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*Cardiac Health of Indian Women: Biopsychosocial Interventions**

Meena Hariharan

It is about time that we focus on the cardiac health of the country. This article will discuss the cardiac health status of India with a specific focus on women's cardiac health and psychosocial interventions for enhancing cardiac health of the nation.

India's cardiac health rings an alarm. The medical professionals, psychologists, social workers and the policy makers need to pay our undivided attention on enhancing the cardiac health. The statistics speak about the fact of the deteriorating cardiac health of the nation. We see that in India the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) which includes cardiovascular problems, respiratory problems, digestive problems, renal problems, reproductive problems and many other such problems, account for 53% of deaths in total. What is more alarming is out of this 24% of deaths are due to cardiovascular diseases. People suffering from cardiovascular diseases are on an increase progressively in our country. Compared to the Global average of world's Global burden of disease due to CVD which is 235 per one lakh, for India, it is 272 per one lakh which should jolt the Indian health care system.

Let us focus a little on women's cardiac health, there has been a rapid increase in ischemic heart diseases called IHD in Indian women. IHD used to be known as middle aged men's disease in 1970s but

* Professor Maya Dev Memorial Lecture, 2020 streamed on *You Tube* Channel on 22nd October, 2021.

now this has changed, this is no more a middle aged men's disease but this is an elderly women's disease in 21st century. IHD mortality has increased by 93.7% between the years 2000-2017 only for women.

This talks about almost 100% increase in ischemic heart diseases among women. Why does this happen? What are the reasons for this? One of the reasons is, when IHD or CVD used to be known as middle aged men's disease, the main focus of any rehabilitation used to be helping the middle aged men in their productive age to return to work. That was true in 1970s when men used to be the sole breadwinners of the families. However, that is no more the case. Right from post-independent era in India, rural women have been equal participants in contributing to families' economy. And from 1980s onwards even women in middle class families have been equal partners in contributing to families' economy.

So, now the focus has to shift from the men to be helped to return to work and equal importance will have to be given to women patients too. The priority for men over women in the treatment process in therapeutic interventions are evident in certain subtle examples which are very rarely surveyed. A survey result found out that prescription of aspirins, ace inhibitors, statins were found to be much lesser for women patients compared to men patients for reasons unknown. So, these are very subtle discriminations that are being practised in bio medical approach. And another alarming factor is that a large number of children have been diagnosed with congenital heart disease. It is very shocking to notice that only 44% of girl children diagnosed with congenital heart diseases receive the surgery in the first year of age compared to 70% of boys. The reasons cited are reservations in revealing the heart diseases of girl children in the interest of spoiling the prospects of their matrimony. It looks ridiculous that matrimonial prospects gain priority over survival when it comes to girl children.

Healthcare intervention should be the same for both the genders. One should pay a attention to this psychosocial reasons behind. The first reason is that Indian women's health correlated highly with socioeconomic status and particularly the level of education. The second reason is the Health Belief Model. The prevailing Health Belief Model identifies cardiovascular diseases as men's diseases and therefore even though women have and manifest certain symptoms they do not attract as much attention. The third point is the cost of private health care. In India the health care delivery is highly privatized and it is quite expensive. So, when it comes to expenditure on health, it is the age old cultural belief that men's heath should receive priority over women's health. And the other fact that we all must endorse is whenever it is a question of women's health the entire focus has been on maternal health and the rest take the back seat. Finally, Indian women's health literacy and awareness about the health status and various aspects of health and knowledge is much lower compared to their men counterpart.

The first and foremost action point is a holistic approach. Cardiac health is no more the prerogative of the biomedical team. Cardiac health involves lifestyle and promotion of health seeking behaviour, prevention of health risk behaviour which involving significant behavioural changes. Hence, it is very essential that health psychologists are involved in planning and designing cardiac health interventions.

Here, I would like to present some of the cardiac health care interventions that I and my team of research scholars have come up with and which have proved quite effective on Indian population. I wish to refer to four significant studies that have proved to be effective both in management of cardiac problems. It is reiterated that a given intervention should have equal applicability for men and women because cardiac diseases show no gender discrimination.

Study 1 : Impact of Doctor-Patient Communication

This study talks about the quality of communication between the doctor and the patient for effective management of hypertension. We have taken hypertension as the basic level intervention because hypertension has been found to be the starting point of a number of cardiac diseases. Hence, management of hypertension is a primary step in managing a number of cardiac diseases. The rationale involved here is when there is a good communication between the doctor and the patient, the information that the doctor gives to the patient constitutes adequate knowledge level leaving a good cognitive base. Cognition has an integral relationship with emotion, motivation and behaviour. So, a strong good cognitive base with knowledge about the normal circulatory system and the anomalies involved in hypertension with a logical explanation of the role of medication in correcting the anomalies constitutes the foundation for behavioural change related to lifestyle. The communication to the patient includes the logic behind prescribed diet, regular exercise, regular monitoring of blood pressure as well as consulting a doctor. If the patients are explained these aspects clearly by the doctor then the patient has the cognitive base. This cognitive base triggers the emotion, a little bit of fear which will be useful in creating a motivation for good adherence behaviour which includes not only taking the medication on time but also following the diet regimen, exercise regimen and understanding and responding to certain alarm signals of the cardiac system so as to prevent untoward serious adverse events. Once this is done, the management of hypertension and the cardiac illness will be much easier for anybody.

So, here we are talking about the behavioural management which has its roots in cognitive base, appropriate emotional trigger and invoking the emotions as well as the motivation to initiate and sustain the cardiac appropriate behaviour.

Study Design:

This study was conducted by Swain, Hariharan, Rana, Chivukula and Thomas (2015). In this study, we had a group of 30 doctors and 300 patients. We studied the communication patterns between the doctor and the patients, whether the doctor explained every aspect of hypertension to the patient and whether the patient understood this communication the way it was intended to be by the doctor. The quality of communication was mathematically calculated by applying a formula for deriving similarity index between the intended communication and the received communication. Accordingly, we divided them into three groups; the high-quality communication group, moderate quality communication group and the low-quality communication group. We measured the blood pressure levels of these patients at the beginning of our study and we continued to measure their blood pressure levels intermittently till the termination of the study. The results revealed that the blood pressure levels of those patients with high quality communication, dropped significantly and the hypertension was managed effectively compared to the low-quality communication group.

We tried to track the pathway in an effort to identify the relationship between quality of communication, adherence and hypertension management. The pathway found that high quality communication contributed to high levels of clinical adherence by the patients and high quality of clinical adherence contributed to good prognosis. Apart from that high quality communication between the doctor and the patient also directly contributed to a good prognosis among the patient.

All that we needed here was a little bit of time from the doctor who would take into consideration the holistic aspects of the patients which includes the cognitive level, personality, emotions and came down to the level of the patients and explained all the aspects related to hypertension in a language understood by the patients. Five minutes of time from the doctor could save lot of patients from things like stroke, heart failure and cardiac arrests.

Study 2: Role of Cognitive Mediation in Management of Hypertension

Having found the positive impact of quality of communication, we thought of applying it for the benefit of groups of patients because more often than not the cardiologists in our country may not be able devote time to explain the necessary details to individual patients. So we tried out two approaches in group communication. The second study was carried out by Andrew and Hariharan (2017). The sample consisted of 250 patients diagnosed with primary hypertension. And this group of 250 patients were divided into 5 sub-groups.

The first sub-group was exposed to a knowledge intervention by a physician who was physically present with the group of 50 patients. He explained to them all about the cardiac system and the problem that is created in the system in high blood pressure and the way the medication works in dilating the blood vessels and the way the beta blockers function and why one should be very regular with medication and diet and also exercise. And there was an interaction between the group of patients and the doctor. This group had repetition of the exposure with a gap of two weeks, while the second group had the same exposure but it was only one time. The third group received the same information through a video recording where the same doctor explained the same contents to the group, which was repeated with a gap of two weeks. The fourth group received the same video exposure only once. The fifth group was a control group which received only standard medical care. We found that the group that received the knowledge exposure directly from the physician twice was the group which reaped the maximum benefit. We measured the blood pressure levels of these patients every week starting from the time started the study and we followed them up for six weeks and then at the end of the study too.

The results tracked a clear pathway from the group that had repeated direct exposure to the physician contributing to the

knowledge level, which in turn enhanced the self-efficacy. Self-efficacy in turn contributed to adherence levels leading to good prognosis. So, when the doctor was explaining to them about the prescribed lifestyle one should follow in order to manage their hypertension effectively, the doctor also instilled a sense of confidence in these patients that it is possible to manage their hypertension by regulating their lifestyle. That enhanced a sense of confidence and self-efficacy which these patients believe "Yes, I shall be able to do it" (the self-efficacy factor). This self-efficacy contributed directly to adherence behaviour and these patients who were not very good in their compliance with medication, diet, exercise and monitoring, became more compliant. That resulted in a good hypertension management as prognosis. And apart from that, we also found that in the group who had two direct exposures to the physician showed direct impact on their enhanced self-efficacy. Here is where the communication from the physician matters a lot in enhancing the confidence levels of people who would take that into consideration and go ahead changing their lifestyle. This was not seen in other groups. But there was also improvement in the other three groups (except the control group). Among them, the group which had knowledge exposure through video recording, had a marginal difference in their blood pressure levels at the termination of the study and they were significantly better than the control group. This indicates very clearly that creating a knowledge base among the patients with hypertension will definitely help them to enhance their motivation in enhancing their adherence behaviour. And this enhanced adherence behaviour would definitely improve the prognosis.

Now, once again I would like to reiterate that all that is needed to enhance the cardiac health of patients diagnosed with hypertension is a little bit of time where a cognitive base is created, if you are not able to do it individually, let's do it to the patients as a group by building certain support groups among the hypertensive patients.

Study 3: Combined Impact of Cognitive and Emotional Intervention on CABG Patients

The third study was triggered by a question, “is cognition everything? What about the anxiety and fear that the individual diagnosed with various cardiac problems faces? Do we leave this anxiety, fear and apprehensions unattended? Is it enough just to work on the cognition of the patients? So, here is a study that we planned on patients who were going for their Bypass surgery called Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting (CABG). This study was carried out by Thomas and Hariharan and Rana (2016).

Study Design:

We took a sample of 300 CABG patients, and divided them into three groups; one group was exposed to a new intervention module that we designed and this module is called *PACE*. *PACE* is an acronym and it refers to “Program for Affective and Cognitive Education”. So, group one, 100 patients who went for elective CABG were exposed to *PACE* and this *PACE* involved the participation of a cardiothoracic surgeon, a health psychologist and a patient who has successfully recovered from CABG. This is a 25 minute video programme which was presented to the patients a day before they went for CABG. The second group was exposed to guided imagery, a standardized relaxation therapy, which would take into consideration the distress that the patients suffer and reduces the distress level that is triggered just before they go for their surgery, any major surgery. And the third group is a control group. *PACE* has components both for the cognitive base as well as for reducing their anxiety and apprehension. The participation of cardiothoracic surgeon and a health psychologist gave them all the information necessary for a patient to know about how one would feel soon after the surgery and the participation of the successfully recovered patient would address all the concerns that a patient would have belonging to the emotional dimension. In other

words *PACE* took into consideration both the cognitive and also the emotional needs of the patient whereas the guided imagery took into consideration only the emotional needs of the patient. And the third is a control group which got only the standard medical care. We followed up these patients for a period of eight weeks. The results revealed that the patients who were exposed to *PACE* module as the intervention, were the ones who reaped the maximum benefit. The cognitive component as well as the emotional components, contributed directly and reduced the emotional distress that the patient suffered and the reduction in emotional distress directly contributed to overall prognosis and their recovery from their post-operative state. We found that the patients who were exposed to *PACE* module were ready to go back to work physically as well mentally five weeks earlier compared to the control group. Another significant aspect of this model is that the model itself directly contributed to prognosis whereas in case of the guided imagery group, the pathway was very clear and it was only one way, where the guided imagery worked in reducing the psychological distress and the psychological distress in turn reduced their trauma and enhanced their recovery.

Now, it is very clear from this that when we are treating the patients with cardiac illness, it is necessary that you take the patient as a whole and address not only the physical pain, not only the physical illness or the physical state of the cardiovascular system but we need to take into consideration the cognitive aspect by enhancing their knowledge level and we need to address more importantly the distress state of the patient who is going for the major surgery. Thus, once again what this study proves to us is that you need to treat the patient as a whole. It is important to reiterate that in all these studies, our patient sample has both men and women in equal number and equally distributed into the various groups. The equal treatment proved that when the intervention is the same there is no gender difference in management or recovery rate.

Study 4: Role of Children in addressing the projections related to Cardiovascular Diseases

Then the fourth study that we have has a futuristic perspective. The fourth study was triggered with the projections on the future cardiac health of the nation that showed that more than half the adult population of India will have some or the other cardiovascular diseases. Should we take these statistics only for an academic purposes or these statistics are projected to us in order to stimulate us, to think about certain ways to prevent this from happening. So, with this we went into a futuristic perspective and conducted a sort of quasi-experimental study taking children as our sample.

Study Design:

This study is an ongoing project by Monteiro and Hariharan. We took 181 children studying from class 6 to class 9. We took these children and asked them to inform us if there is any adult hypertensive patients in their families. Those children with one adult member living under the same roof with the diagnosis of hypertension constituted our major sample. Initially before the beginning of the study we measured the blood pressure levels of these adults and then the intervention was given to the children and not to the adult hypertensive patients. The children were exposed to hypertension knowledge programme through a video clipping continuously for two sittings with a gap of two weeks.

These children were asked whether they would volunteer to work as health monitors for the adult hypertensives in their family. Those children willing to do this were recruited into our sample. These children were given a health monitor diary. They were asked to remind their adult hypertensives in the family to take their medicines. The reminder is for every day. The children also monitored the diet of these adults, as well as insist on the adult family member doing their exercise regularly.

The children were motivated to adopt any method that they would think would be successful with their adult family member to comply with medication, diet and exercise. Every weekend, these health monitor diaries were collected from the children. They were followed up for six weeks. At the end of six weeks, the adults were called back and their blood pressures were monitored and recorded. In the meantime, the children were also tested on a number of personality dimensions like frustration, tolerance, perseverance, their interpersonal influencing capability etc. A number of psychosocial parameters of the children were tested. What was the outcome? We found that those who monitored their adult hypertensives effectively could bring in a significant drop in the adults blood pressure levels at the end of the study. Who are these children? Could all the children do that? No, we found that children with certain unique personality characteristics are the ones who could successfully monitor in helping their adults manage their hypertension effectively.

What are these personality variables? The first and foremost is the knowledge level, those children whose knowledge level was high after the exposure to the knowledge intervention and those children who had a combination of factors like intellectual openness to experience, conscientious, perceived ability to influence, tenacity, were found to be effective in their monitoring of the health of the adult hypertensives. As a result of this, the adults showed a better adherence to their medication, diet and exercise. This enhanced adherence brought about a better prognosis in these adult hypertensives. We did this study mainly to find a way to arrest the projected prevalence of hypertension.

This particular intervention module brought two benefits, to the population or the sample included in the study. The first thing is the present hypertensives who were suffering from high blood pressure were monitored very closely by the children and this enhanced their hypertension management skills and brought down their blood pressure levels, thus reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases. That is talking about the present hypertension population.

This study also has a benefit for the future hypertension population, i.e. the children, those children in their adolescent stage now are going to be the adults after 2030. These children already had an exposure to the knowledge base about the lifestyle, health-risk behaviour and health-promoting behaviour which would work as a very good preventive measure from hypertension. This knowledge level is likely to be sustained in these children. These children when they grow up are expected to remember these inputs and follow health-promoting behaviour and not go into health-risk behaviour. By doing so, we are in fact taking a preventive measure in addressing the projected progressive increase in hypertension in future.

To attain such goals, we need to work as a team. The doctors, middle-level health care workers, health psychologists, social workers, educationists, policymakers should come together and we should work as a team in preventing the national cardiac health from further deterioration. Indian government has already taken certain measures for promulgation of comprehensive Primary Health Care-CVD management guidelines, that included cardiovascular diseases as one of the important health care measures to be taken care of. The government also has been advocating that the treatment approach for cardiovascular diseases should no more be limited to biomedical approach, that there should be a paradigm shift and biopsychosocial approach has to be adopted and embraced in handling the cardiovascular diseases among the population of India.

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*Samasta Mahisā-Varga : Two Image Inscriptions,
Two Deities and One “Jana”*

Ranjusri Ghosh

Image inscriptions are written records on image-sculpture representing deities. Only a small segment of the total stone and metal images of early-medieval (seventh century — twelfth century CE) North Bengal¹ is found with inscriptions. These are of different lengths recording the dedication of an image-sculpture normally by an individual or a couple.² There are a few exceptions when it was a collective gift of all the people of a certain clan or community. Such instances are rare from Bengal. The subject of this essay is constituted by two image inscriptions where the expression ‘Samasta Mahisā-Varga’ implying collectiveness is found. Both were published but the expression has not been appreciated with due importance and historical perspective. The two image inscriptions have offered us a kind of practical demonstration of the way the local societies had been integrated in the Brāhmaṇical cultural fold. It resonates a process in which ‘cult appropriation’ has been underscored as a strong mechanism for such transition from early historical to early medieval India.³ Cult figures from image sculptures along with the information from the inscriptions on them could have provided direct pieces of evidence in support of the point and made it stronger as well as dependable. The main aim of this essay is to focus on the transforming process of a people we get from two image inscriptions, next it would discuss on a cult evolved out of snake goddesses followed by the conclusive remarks.

Image Inscription vs Historical Source

The historiography of early-medieval period reveals more and more dependence on the epigraphy as a source. These are mainly the land-transaction charters, in which a piece of land had been bought to make it tax-free by the government for religious purposes. Besides, there are a few epigraphs issued at private level in order to eulogise the deeds of some illustrious members in succession of particular reputed families (the Badal Pillar and Silimpur inscriptions, for example) or powerful sectarian lineage (Bangarh Mūrtiśiva *praśasti*). No doubt all are very important source of information for early medieval Indian history.

Making images were not new, the earliest ones being made of clay. Perhaps some of them were also dedicatory pieces. But the practice of engraving the name of the dedicator evolved later in North Bengal. The earliest example of dedicatory image is to be found now in the Varendra Research Museum (henceforth VRM, no. 1391) from Bengal. It belongs to the eighth century and dedicated by a certain prince of a ruling family.⁴

It may be mentioned here that writing down the act of dedication first started by the Buddhists who travelled to visit the sacred Buddhist places in different parts of India. These were found on curved or plain architectural parts. It was a means of communication with other visitors and pilgrims, a kind of record enabling them to know who and what kind of devotees came at the same place previously. They would know the name of places the lay worshippers belonged to as well as the *śramaṇas* and the monasteries they were associated with. They came to know about the types of relationships among the devotees because in the collective dedications the kinship linkages were mentioned. The dedicatory script was written in a formulaic language which set a pattern to be continued in future. Certain differences are noticeable in relation to the details of dedicators, however. Those dedicated by the Buddhists are more complete in terms of their recorded identity. This is true for those belonging to the early medieval Bihar too. The reason seems to be that most of the

Buddhists belonged to the urban area or rich agricultural rural settlements where social norms and relationship bonds had reached a kind of acceptability and familiarity.⁵ Most of them could have presented themselves with lineages, familial or kinship relationship and, identifiable occupations. This factor made a difference with those belonging to the Brāhmaṇical culture. The famous Sanchi Stūpa is the earliest example of such attempt by the common Buddhist people of recording the details.⁶ It was followed subsequently and we see several other Buddhist architectures with dedicatory inscriptions. It is an interesting example of the cohesive attempt within an organised religion as a result of which we get a map of community movement across the country.

The Bengal Sequence

In case of Bengal or rather North Bengal recording the details of a donor is found mainly in the land transfer charters, all of which were officially issued.⁷ In the beginning, the fifth century land-transaction records do not supply much information about the donor. We do get the names of the donees (but not always the place he hailed), the purpose for the prayer of tax-free land, the names of the administrative unit and its constituent members, administrative head, king who appointed the head along with the date of issue and, the official and non-official functionaries associated with the execution of land transfer. Those belonging to the Pāla period, provide with a few more pieces of information.⁸

The land-gift involved several persons in different capacities, in comparison the image-gift required the engraver and the sculptor, besides the dedicator. The engraver was for the maximum cases a local unskilled person and the sculptor worked as order was placed to him in lieu of remuneration. Rarely do we get the name of an engraver. There are two sets of dedicators. Those who mentioned the details such as the date of installation, the name and year of the ruling king and an introduction of the dedicator mentioning the names of his father and forefathers seem to have enjoyed some prominence

in their immediate social circle for different reasons in comparison to others who did not mention their occupational or social relationship details or information about the ruling king. But even some dedicators from that higher up section in society might have been residing in prosperous rural areas. However, there are dedicators such as a queen⁹ who did not speak about the birth or marital relationship by mentioning the names on either side. There must have been a different background for not introducing herself/himself in the conventional line. Lack of knowledge might also have been the reason for a few dedicators who appear in the inscriptional records without introduction, date and the name of ruling king.

In all these cases the image-gift remained as a non-official private act. The process from the making to the installation of image was done privately. The writing of the text and engraving the same on an image were done locally. So, mistakes in texts and corrupt Sanskrit very often occurred in them. We meet many names in dialects too.

Variation in introductory information of dedicator/s

There are instances also of different kind of introduction. It happened when a dedicator conformed to a different norm where personal relationship based on birth or marriage had not been used for introducing an individual person. The dedicator in these examples belonged to a different social relationship. The dedicator/s introduced a community/place/name of a tribe or a clan. It was a basic social unit in which a dedicator was a member. The two inscriptions we are concerned belong to this category.

The first image (Fig. 1.) in the Rangpur Museum (Acc. no. Manasā 1) belongs to the eleventh century. It is in blackstone, the size being 106 cm. x 53.34 cm. (Earlier in the Rangpur Sahitya Parishat). No mention is made about its exact findspot in Rangpur.

Text: script Gaudī, language: incorrect Sanskrit

L.1: *Samasta-mahisā-varṅga-vasī (vāsī) vācai janai*

L.2: *Svabhiḥ kārīta[m] devī-saṅghāikām idaṁ //*



Fig. 1: Svāṅgādevī or Suṅgādevī, Rangpur Museum (Acc. no. Manasā 1),
Haque and Gail 2008: 350/pl. 48.

The meaning as given by G. Bhattacharya is as follows: This (image) of the goddess called Saṅghāikā was caused to be made by the people who were residents of Samasta-Mahisā Vargga. (Bhattacharya 2008: 232-3/pl. 48). According to Bhattacharya it may be Suṅghāikā too. The other variants of the name are Svamgāi, Svāṅgā, Suṅgā and so on, *kā* and sometimes *devī* used as gender indicative.'

I should say that I did not get a chance to read the inscription. It was reproduced by Bhattacharya which is not clear, nor I was able to get a photograph or see the original image. My arguments are based on the reading offered by Bhattacharya himself. The use of the terms such as *vargga* or *varga* i.e. a class/group/clan etc. and *jana* i.e. people in this inscription occurred for the first time in the image epigraphic record of Bengal. The meaning of *vācai* is not clear to us. The first four words are Samasta-Mahisā-Vargga-vāsī. It means a land in which the division or the clan (*varga*) of Mahisā people (*jana*) had been residing. The term *jana* is used to imply distinctiveness of the Mahisā people from others who were residing in the neighbourhood. The land, therefore, was known after the Mahisā people. Naming a settlement unit with the name by which the settlers were known is a known phenomenon. It is a clear statement by a people about their collective dedication of an image of the deity Saṅghāikā or Suṅghāikā who might have initially been the deity per excellence of the Mahisā tribe itself. All of them professed devotion to this deity en masse. It is a feature of tribal social organisation. Originally, the deity might not have the anthropomorphic form which is depicted on the stele in question and she was worshipped in any symbolic form, may be a pot or five lumps of clay implying a five hooded snake, etc.¹⁰ A concept of snake goddess must have been present in several local belief systems and during the process of integration a standard form was appropriated from prevalent organised religious systems such as Brāhmaṇism and Buddhism in which the deities were worshipped with codified iconographies although some elements associated with the original deity were retained. The original name Saṅghā or Suṅghā was retained and such examples of retaining local names of the deities

are not uncommon in the Indian iconography. The act of dedication was recorded in the name of Mahisā *Varga* and not in the name of any individual of that *Varga*, which would have been against the norm of a tribal society. However, this type of individual munificence recording the personal name and declaring belongingness to the same Samasta-Mahisā-Varga also would happen at the end of the eleventh or sometime in the twelfth century on which we are going to throw light now.

The image in blackstone shows a figure of Viṣṇu belonging to the eleventh/ twelfth century (Fig. 2). The size is 100 cm. x 52 cm. The exact find-spot of this image is not given but it should have been from the same place of Rangpur district or division as the above one. It is also preserved in the same Rangpur Museum of Bangladesh (Acc. no. Viṣṇu 9). The one-line text on the pedestal reads:

Text: script Gaudī, language: incorrect Sanskrit

siddham (symbol) *samasta-mahisā-vaggasya śrīdharai mādhavaḥ* — Mādhava (of) Śrīdharai or the illustrious Dharai belonging to Samasta-Mahisā-Vagga (or Vargga) — G. Bhattacharya 2008: 233/pl. 137.

We corrected the name of the dedicator as Śrīdhārai, the 'ā' sign is clear in the text (Fig. 2a). Śrī may be an honorific used before the name Dhārai. It may be translated as: (The image of) Mādhava (was dedicated) by Śrīdhārai of Samasta-Mahisā-Vagga (Varga). Here the dedicator followed a current practice of conjoining his personal name with that of the deity. This happened mainly with the images of Viṣṇu. In that case the translation may also be 'the image of the illustrious Dhārai-Mādhava belongs to Samasta-Mahisā-Vagga'.

Now the pieces of information may be extracted from the two images and the inscriptions they bear. Both of them speak of the same Samasta-Mahisā-Varga. The first image which was created earlier was dedicated by the whole Mahisā-Varga and the second by one member of that Varga. The first example shows that the Mahisā people adopted a well-established Brāhmaṇical religious practice of making an image of a deity in stone or metal and recording the dedication in a language used by the elite class, the Sanskrit. Perhaps they installed this image



Fig. 2: Viṣṇu, Rangpur Museum (Acc. no. Viṣṇu 9), Haque and Gail 2008: 402/ pl. 137.



Fig. 2.a: Illustration of the inscription on the pedestal of 2, Ibid: 402/pl. 137.

in a temple too. The iconography of the deity has many similarities with that of a goddess known in Bengal as Manasā with certain additions and omissions. Iconographically, a clear distinction may be drawn between the two sets of female snake-hooded deities of Bengal, a point to be discussed in this essay after a while.

The second image offers a more convincing information underscoring significant progression towards adoption of Brāhmaṇical cultural norms. The first striking information is that it was a dedication of an individual in his own personal name and so it was not a collective munificence of a clan like the former one. This individualistic approach is definitely a deviation from the tribal norm. Even the dedicator used an honorific Śrī, a practice prevalent among the prominent people in Brāhmaṇical society. This is another instance of borrowing cultural elements from the refined elite class. But along with it must be noticed that still the dedicator Śrī Dhārai did not introduce himself with his parental and forefathers' lineage, indicating that such social practice had not yet been established in his society. It means that the members of Mahisā-Varga did not give up all the tribal traits yet. What is important is the phased process of integration of cultural elements from an other society, the Brāhmaṇical in this case, which itself is in a simultaneous process of growing and systematising its own norms, while the Mahisā-Varga people's own ones had been dispossessed to oblivion. The two inscriptions, therefore, reveal an active process as how the tribal societies in India could have been integrated in the Brāhmaṇical society. This type of integration happened in different areas at different points of time depending on the socio-political situation of those places. The area in question seems to have been in the northern part of present Rangpur district in Bangladesh including a slice of tract further to its east when the rivers Tista and Brahmaputra had flowed on different fluvial tracts.

Possible Mahisā-Māhiṣya Link

The identification of the people called *Mahisā* remained unknown. However, more research can throw light if the people of *Māhiṣya*

caste could have some link with Mahisā. The agitation of the Māhiṣyas of Bengal in the early twentieth century for identification with the Kaivartas, believed to be the descendants of those Kaivartas who under their chief Divya occupied a large portion of Varendra by defeating Mahīpāla II,¹¹ perhaps has some relevance in this discussion. The claim may rightfully appear as anachronistic the actual incident in connection to Divya being about eight centuries old. Quite logically it may also appear as a serious drawback that no information came down to us which could have linked the present hālī (agriculturist) Kaivartas with the Māhiṣyas at any point of time in this long haul of journey. The Kaivartas had been engaged in fishery and boatmanship mainly. Later a group took cultivation as their chief occupation and came to be known as hālī Kaivartas as distinguished from the jālī (fisherman) Kaivartas. The former enjoyed a higher rank in social hierarchy. However, we have several references to Kaivartas in texts and epigraphs of Bengal, but not any to Māhiṣya as claimed by N.K. Dutt that about five centuries ago there was no caste in Bengal known as Māhiṣya (1965: 137). But the legal texts such as Gautama and Yājñavalkya which he himself consulted show that the authors deliberated over the question of origin of the Māhiṣya and created an ideological frame like mixed caste (Idem: 135). Gautama declared that a Māhiṣya was an offspring of a Kṣatriya father and a Vaiśya mother. The Smṛti texts preserved that ideological frame unabated (*Yājñavalkyasmṛti* IV. xcii). It means Māhiṣya as a caste was not unknown in the early historical period. The Mahisā people who seem to have been residing in a place of Rangpur where buffaloes had a natural habitat. D.C. Sircar referring to the *Sūtasamhitā* stated that Ambaṣṭhas and Māhiṣyas were same. He definitely indicated the law-books' theory about the origin of mixed caste. Then he said that Māhiṣya means those who lived in the land of Mahiṣa (Sircar 1982: 166). In a study on Bengali surnames we get one as Mahiṣa i.e. buffalo and as caste they are known as Māhiṣya along with some others (Bhaumik 1389 BS: *gha*/24).¹² Such an area where buffaloes were abounded along with the elephant and tigers seems to have been present in the northern part of Rangpur and Dinajpur. Among the

people who were inhabiting there or at the adjacent lands we get Kirātas and Kaivartas respectively.

A copperplate charter issued by Mahīpāla I (end of the ninth decade of the tenth and first half of the eleventh century)¹³ in his fifth reigning year also from an unspecified place of Rangpur (Furui 2011: 232-45) seems to have spoken about this area. It mentions several elements that indicate that the two gift villages to be donated to a Brāhmaṇa by this charter were situated close to a woodland. This Rangpur inscription speaks of the Kirātas who seem to have possessed some tracts in contiguity where they had been living. Because of the physical proximity they seem to have some links with the village Rājikāgrāma-odraṅga, one of the two villages to be donated. This is perhaps the only inscription to mention the Kirātas as a living people within some definable forested area. The tribes who generally lived in the forests have been described as Kirāta in the early texts. This, therefore, may include several peoples who lived within the close sphere of wooded land. The *Mahābhārata* mentions that the King of the Puṇḍras had under him the Vaṅga and Kirāta countries also (Sukthankar and Belvalkar 1971: II. 13. 18-20). The reference shows that all the three tracts were contiguous to each other. The name of the other gift village in this epigraph is Kuñjavaddhikādāma. Kuñja in Sanskrit means a land covered by trees. The village seems to have bounded with wooded area. It is said that within the gift land was situated a resting place for the elephants. Moreover, there occurred a term *kuddhra* or hill situated in the same forested area. All these suggest a landscape to the north or in the northern part of Rangpur. Both these villages are situated in two separate *maṇḍalas*, an administrative unit constituted by a number of villages, within Phāṇita-*vīthī* (higher administrative division than a *maṇḍala*) of Puṇḍravardhana-*bhukti* (an administrative unit comparable to a province) which denotes North Bengal. The village Rājikāgrāma-odraṅga is mentioned as within Uddhanna-Kaivartta-*ṛtti*-Vahikala. The meaning of the term *vahikala* is not known but Uddhanna-Kaivartta-*ṛtti*-Vahikala seems to have been a large settlement unit resided by the Kaivartas. The addition of *ṛtti* with Kaivartta (Kaivarta) as explained by D.C. Sircar (1957: 5) means that the area of Uddhanna was allotted to them for their service. So, it was

not a gift plot legitimised by a charter but given to them with a purpose involving their service which must have been beneficial to the state. There is a reference to tank (*puṣkariṇī*, l. 27) within the village in this inscription. It may have been used for the purpose of fishery by the Kaivartas, which along with boatmanship had been their primary occupation. This, however, does not mean that they did not till the cultivable lands available in their area. There is a reference to another settlement unit as Osinna-Kaivartta-*ṛtti* within the same Phāṇita-*vīthī* in the Belwa copperplate belonging to the fifth reigning year of Mahīpāla I (Sircar 1957: 1-13). The find-spot, Belwa, is in the Palsa union of Ghoraghat upazilā (see the location on the map). It is located in the south-eastern fringe of Dinajpur district and near the border of Rangpur and Bogra. Along with this Osinna-Kaivartta-*ṛtti*, two more plots were donated to a Brāhmaṇa. One named Gaṇeśvara is said to have been attached with fifteen village tanks. It was situated in Pañcanagarī-*viṣaya* (an upper administrative unit of *vīthī* comparable with present time's district), which from a Gupta period charter of the fifth century has been known to us. The third one mentioned as Nandisvāminī was within Puṇḍarikā-*maṇḍala*, which was also within Phāṇita-*vīthī* as is confirmed by the second Belwa plate issued in the eleventh reigning year of Vighrahapāla III (second half of the eleventh century), the grandson of Mahīpāla I. By this time Phāṇita-*vīthī* became a *viṣaya*. It means that it became independent from the Pañcanagarī-*viṣaya* which was situated to its west and south-west. The Phāṇita-*vīthī-viṣaya* was an emerging area extending northward in the Rangpur district where several plots were donated. This seems to have been the north-easternmost part of the Pāla territory. These munificent acts generated fresh initiatives for intensive cultivation. There is a gap of about seventy to eighty years between the two Belwa plates. Two charters of Mahīpāla I from this part of North Bengal shows that this area received royal attention lately but it was speedily coming within the Brāhmaṇical cultural sphere. The area had homogenous physical features which were visible still several centuries later. The Gazetteers of Rangpur and Dinajpur speak about a forested area on the northern part. That forest seems to have stretched up to Jalpaiguri and had been a natural habitat of the elephants and buffaloes. The district Gazetteers

of Rangpur published in 1911 by J.A. Vas recorded that half a century back “Rangpur abounded in wild animals. Tigers had their hunts all over the district, elephants were trapped and noosed and wild buffaloes were with spears and poisoned arrows. But the advance of civilization, the spread of human habitations and the destruction of jungle have compelled their retirement to the more secured abodes in the forests of Jalpaiguri ... (Vas 1911: 13)”. The mention of buffalo along the elephant is significant. Similarly, the contiguous district of Dinajpur on the west, is said to have had a wide forest extending “... from a point some distance south of Thakurgaon right through the Jalpaiguri district to the Himalayas” (Strong 1912: 8). Among the large animals F.W. Strong found in the Revenue Report of Major Sherwill, which was concluded in 1863, were buffalo and tiger (Strong 1912: 10).

From the information it seems that before the Brāhmaṇas settled in this area it had been manned by the people who had cultural affiliation with those living to its north and east. We get the name of Trisrotā in a mid-ninth century Tezpur inscription of Vanamāla. It is said that the gift village Abisuravāṭaka was situated to the west of that river. Sircar suggested that it was in the present Rangpur district of Bangladesh as the Tista i.e. Trisrotā runs to its east (Ghosh 2019 : 176). But the Tista’s present easterly course was not present before the well-known flood of 1787.¹⁴ Earlier the river had a channel to its west. The names Tista and Karatoya seem to have been used interchangeably for the same stream after it entered in Jalpaiguri from Sikkim.¹⁵ So, the location of the gift village might have been anywhere from Jalpaiguri to Rangpur. Jalpaiguri is situated to the north of Rangpur and Goalpara to its east separated by the present course of the Brahmaputra. Epigraphic evidence from Assam reveals that in Goalpara, Naogaon, and some other places in present day Assam lived several groups, in the occupations of boatmanship, weaving, fishing and cultivation. Some of them had occupations in both fishing and boatmanship while they owned cultivable lands. The Kaivartas were one of them who were always mentioned in groups (Lahiri 1991: 66-7) with a prefix which might have been the name of their settlement unit.¹⁶ Presence of Several Kaivarta settlements distinguishable from each other at dispersed locations in this long stretch of land is

noteworthy. Living in group is found in other occupations also, a single group of weavers, mentioned in one inscription with a fore-name as *orāṅgi*, which seems to have denoted a place they had been residing. Of the others we get potters (*hāḍi*) and boatmen (*nauki*).¹⁷ Such an occupational picture of some prominent local groups in a region of Assam possessing immense surface water in rivers, ponds, tanks, marshy covers, etc. is significant for the understanding of its neighbouring area to the west in Rangpur and Dinajpur districts which also shared the same geo-morphological elements. For a certain period of time when the mighty Brahmaputra did not have the present channel and flowed to its east, the tract from the east of Rangpur to Goalpara could have had a more intimate connectivity. One important feature of this is its woodland which in reduced form was still present in the nineteenth century as the district Gazetteers of Rangpur and Dinajpur mentioned above reveal. Among all Kaivartas appear to have been a prominent class spread over in several groups in this Tista-Brahmaputra belt.

The presence of the Mahisā people in the Rangpur district has not been mentioned in any other source. The epigraphic evidence shows several other people such as *hāḍi*, *nauki*, etc. but not Mahisā. The term Mahisā could have been scribe's error who wrote 'sa' instead of 'ṣa', as such occurrences are so common in image inscriptions. It may be possible that the Mahisās were clubbed with the Kaivartas when a segment of this community took cultivation as their main occupation. The land in which they had been residing was a natural habitat of the buffaloes along with elephant. Both had been used in the battle against Rāmapāla. Using elephant as a combating unit is not new in Indian warfare. The *Rāmacaritam* states that at the time of his capture Bhīma, the son of Rudoka who was the brother of Divya (I. 39B), the Kaivarta king to dethrone and kill Mahīpāla II, was seated on the elephant (II. 20B). Again, it states that after his defeat his elephants ran away from the battle field, the cavalry also deserted him and he did not have even the buffaloes (II. 29B, 30B, 33B). But the *Rāmacaritam* testifies the use of buffalo by a troop which is worth noticing. It states that

Bhīma's soldiers riding on buffaloes were throwing enormous arrows on enemies (II. 42B). So, buffaloes were not only used for transportation they also formed a part of the fighting force during the time in focus here.

The stages of transformation of the Kaivarta community or a part of it, from originally in occupation of fishery and boatmanship to becoming agriculturist and a few of them perhaps turning to be big landholding individuals, and still one of them entering into the prestigious Pāla officialdom are not known. We do not know about the qualification or skill that Divya excelled as an officer of high position in the Pāla administration (*Rāmacaritam* I. 38B). But it is a fact that Divya successfully garnered a large number of sympathisers who not only backed him but also involved directly in his attempt to capture a large chunk of Pāla territory in North Bengal. It is natural that among his supporters not only the Kaivartas but also several other prominent individuals and communities were present. The Mahisā people might also have been one such. But Divya took the leading role and encouraged others to follow him which implies that he enjoyed influence over a wider circle beyond his own community. It shows that from the end of the tenth century (when Mahīpāla donated the land of the Kaivartas) to the time of Mahīpāla II (when Divya defeated him), a period of about nine decades (including the ruling period of Nayapāla and Vighrahapāla II),¹⁸ the Kaivartas achieved phenomenal escalation in social hierarchy. At the same time, they acquired a more secured economic footing. And a few clans who collaborated jointly too gained from this fortunate turn of event.

Snake Goddesses : Saṅghā and Manasā

The image dedication of Saṅghā is a proof that the Mahisā people had already achieved some social elevation. Image dedication was another step to assert social distinction. The inscription on this image validated their name as well as religious and cultural affiliations. The act elevated the position of that very goddess Saṅghā too along with the whole clan devoted to her. The iconographical elements such as the presence of Revanta as an associating figure too demonstrates a

distinctive position of this goddess of the Samasta-Mahisā-Varga (see no. 2, Table) from the class of Saṅghā images. Bhattacharya identified the animal, on which Revanta rides, as donkey and the figure tentatively as Nairṛta (Bhattacharya 2008 : 232). But it is a horse and I found an iconography which exactly matches with this figure. N.K. Bhattasali had found it much before and I took details from his magnum opus of 1929 C.E. The *Kālikāpurāṇa* in chapter 80 states about a rite Nirājanā. It is a kind of preparatory rite performed by kings and army generals in the month of Āśvina (September-October) before undertaking campaigns. It went on for seven days in which several gods were worshipped. On the seventh day Revanta was worshipped at the city gate. It states that the image should show this deity as "... having two strong arms and his body shining with armour. He should have his hairs restrained or covered by an apparel (meaning probably the *pugree*). He should have a whip in his left hand and a sword in the right, and should be placed on a white horse and worshipped with the same rites as used in the worship of the Sun-god" (Bhattasali 1929: 175 6). However, we do not have any suggestion for the presence of Revanta in association with the goddess Saṅghā. Should we think that this goddess too was worshipped before undertaking military campaign? It happened in the eleventh century (the date of the image). Another image in the Linden Museum representing a female snake deity is noted with almost similar iconographical features save the fact that it is two-armed, not associated with Revanta and, the deity has fangs (see no. 3 in the table). It is also inscribed in which the deity is mentioned as Svamgāi Bhaṭṭārikā. The image was dedicated during the time of Mahīpāla I (Bhattacharya 2000: 256). The name of this deity has not been found in any early Purāṇas or other contemporary texts save *Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇasārasamuccaya* (PLS), a Śaiva text of the eleventh/twelfth century. It not only mentioned the name as Svāṅgādevī or Suṅgādevī but also gave the particular *dhyāna*.

Śyāmalāṅgī ghanoraskā saptabhogā caturbhujā |

Sudrṣṭā [or sukrṣṇā] jalpa(japya)mānā ca svotsaṅge putradhāriṇī ||
6.299 ||

Parṇavalli dharā pāṇau nānālaṅkārabhūṣitā |

Padmā nandanapadmastha(ā) svāṅgādevī [or suṅgādevī] prakīrtitā ||
Muktabodha, 6.300 ||

Almost a dozen or more images from Bengal and Bihar with close similarities are found which seem to have represented Svāṅgādevī or Suṅgādevī. Nine of them available to me conform with most of the features of the PLS's *dhyāna*.¹⁹ The prominent features of these images are mentioned in the Table below.

Almost all of them have three features in common, the deity is associated with a child, betel creeper/s and seated on a heavenly lotus. Hence, the iconography fulfills the criteria such as *svotsaṅge putradhāriṇī*, *parṇavalli dharā pāṇau*³² and *padmā nandanapadmasthā*, the last one is absent in one which is the earliest in the group belonging

1. Bhattacharya: 2000: 218 9/ pl. 19.4; 254- 5/pl. 22.4, ²⁰ from Kurkihār, Gaya district, Bihar, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (no. 83, 1.2).	900 C.E., bronze. illegible inscription.	A 2-armed deity, a 3- layered umbrella above, a snake canopy with 9 hoods, seated on a large lotus, no sacred thread.	Two <i>parṇavallis</i> with leaves on two sides of the snake- hood above, a snake-hooded and crowned child on lap, no pitcher/ <i>ghaṭa</i> on the pedestal, no <i>vāhana</i> .	Seated figures of Vāyu ²¹ (left) and Gaṇeśa (right) above the throne bar; at each side of the deity is a standing nāgī on lotus with a snake hood, nimbate and wearing sacred thread.
2. Bhattacharya 2008: 232-3/ pl. 48, ²² Rangpur district, Bangladesh, Rangpur Museum ²³ (no. Manasā 1).	c. 11th century stone, inscribed (see above). Fig. 1	A 4-armed deity, a <i>kīrtimukha</i> on the top and a couple of Vidyādhara on two sides, a snake canopy of 9- hoods, seated on a large lotus, wears a sacred thread.	<i>Parṇavalli</i> in each back hand, fruit and a child on lap whose feet are placed on a lotus, a pitcher/ <i>ghaṭa</i> with a lotus on the mouth and sprouting snakes on the pedestal, no <i>vāhana</i> .	Vāyu on the left (riding on deer), and Revanta on the right (on horse, booted and holding a sword and whip) of the deity, a devotee/donor on the extreme right and left of the pedestal.



Fig. 3: Svāṅgādevī or Suṅgādevī, Malda Museum (no. RMN-1), courtesy of Malda Museum. Photo Author.



Fig. 3.a: Close up of the inscription on the pedestal of 3, courtesy of Malda Museum. Photo Author.



Fig. 4: Svāṅgādevī or Suṅgādevī, Brooklyn Museum (ACC. no. 71.1672).
Photo <http://www.brooklynmuseum.org>

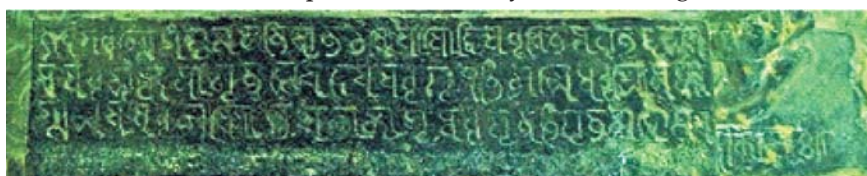


Fig. 4.a: Close up of the inscription on the pedestal of
Photos www.brooklynmuseum.org.

3. Bhattacharya: 2000: 253-6/ pls. 22. 3 & 6; 2008a: 73- 5/ pls. 6.2a & 6.2b, probably from Rajshahi. Most probably from Rangpur, Bangladesh, Linden Museum (Inv. Nr. SA 38226L).	Early 11th century, Metal. inscribed.	A 2-armed deity, a snake canopy with 9 hoods, seated on a large lotus, wears a sacred thread, round eyes and fangs.	Holds a stalk most probably a <i>parṇavalli</i> , a snake-hooded child wearing a sacred thread on lap, no pitcher/ <i>ghaṭa</i> on the pedestal, elephant as <i>vāhana</i> .	Seated figures of Gaṇeśa (right) and Vāyu (left) on two sides of the snake hood above, a snake hooded- nimbate- wearing sacred thread and standing nāgī on lotus at each side of the deity.
4. Bhattacharya 2000: 252-3/ pl. 22.2; Rahman 1998: 318/ pl. 299, ²⁴ Chowbāria, Durgāpur, Rajshahi district, Bangladesh, Varendra Research Museum (no. 3310).	c.11th century, Stone.	A 4-armed deity, a <i>kīrtimukha</i> on the top and a couple of Vidyādharas on two sides, a snake canopy of 5- hoods, seated on a large lotus, no sacred thread, a third eye.	<i>Parṇavalli</i> with leaves in each of back hand, fruit and a crowned child on lap, no pitcher/ <i>ghaṭa</i> or <i>vāhana</i> on the pedestal but two nāgas at two sides uphold the lotus seat.	Standing Vāyu ²⁵ with bend at knees and putting right foot on deer on left and dancing Gaṇeśa on rat on right of the deity, a 4- armed Maḥiṣāsura- mardīni on right and Kārttikeya on peacock on left of the snake- hood above.
5. Bhattacharya 2000: 257/ pl. 22.7, ²⁶ Rajshahi, Bangladesh, Indian Museum (9212/ A24357).	c. 12th century, Brass inlaid with silver.	A 2-armed deity, a snake canopy of 7- hoods, seated on a large lotus, no sacred thread, a	<i>Parṇavalli</i> with leaves in right hand, a child on lap crowned- snake hooded and wearing a sacred thread, no pitcher/	The surrounding halo is missing and so attending figures are not present.

		third eye, round eyes, hanging leg perhaps on a lotus (missing).	<i>ghaṭa</i> on pedestal, no <i>vāhana</i> .	
6. Rahman 1998: 311-2/ pl. 290, Pānduā, ²⁷ Malda, West Bengal, Varendra Research Museum (no. 118).	c. 11th century, Bronze.	A 2-armed deity, a snake canopy of 7-hoods, seated on a large lotus, hanging leg on a snake.	Betel leaf on either side, a child on lap, holds a snake in left hand, no pitcher/ <i>ghaṭa</i> , no <i>vāhana</i> .	No attending figures.
7. Bhattacharya 2000: 255/ pl. 22.5, Bamangolā, Malda district, West Bengal, Malda Museum (no. RMN-1).	c. 12th century, Stone, damaged, Inscribed. ²⁸ Figs. 3. and 3.a.	A 4-armed deity, a <i>kīrtimukha</i> (scraped away) on the top and two Vidyādhara on two sides below, a snake canopy of 9-hoods, seated on a large lotus, no sacred thread, wearing a blouse below the <i>uttariya</i> , hanging leg on a lotus.	<i>Parṇavalli</i> with leaves in hands (left one scraped away), a child without crown-snake hood and sacred thread on lap, no pitcher/ <i>ghaṭa</i> on pedestal, elephant as <i>vāhana</i> .	A seated figure holding a sword on the right of the deity seated on a lotus, bedecked with jewellery, having a crown on head. He may also be Revanta but in a different form or Kārttikeya.
8. Bhattacharya 2000: 216-7/ pl. 19.2, probably from Kurkihār,	c. early 8th century, Bronze,	A 2-armed deity, a snake canopy of 5-hoods, seated on a cushion, no	<i>Parṇavalli</i> seems to be depicted on two sides of upper throne, snake hooded child holding	No attending figures.

Gaya district, Bihar, British Museum (no. 1969, 1-15.1)		sacred thread.	another snake hooded small child, no <i>vāhana</i> .	
9. Either from Bihar or North Bengal, Brooklyn Museum (ACC. no. 71.167.2), New York. ²⁹	c. 11th century, blackstone, inscribed. ³⁰ Figs. 4. and 4.a.	A 2-armed deity, an umbrella on the top, a snake canopy of 7-hoods, two snake-gandharvas on lotus on its two sides, seated on a large lotus, counts the beads (<i>japyamānā</i> as is prescribed in the PLS), sacred thread, round eyes, ³¹ hanging leg on a lotus.	A long <i>parṇavalli</i> with leaves on the right side and a shorter one with leaves in right hand, a child with a tiara like crown (no snake hood-no sacred thread but feet on lotus) on lap, a pitcher/ <i>ghaṭa</i> on pedestal, hanging leg on a lotus.	No attending figure, a couple of therio-anthropomorphic <i>nāga</i> and <i>nāgī</i> with folded hands and on lotus sprouted out from the <i>ghaṭa</i> , a male and a female devotee/donor also with folded hands and seated on lotus.

to the early eighth century. Four of them have a figure of Vāyu (the lord of north-west direction)³³, and one of them show Revanta and even one shows the goddess with *akṣamālā*. Eight of them do not represent pot or *ghaṭa* on the recess of the pedestal (which shows a pot in almost all the snake-goddess images when the deity is two-armed), two have elephant beside the hanging foot of the deity. What is noteworthy is the fact that none of them show seated and emaciated Jaratkāru (as husband of the deity) and Vāsukī (the Nāga king and Manasā's brother) on two sides of the deity. But all the imageries show the presence of several therio-anthropomorphic or natural snakes. The absence of Jaratkāru and Vāsukī indicates a different

background from that known as Manasā for this class of images. This typical form perhaps uniformly known as Svāṅgā or Svaṅghā or by other variants, therefore, is strongly associated with the tradition of Śiva and his family which worked in her favour for a more prestigious place in Brāhmanical pantheon. Snake also has an important place in the iconography of this god. Besides, the presence of Vāyu in four images and Revanta at least in one image suggests some other stories in connection with the goddess Svāṅgā. All these made a contrast with the snake goddess Manasā the name of which has not been found on any image inscription although iconographically the figure of Manasā and Svāṅgā, without the child and other attending figures as well as the associated elements on the stele, is almost similar. One more important feature of these images is the fact that several of the Svāṅgā images bear inscription, on the contrary, those of Manasā although numerically are far larger have inscriptions only on a negligible number from North Bengal that too does not record the appellation of the goddess in any. Here two images with inscription are reproduced (Figs. 5, 5.a and Figs. 6, 6.a). The image (Fig. 5.a) in black stone is preserved in the Akshaya Kumar Maitreya Heritage Museum (Acc. no. 23), in the University of North Bengal, Darjeeling. It is from Bad Bandalahar, Beyatta (not known where these places are) in Uttar Dinajpur. The height is 60 cm. and it belongs to the 12th century. The script is Gaudī and language Sanskrit. The Text reads: *om om śrī varikaḥ* — Hail! [the image is a gift of] the illustrious Varika (Fig. 5.a). The dedicator of this image is Varika. It may be that as a head of a *vāraka-maṇḍala* he was called Varika. If the second proposition is correct then we should say that this unnamed snake goddess also found devotees from prominent families. The image shows some differences from the group of snake goddess holding snake in the left hand. The figure on the right is not fashioned in the usual sitting posture of Jaratkāru with the *yogapaṭṭa* bound legs and he has a turban like hair-do which we see on the heads of the Śaiva Saiddhāntika *ācāryas* and the ascetics beside Brahmā. He shows an *abhaya*-mudrā in the right hand (damaged). He may be Kaśyapa. On the left, the

seated figure holds a *śakti* and so he seems to be Kārttikeya. Both Jaratkāru and Vāsukī are absent in this image.³⁴ The second image (Fig. 6) belonging to the 12th century is an unpublished sculpture showing the lower part of a snake goddess. It is found in the village Nischinta, Tapan block of Dakshin Dinajpur. Nischinta yielded a good number of images which are preserved in the VRM, Bangladesh. The Script used in it is Gauḍī, language: erroneous Sanskrit. It reads: L.1. *siddham* (symbol) *kadaṇīya x x x* L.2. *jāiko x x ḥ x mo x ḥ //* a meaningless text (Fig. 6.a).

Regarding the nomenclature Manasā we get a number of suggestions and good discussions from several scholars. In this regard we may mention that the views of E. Haque regarding the origin and development of the deity Manasā (Haque 1992: 286-94) is an attempt to negate very strongly those of P.K. Maity (1966). The appellation and the description of this goddess are not available in the main Purāṇas or other previous texts. So N.K. Bhattasali tried to reconstruct an iconography taking into account traditions, myths, ballads, archaeological objects, images and texts of different times and ultimately found a plausible link of the name in Mañcā, a snake goddess worshipped by the Telegu-Kannadas agreeing with the suggestion of K.M Sen (1929: 212-27). But the same PLS in the same chapter six first mentions Manasā and describes her attributes and iconographical features before doing the same for Svāṅgādevī.

Saptabhogāsītā saumyā dvibhujā sarpadhāriṇī |

Hāraṅḍalakeyūraiḥ sadābhara[sarvābharāṇa] ṇabhūṣītā | | 6. 295 ||

Haṭapadmopaviṣṭā vā varado dhyānatatparā |

Īdṛśī manasā kāryā śrikaṇṭhamanasambhavā || 6. 296 ||

The description requires Manasā to be two-armed under a snake canopy of seven-hoods, wearing all jewellerys, seated on *yoga* (*haṭa*) lotus or in *varada* contemplative attitude. Such is a form of Manasā who was originated in the mind of Śrikaṇṭha (Śiva).

The Kaśyapa tradition regarding her birth is ignored here. It is also important that in majority of the images of snake goddess she is not shown in *varada* contemplative attitude. But a few exceptions are available.³⁵

After this it provides a *dhyāna* of Jaratkāru too (6.297) but does not speak about the relation of this ascetic with Manasā. Next it throws light on Manasā-*parivāra* or family of Manasā in which it states about a figure in the form of a child, red coloured with a snake hood and bedecked with jewellery and holding *padma* (lotus) as a *maṇi* or jewel.

Phaṇaikacāruraktāṅgā dvibhujāḥ śísurūpiṇaḥ |

Nānālaṅkārasamīyuktāoutpalamaṇi bhṛtkarau || 6. 298 ||

Significantly, it is not told that the child will be seated on the lap of Manasā. Similarly, Jaratkāru as her husband has not been told to be associated on her visual portrayals. What may be gathered from these *dhyānas* is that the PLS shows that a process had been active for ascertaining a standardised form of Manasā from several extant aspects apparently with missing links but it remained unfulfilled. N.K. Bhattasali painstakingly collected characteristic features and iconographical elements of Manasā from materials belonging to varied cultural and chronological range as well as prevalent *dhyānas*. After almost hundred years, several new pieces of information are now available but still many of his remarks regarding Manasā show the soundness of observation and judgement. We do not need to delve into the details of his discussion but for this essay it is important to note that the Mahāyāna Buddhist goddess Jāṅgulī (lived in jungle or forested area) as well as Vedic goddess Sarasvatī not only share an attribute (playing lyre) but also linked with wilderness where peoples such as Śavaras and Kirātas lived and both are endowed with the supernatural capacity of curing from snake bite (pp. 221-4). The last two aspects show that goddesses later came to be known as Manasā and Svāṅgā had been originated in wooded lands. Bhattasali finds the Senas as the possible factor for the popularity of this goddess in Bengal. But her popularity seems to have owed to a different dynamic process in which the former story of her origin from Kaśyapa was pushed out and Śiva was pulled in. It requires further study to settle the issue.

Previously the name of the deity might have been different. A particular but small group was known as Svāṅgā in which also the

attributes of Sarasvatī and Śiva are noticeable as far as her special relation with snakes as well as her attribute of *akṣamālā* are concerned. *Parṇavalli* seems to have associated with her originally. It is significant that its alternative name is *nāgavalli* and as *nāga* stands for snake it seems to have been the reason that betel creeper became her attribute or an important iconographic feature. But as *nāga* meant elephant too in some images she is portrayed with an elephant mount. It seems that the depiction depended on how the dedicator of a particular place perceived the associating elements of the deity Svāṅgā. The goddess is seen as having fangs in a particular image (no. 3, in Table) from North Bengal. It definitely connects her with wilderness but for it we do not have any textual reference or mythical link.

Combination of attributes and characteristic features in some chief cult figures and their evolution through times and spaces had been an important aspect in the Brāhmaṇical religious history. What is new in the present case is that a cult of snake goddess with different names and varied iconographical elements had a very strong presence with all pomp and grandeur in North Bengal, which is evident from the large number of images from this area itself, but her anthropomorphic form visible in the image sculptures has not survived in any section of society. With it had lost a formidable link which this goddess had with some prominent tribes such as Samasta-Mahisā-Varga. Even the Mahisā people gradually inclined to superior gods and goddesses. This is evident from the example of one of its members, Dhārai, who installed an image of Viṣṇu as Śrī-Dhārai-Mādhava, with a wish that the god would be known by his personal name. This demonstrates a more assertive position of the dedicator and the Mahisā-Varga he belonged. The Muslim penetration brought a change in the mode of worship in Bengal. Many of the stone sculptures in open public spaces of worship were thrown in the water bodies, several of the home images were buried underground or shifted to a safe place by the terrified devotees. The people of Bengal again returned to the clay mode for making images. The idols were immersed after the rites were complete. It was comparatively less risky. A

transformation of immense dimension took place silently across centuries during which several gods and goddesses including Svāṅgā got lost from the popular mind as people could not continue with the way of adoring a vast number of deities. Only the main cult figures survived but in limited forms. A process of selection set to work instinctively. Of the two snake goddesses Manasā and Svāṅgā the latter was removed from the pantheon and the former lost its anthropomorphic form. She started to be represented by a *ghaṭa* which seems to have been the original element to worship Manasā. In reality, worshipping a *ghaṭa* had never been in abeyance even when she had been worshipped in anthropomorphic forms on stone sculptures. We may remember Bhattasali's information regarding the discovery of pots and utensils with figures of snakes from excavations at Rajarampur and Deopara in Bangladesh (Bhattasali 1929 : 225). A plaque showing a *ghaṭa* and snakes is found in the stone and metal image sculptures of snake goddess Manasā and a few examples of Svāṅgā. I discovered a plaque showing a *ghaṭa* in the Bangarh locality within Gangarampur block of Dakshin Dinajpur district (Fig. 7).

Puṇḍravardhana by which North Bengal was denoted during the period concerned and which from the tenth century got another name, Varendra, had a natural link with the Magadhan culture, economy and polity. The penetration of main ideas from the Middle Gangetic Valley had been reshaping its social and cultural norms. The society that emerged from such interactions has been described in the early historiography on ancient Bengal as Aryanised (e.g. Bandyopadhyay BS 1324: 2nd chapter). This implies a gradual process of integration of the land and inhabiting peoples/communities into Brāhmaṇical system. The picture built up in early writings on Bengal/eastern India in broad lines although based on authentic sources cannot clearly identify the ways through which the non-Aryan peoples were Aryanised. Early medieval historiography of India has achieved a noticeable shift in methodology and approach after Bandyopadhyaya and his near contemporary scholars but still it remained mostly as a theoretical proposition. The reason is that the sources they use, land



Fig. 5: Manasā, Akshaya Kumar Maitreya Heritage Museum (Acc. no. 23), courtesy of the University of North Bengal, Darjeeling. Photo Author.



Fig. 5.a: Close up of the inscription on the pedestal of 5, courtesy of the University of North Bengal, Darjeeling. Photo Author.



Fig. 6: Manasā, Nischinta, Tapan block, Dakshin Dinajpur. Photo Author.



Fig. 6.a: Close up of the inscription on 6. Photo Author.



Fig. 7: *Ghaṭa*/ pot. Courtesy of Rajibpur Christian Mission Girls' School, Gangarampur, Dakshin Dinajpur. Photo Author.

grants as the most valuable ones of all, involved mainly the higher echelon of the society, which has already been an integral part of the Brāhmaṇical society.

Image sculptures are the visual demonstrators of several elements: gods, semi-gods, plants, animals, mythical figures. In this backdrop the pedestal, the lowermost section of it is the only space where humans had a small presence by the way of depicted form and sometimes in written materials. These are mostly those humans who constituted the people, the real maker of history. But the images unfortunately not directly illuminate us about the material life and so might have escaped the notice of those practitioners in historiography who are guided by the norm that "... society is characterized by what

it regards as necessary; who gathers or produces the things, by what implements; who lives off the production of others, and by what right, divine or legal — cults and laws are social by products; ...” (Kosambi 1975 : *xiii*). So, the dedicators, many of whom mentioned the personal names only, who should have been regarded as an important constituent part of historiography but because of their acts of munificence were denied that space. The act of munificence remained as an important part of religious life for centuries. It had impacted social organisation deeply, which under the theologians, underwent several phases of change to be felt enormously in its caste structure, the chief characteristic feature of Indian society, in the main. Devices were brought to accommodate new people; at one time through the theory of ‘mixed caste’ and at other *sat-asat* distinction or something else in case of Bengal. The older societies which retained some features of their old elements in the Brāhmaṇised society paved the way for a more hierarchised society which brought in increasingly more conflicts of feelings in relation with social positions in different communities, forcing reorientation of caste positions as we move past the early medieval towards the medieval Bengal. The image inscriptions and the visual imageries also show that the people who integrated lately were likely to receive lesser position in society, their struggle to ensure elevation in social rank continued throughout the late medieval period and even in the twentieth century.

Notes

- ¹ It denotes the northern part of undivided Bengal (present West Bengal of India and Bangladesh). It was known as Puṇḍravardhana, the first clear mention of which is found in the Gupta times epigraphs with a suffix *bhukti*. Roughly, the same area from the tenth century onward started to be mentioned as Varendra.
- ² I came across about one hundred and thirty readable published and unpublished image inscriptions so far from this area. All these are read now. A good number of image inscriptions could not be retrieved because of the damage. Several ones are in good conditions but the texts are meaningless.
- ³ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India : Introduction of the first edition*, Oxford University Press, 2012.
- ⁴ The dedicator of the Mahiṣāsura-mardini image mentioned himself as *rājaputra*. It is discovered at Gangarampur, Dakshin Dinajpur district of West Bengal.



Map is edited by the author.

⁵ Buddhist propagators had less influence among the forested areas.

⁶ Only a small number of donors are found who did not give the details.

⁷ In one example of keeping a piece of land separately for the maintenance and worship of a personal god is found in the above mentioned Silimpur plate of Prahāsa. The Bangarh Mūrtiśiva Praśasti also states about the making of temples, etc. by Mūrtiśiva, a Saiddhāntika Śaivācārya of Durvāsā lineage.

⁸ The main ones of them are: the family tree of the ruling king, ancestry of the dedicator and what the dedicator is; the place the dedicator resides in and, his family previously belonged; the name of the engraver; the place he

resides and sometimes his family tree up to third or fourth generation; and, the name of the messenger/executor.

⁹ E.g. *rājñī-śrī-gīta lalitā*, is the text of an inscription which means ‘the image of Lalitā dedicated by the queen Gīta. It is found on an image of Lalitā now in VRM (no.691). The dedicator did use the definiens *rājñī* but not give the information about her parents, husband, the place she belonged or ruled, the date, etc.

¹⁰ I found five clay lumps were made to worship Manasādevī in a Rajbanshi household in Dakshin Dinajpur district.

¹¹ One may see the essay of Sayantani Pal published in 2019: 502-17 for the claim of the Māhiṣyas of Bengal.

¹² Mahiṣa surname is not a unique legacy, there are other surnames like Hāti or elephant, Ghorā or horse, etc. which are still present in Bengal.

¹³ Pāla chronology is still in a fluid state, so the time-frame is tentative.

¹⁴ J.A. Vas’s observation might be cited here. “The Tista is noted for frequent and violent changes in its course; and many old channels are found known as Chhota Tista, Būri Tista, and Mara Tista, each of which at one time must have formed the main channel of the river, but which are now deserted, ... At the time of Major Rennell’s survey, the main stream of the Tista flowed south instead of south-east as at present, joined the Atrai river in Dinajpur, and finally fell into the Padma or Ganges. In the destructive floods of 1194 B.S., or 1787 A.D., which formed an epoch in the history of Northern and Central Bengal, the stream suddenly forsook its course and, forcing its way ..., opened out a new channel to the south-east into the Brahmaputra” (Vas 1911: 5).

¹⁵ The unitary course has been highlighted in several researches which have been consulted by this author (forthcoming).

¹⁶ For example, from two different places of Gauhati we get the Svalpadyuti Kaivartas (L. 47, Sarma 2003: 98), and Avañci-Kaivartas (L. 51, Sarma 2003: 138).

¹⁷ One may see the article of S. Ghosh for individuals with end name *nauki*, a group of weavers *tantras* prefixed with *orāṅgi* and a name with *hādi* as the end name (1919: 171 and 181).

¹⁸ The Pāla chronology has not been satisfactorily prepared after a new king Mahendrapāla came to be known as the son and successor of Devapāla. Tentatively Mahipāla I who ruled for fifty years might have ascended the throne in the end of the ninth decade of the tenth century. His ruling period might have ended accordingly in the end of the fourth decade of the eleventh century.

¹⁹ One more image in bronze in the British Museum (no. 1936, 2-11, 1) has been discussed and published by G. Bhattacharya in which the deity is not represented with a child on lap but bear several similar features (2000: 217-8/pl. 19.3).

²⁰ Published previously by Pal 1974: fig 4.

- ²¹ In his 1987 article G. Bhattacharya did not identify the figure as Vāyu but in his 1990 he clearly did.
- ²² Also published in Sanyal 1930: 30/fig. 2 (Rangpur Sahitya Parishad Collection); Banerji 1981: 122/ pl. LXIV(a) and Maity 1966: 208/ pl. 4; Alam 1985: 218-9/fig. 104; Bhattacharya 2008a: 71-6/ pl.6.1, 6.1b.
- ²³ Previously in Rangpur Sahitya Parishad.
- ²⁴ Also mentioned in Sanyal 1930: 30 and Rahman 1979: 132/pl. III.1.
- ²⁵ I observed photographs and Vāyu does not seem to have been seated as told by G. Bhattacharya. A look on the original image may help in discerning the position.
- ²⁶ The plate number should have been 22.6 as a natural sequence after 22.5 the image is published in Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India 1934-5: pl. XXXI-b; Maity 1966: p.1.7; Haque 1975: pl. XLVI/ fig. 3 and 1992: pl. 234.
- ²⁷ Haque 1975: 143.
- ²⁸ *Pacāpalo-deva śevēddevī*, the dedicator is Pacāpalodeva, the meaning of the expression *śevēddevī* is not clear.
G. Bhattacharya read it as: *vacayālā-deva śeve* ///
He left the last two letters (2000: 260/ fn. 42).
- ²⁹ It was a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Morse with no specification about find-spot. The size is 53.3 cm x 27.9 cm., the date is assigned as 12th century. Photo Source: www.brooklynmuseum.org. G. Bhattacharya gave a brief description (2000: 258/ fn.14) of this image.
- ³⁰ The three-lined inscription (4) remained to be read satisfactorily. It starts with *Siddham* symbol and followed by *deya dhammo=yam mṛma x ti-suta ...* In the next line I could read Harihara. Several Brāhmaṇical images inscriptions in Bihar and North Bengal are found with the expression *deya dhammo=yam* meaning 'the meritorious gift'. The gift was made by a son *suta* whose father's name in *mṛma x ti* could not be restored.
- ³¹ She does not have a third eye on forehead as stated by G. Bhattacharya (2000: 258/ fn.14).
- ³² Although the deity does not have betel creeper in her hands in all the images but sometimes it is depicted in close proximity of the deity's figure.
- ³³ G. Bhattacharya has stated a probable reason for the presence of Vāyu in these images (2000: 253/fn., 26).
- ³⁴ It is published in a catalogue (Bhattacharyya 2005: 15/no. 23) and in an essay (Ghosh 2015: 48/figs. 20A & 20B). The latter published the reading and photograph of the inscription also.
- ³⁵ See for example, the image in the VRM, no. 800 belonging to the 11th century and originally from a place in the district of Bogra, Bangladesh. The deity is four-armed seated in *vaddhapadmāsana* holding an *akṣamāla* keeping her palm open on viewer's side and a manuscript respectively in two main hands. References: Annual Report of Varendra Research Museum 1929 9: 16/ fig. 3; Majumdar 1943: 460/ pl. LXVII.161; Maity 1966: 260-1/ pl.3; Haque 1975: 144/ pl. XLVI.4 and 1992: 295/ pl. 235; Rahman 1998: 316/ pl. 298; Bhattacharya 2008: 165-6/ pl. 403.

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Mapping the Contour of Virtue Ethics

Debashis Guha

Introduction

Celebrated film director Aparna Sen's acclaimed and award-winning film *Parama* was released in September 1985. The central character Parama is an upper middle-class Bengali housewife, a gorgeous person of talents, has lost her identity in living a stereotyped life as wife, daughter-in-law, aunt and so on. Things changed with the arrival of an expatriate family friend Rahul who was working on a photo-essay: "An Indian housewife". Parama was pursued to play the protagonist, which she did with élan. She discovered her talents through this man who was much younger than her - an aberration of love was the outcome. Twist of the film is that Rahul, without Parama's consent displayed a few semi-nude photographs. Rest was turmoil in Parama's life - she was banished by the family. Through many twists and turns she was forgiven by the family to join them again. But Parama had another idea. She tried for a job with the help of her friend and left the family. The story opens a can of worms much involving for the virtue ethicists - what virtues should Parama have as a married woman? Was she judicious in not following standard ideals of married life? Questions like these are of great importance to the virtue ethicists.

Section I: Virtues, Virtue Theory and Virtue Ethics

Philosophers are keen at conceptual clarification because it paves the way for better understanding of ideas and theories. It is desirable that we have a clear idea about what 'virtue' is, before intriguing discussions about virtue theory and virtue ethics. In order to have a clear idea of the concept 'virtue', we need to have a clear idea about

'value'. A trite assertion is: 'all virtues are values but all values are not virtues' - clarification of this assertion is important. The word 'value' is derived from the old French *valoir* and Latin *valere*, connoting 'worth', 'moral worth' or simply good. The word 'virtue' is derived from *virtus*, the Latin root being *vir* (human being), meaning thereby 'human worthwhileness' such as courage. Vices are unworthy things or simply, bad or evil or human unworthiness. A vice is a disvalue not valuelessness. We may conceive of a number of valuable things or things of worth, namely material value or value of self-sustenance (of plants and trees); though these are not human virtues. However, it is not odd to speak of 'courageous' dogs and 'sharp' tooth and knives. Yet, these adjectives do not convey the sense of human worth or moral worth. Human virtues refer to dispositions or traits of character, and it is out of way to use 'courageous' with dogs meaning they have a character disposition - dogs are not characterless but they do not have the characteristics of 'character', which humans do have. This is sufficient to understand what a sharp boy and an honest man means than sharp tooth and honest horse to his master.

Character is not a queer substance, we mean by it something in humans that reflect their inner intentions, that is an inner motive of action that carries with it the conceptions of choice of end (or goal) and means of action along with behavioural correlative. Traits or dispositions of character are not genetic or hereditary; they are those acquired properties by virtue of freedom of will and well-intended actions, amenable to evaluation for moral worth. Morally worthwhile actions therefore inculcate character traits or virtues as part and parcel of our being. Normative ethics presuppose the need for standards such as teleology and deontology to evaluate the moral value of our intentional actions and character. The reason for need of norms or standards is that evaluation of our actions and character amounts to 'distinctions making'. For example, we make a clear distinction between good and bad actions, right and wrong actions, virtuous and vicious character and so on, which demands a definite and logically justifiable moral ground or the norm or standard of evaluation. Hence

bereft of norms of ethics, there is hardly any moral judgment of actions and character.

Moral theories like utilitarianism, egoism and hedonism uphold those ideals of morality that give great importance to value of consequences of our actions. The consequence may be maximisation of good produced over evil in the world (utilitarianism) or good produced in fulfilment of or satisfaction of ego (egoism) or hedonic satisfaction of ego (egoistic hedonism). When we carry on threadbare philosophical critique of these moral theories, we are involved in philosophical morality or ethics. In ethics, critique of moral theories or standards of evaluation of moral worth of our intentional actions, is the first order inquiry. On the other hand, the orthodox virtue ethicist holds that being virtuous or having virtuous character is more important than begging moral standards for valuing our actions and character. The basic presupposition is that in being virtuous most needed traits of character are inculcated and for that we must of necessity act virtuously.

However, virtue theory and virtue ethics should be further distinguished because the former propose theories about nature, justification, kind and hierarchies of human virtues or traits of character, whereas the latter is philosophical critique of these theories. For instance, Aristotle proposed eudemonist virtue theory, the philosophical critique of which is under virtue ethics. Another interesting point is that it is the task of virtue ethics to consider the problem of need for virtuosity than norm-following in ethical journey of life. A critique of norm-following and stiff disagreement on such critique has been an important feature of contemporary virtue ethics.

Another important issue for virtue ethicists is: Do we have to consider a set of sacrosanct virtues for judging virtuosity or virtuosity has to be considered contextually/socio-historically (namely, social, political, economic, historical, locale, and cultural factors)? Do we not conceive of Parama to be truthful, honest, obligatory, honouring, respectful, dignified, having integrity and respectful of marriage covenant? Or, do we say that these general virtues need to be socio-historically/contextually valued. There are no sacrosanct general

values for Parama(s) because she/they need to be valued for character fidelity in typical, socio-historic contextual setting. Parama(s) thus need to be valued in say 1830s rural Bengali middle class family in a typical locale or in 1930s urban Bengali setting or 1985 setting in Aparna's film or 2019's typical setting in say, Kolkata slum, or a remote village in Dooars. Parama(s) need not be valued for her / their character on the basis of timeless sacrosanct virtues. These and the former problem of either norm-following or being virtuous are well debated in virtue ethics.

We may say that virtue theories provide historiographic account of human virtuous or vicious character whereas virtue ethics is philosophical critique of these theories. It has also to be noted that such discussions are different in Indian virtue-theory literature. Thus, virtue theoretical discussions are significant for distinctive approaches about history of virtue theories, and nature, kinds, and hierarchies of virtue. George Pence observes: "It is impossible to understand modern virtue theory without some understanding of the history of ethics".¹ In the recent virtue ethical literature belligerence between following ethical ideals in life and being virtuous has been significant.² We shall consider this contest shortly.

Virtue theories may be traced historically in the Western and Indian ethical literature. These theories vary greatly owing to socio-cultural settings, situatedness of a moral agent and typical nature of a case in consideration. Greek theory of virtue is distinctive of elaborate discussion on *arêtê* or human excellence. Nevertheless, discussion of *arêtê* in Homer is different from Plato and Aristotle. For Homer, *arêtê* (virtue) is all worthwhile things or excellences that humans possess. In this sense character and personality traits are all virtues, such as, physical strength, diligence, and honesty. However, later Greeks did not adhere to this idea because a man of excellent personality might have bad character. Interestingly, Homer does not make any rich-poor divide in aretaic dispositions, which is peculiar to Aristotle. He speaks of magnanimity as a virtue of the rich, not poor. MacIntyre explains that "Homer's list of virtues differs only from our own; It also differ from Aristotle's." But of course it is not that Homer's list of virtues

differs only from our own; it also notably differs from Aristotle's. Indeed according to Aristotle certain virtues are only available to those of great riches and of high social status; these are virtues which are unavailable to the poor man, even if he is a free man".³ Yet, in *Mahābhārata*, helpless Draupadi offers a piece of meal to Durbāsa and Karna gives away his lifeguard (*rakṣākavaca*) to be considered as persons of magnanimity. Or, for a change, Parama gives up her talent, youth and aspirations to be an ideal housewife to live magnanimously. Furthermore, Aristotle contests both Homer and Plato on hereditary virtues because virtues for him were inner traits acquired through moral actions without a holiday. Plato's Philosopher King possesses the virtue of knowing the Form of Good or the Idea of Good and thus the knowledge of the Form of Justice, enabling them to rule and do justice. This is a repugnant idea for Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* because human beings are capable of being virtuous by doing good action and not by mere contemplation of the Good. However, both Plato and Aristotle agree on four cardinal virtues, namely, wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice in *Republic* and *Nicomachean Ethics* respectively.⁴ There are minor disagreements on wisdom, courage, and temperance but regarding 'justice' Aristotle differ greatly from Plato. Even with regard to definition of 'justice' there is stiff disagreement. For Plato, justice is logically indefinable though Aristotle defines it as 'a mean state of mind'. However, both Plato and Aristotle agree that virtue or araitic dispositions are character traits, not personality traits. Such Greek influence has been wide and deep in Western virtue theories. Radical change is noticed with the advent of Christianity.

Aristotle's virtue theory is known popularly as theory of 'golden mean' and commended for giving us a relativistic-contextualist account of virtues. Aristotle has explained fourteen major human virtues clubbed under moral and intellectual virtues. In his seminal work *Nicomachean Ethics*, he holds that virtuosity is required for a 'flourishing' life - an idea expressed in eudemonia, a Greek term meaning 'being well', 'well-being', 'welfare', 'perfection' (loosely taken as happiness). Eudemonia, the telos of moral life is the highest good (not the only good) that conveys the idea of realisation of our essential

capacities. Aristotle thus conceives of goods for man, a pluralist account of telos (intrinsically valuable ends), the highest being eudemonia. A virtue for Aristotle is a trait of character that contributes to 'flourish' or 'being well'. Nevertheless, Aristotle thinks that there are a number of extrinsically valuable goods or means such as wealth and honour which are needed to flourish though it is a matter of moral luck that we have these goods as well.

Most importantly, Aristotle inquires: how do we progress to this state of highest good? In answering, he refers to functions of rational (intellectual) part of human soul, which is not different from the psycho-physical soul. At this place Aristotle stresses on rational life to live a virtuous life, a clear impact of Socrates and Plato on him. Activities of man initiated by rationality and perfected by virtue or excellence of character are amenable to highest good. Such activities are to be performed without a moral holiday. For example, a flautist is the one who plays flute well, a life-long-activity perfected by virtue enables her to flourish, and in doing good, she becomes virtuous. Furthermore, he says that virtuous actions that perfect our being is 'mean in relation to us', that is, moral choice between the extremes, excess and defect in varying contexts in which a moral agent finds oneself. Here, 'in relation to us' is not choice of arithmetic mean but geometric in nature. For example, Parama (post-banishment) among all odds was thrown in the midst of choosing an excess, that is revengefulness (or bashfulness) and defect, that is, cowardice, though the moral choice for her is the courageously chosen path of socio-economic liberation and self-dependence to re-enliven her subdued potentials. However, choices vary from person to person and from context to context. In this sense Aristotle explained the basic virtues of liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, ambition, wittiness, friendship, modesty, righteous indignation and many more. Remarkably, with the advent of Christianity, particularly influenced by *The New Testament*, the Greek cardinal virtues were replaced by faith, hope and agapistic love - this may be seen as transformation of a secular account of cardinal virtues to supernatural account of the same. The Christian influence on this matter is well

noticed in the account of human nature in Butler, and virtue theories of Hutcheson, and Shaftsbury.⁵

A brief account of Indian virtue ethics that recognises the Aristotelian truth that in being well you need to do well is appropriate at this point. Indian ethics elaborates on *sadguṇa* and *durguṇa* or *sadvṛtti* and *asadvṛtti* under the discussion of *dharma*, particularly *sāmānya-dharma* and *āpad-dharma*. The word *dharma* has various connotations like, duty, sacrificial duty (*yajña*), intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) and practiced religions. *Dharma* as intrinsic nature and duty is of greater interest here. Duties in accordance with one's *svabhāva* may be *sāttvika*, *rājasika*, and *tāmasika*, that is - pure or good, passionate and dull or unworthy, respectively. *Dharma* in this sense is performance of one's duty in accordance with predominant dispositions or tendencies. In another sense, *dharma* as virtue is infatuationless (*anāsakta*) performance of one's duties in accordance with one's inner dispositions and stages of life. Duties are ethically performed, as said just now, in accordance with one's *varṇa* (loosely taken as caste), that is, in accordance with our social position, not by birth but by virtue of our dispositions. Furthermore, we have duties in accordance with our *āśrama* or stages of life, namely, *brahmacarya* (discipleship for knowledge), *gārhasthya* (family life), *vānaprastha* (renunciation from worldly bondages), and *sannyāsa* (to have self-realisation; the knowledge of Oneness and equanimous vision). Indian virtue ethicists are of the opinion that performance of *varṇāśramadharmas* on the one hand stresses on the virtue of intrinsic value of duty itself (*kartavya*), and on the other hand, values *abhyudaya* or well-being of humans and non-human beings and things. Hence, virtuosity is not antagonistic to either deontological or consequential ideals of life. On the one hand, it urges to keep off desired consequences while performing duties, because those are both binding on our nature and prohibited by the sacred texts (*vikarma*). In an important way Indian ethics of virtue keeps in mind relativity of duties performed by men, situatedness of agents and what ought and ought not to be done. Virtue of performing one's *varṇa* and *āśrama* duties apart, we have some universal duties or *sāmānya dharmas* elaborated in details with

minor variations by Manu and Praśastapāda.⁶ There are lists of such universal duties with a view on their hierarchy as well — honesty, dutifulness, truthfulness, promise keeping, benevolence, sensual purity, scholarship, patients, telling truth in a dignified way and many more.

Coming to *āpad-dharma* or duties to be performed in acute urgency or crisis, we get an excellent idea of virtue, namely flexibility of virtues, such as, using placebos by Doctors. In case of a serious heart patient who has just survived and is in constant need for sedatives, the doctor pacifies by injecting distilled water. This is plain unethicity in normal situation but in '*āpātakāla*' (dire states of urgency) it is a great professional virtue. What interests us most at this place is that the virtue theories most cursorily stated here are not congruous. They are discreet. Hence, to find a unifying or general feature, is the key contention in virtue ethics.

Section II. Ethical or Moral Philosophical reflection on Virtue theories

Almost all-important accounts of virtue ethics open with something like: 'And then Anscombe writes... 'We know that virtue ethics apart from other interests centrally places query about the general features of virtue theories so that a critical inquiry and better understanding of this issue is possible. In 1958, G. E. M. Anscombe published a paper: "Modern Moral Philosophy" in *Philosophy* to take Aristotelian revival seriously, that is, a renewed interest in being virtuous than following rules. Anscombe famously argued in favour of centrality of virtues in ethical life along with Philippa Foot, Bernard Williams and Alasdair MacIntyre.⁷ These thinkers contributed immensely to the growth of virtue ethics in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Anscombe's main argument is that, the normative conceptions of moral ought, duty and obligation have failed us today because the monistic-absolutist conceptions of morality have truncated growth of moral being. It is therefore important to inculcate virtues and be virtuous human beings. This is not our duty or desire or utility but an intrinsically valuable end of moral life. MacIntyre has also championed shared achievement in the revival of Aristotelian call for 'being virtuous' than moral agents' islander ethos. He says, "The best type

of human life, that in which the tradition of the virtues is most adequately embodied, is lived by those engaged in constructing and sustaining forms of community directed towards the shared achievement of those common goods without which the ultimate good cannot be achieved.⁸ Edmund Pincoffs, Annette Baier, Bernard Williams and thinkers like Michael Slote, Christine Swanton and Stephen Darwall, have contributed immensely to an understanding of philosophy of virtues.⁹

One of the important feature of philosophical inquiry of virtue is that character traits of moral agents are the right/wrong making properties of our well-intended actions - this is a central theme that shifts focuses from normative mansion. Virtue ethicists further mention that virtues are many and are intrinsically good. Not only this, they are objective as well. Parama's courageousness is valuable in itself not as a means to something else and that the same is not by virtue of what Parama desires or thinks or likes, but beyond any subjective predilection. Another important feature is that though virtuous beings perform virtuous acts that perfect their character, there is no striving for a normative ideal like utility or duty because the aim is flourishing or gaining excellence. Rachels has made an important point to underline the importance of being well by doing well. He says that bereft of courage (of say Parama(s)), we shall be cry-babies in each demanding situation in life where we may be rash or an escapist or headstrong. Thus, courage as virtue of character is of great importance, situationally for being well.¹⁰

Section III. Normative Ethics versus Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethicists justify character concern of a moral agent than concern for normative rule-following, because these norms or ideals of moral life are plural though each of these standard theories are monistic in spirit, that is, they are believed to be absolutely valued standard for evaluation of moral actions and moral character of agents. A number of virtue ethicists, who are anti-normativists (or are anti-theory), think that normativity is unacceptable on two counts: it is chauvinistic and ahistorical. However, some virtue ethicists are of the

opinion that anti-theoretical virtue ethics does no good to an understanding of what virtue ethics consists in. Rosalind Hursthouse, for instance, argues eloquently that, “virtue ethics cannot be a normative rival to utilitarianism and deontology because, ‘It cannot tell us what to do’ ... in some cases, moral wisdom required if the v-rules are applied correctly and apparent dilemmas thereby resolved”.¹¹

Let us consider the case of Parama in this interface. Suppose she went to a utilitarian, for instance, for a rule-following moral life and then to a Kantian Deontologist, and again to an Authoritarian. The result may be bewildering if utilitarian suggested her to maximise good in the world, and if it is pleasure maximisation, let us better not deal with any further. The deontologist would suggest her to perform her duties for the respect of or intrinsic value of the duty, and not for good consequences. But Parama’s duties were stated as an ideal housewife in which she would not prefer to be trapped again. Another normative point is that she should listen to her inner authority of unfaltering conscience, as Joseph Butler would say, and then she would justify that her conscience asked to proceed for an independent life which is objectively true.¹² However, a number of people might contest that all Paramas need not necessarily beg a sacrosanct conscience to decide for an independent life. At least Aparna Sen’s account does not toe Butler’s line. Parama’s normative rule-following therefore is in jeopardy. The anti-theorists like Alasdair MacIntyre, Annette Baier, Bernard Williams and others argued that such rule-following is impractical, artificial and absolutist. We should better look for what kind of a character should Parama or any other people have, or what kind of a person one ought to be? Being good is thus ethically desirable than following rules. Michael Slote remarks that for the irresolvable dilemma moral theories create, they do no good at all to the moral agents in real life situations. Yet, he remarks that “The real issue ... is what kind of ethical theory to adopt not whether we need theory in ethics”.¹³

No less stiff question is: what set of virtues should Parama inculcate? What she should do to be good? Let us assume that Parama should be courageous. But what is courageousness in her situation

(pre and post banishment)? 'Why should it be inculcated and by what means? These questions, particularly the one of justification of why such and such trait (like courage) is a virtue not vice is of utmost importance because an attempt at answering this leads us to normative theories. If we ask Parame, she might reply that, 'I should be courageous because that is amenable to my overall good than bad' or she might say, 'I should be courageous for its intrinsic value' or that 'courageousness would satisfy my ego'. Each of these replies, without any normative chauvinism may be grounds for being courageous by ordinary ethicsless people. Hence, overtly, or covertly, justification of virtuosity is closely related to normative theoreticism. Hence, the theory-anti-theory debate is wayward - there is no such disjunction. Apart from Peter Railton, W. K. Frankena and Barbara Harman are of the opinion that normative theories are not con-virtue related justification; they are rather complementary to it.¹⁴ How would a normative ethicist bereft of conceiving virtues of character like benevolence and beneficence be a utilitarian? Without having the virtue of respectfulness for actions, how one would be a deontologist? Without the virtue of self-love, how one would be an egoist? Without conscientiousness, how one would be an authority regarding person? These traits or any one of them may be important for Parame to be a normative rule-follower. For this, Frankena says that we follow any one or more of these ethical theories namely, trait egoism, trait deontology, trait utilitarianism and trait authoritarianism which logically consider traits of character and overreaching normative ideal in due fold. There is thus no disjunction between virtuosity and normativity. One might prefer the expression "trait consequentialism" to club egoism, egoistic hedonism and utilitarianism for their regard for valuing good consequences of decisions made and actions done.

This idea is against a stoic attempt to support non-consequentialist virtue ethics. Gier observes that our virtuous behaviour lends support to normative thinking — virtuosity precedes rule-following and not the other way around. Without being a rule-addict overtly, we follow rules covertly by being virtuous.¹⁵ However, this is to assume good actions done incessantly. Gier argues that normative theories in fact

are not prescriptive as 'do this' or 'follow this' rather 'be this' or 'be like this'. Deontology is thus 'being dutiful' or cultivates the virtue of dutifulness. However, almost all these thinkers/theories care for situatedness and context in which a moral agent is. No wonder that act-deontologists give due importance to situatedness of moral agent and rule-deontologists do not disregard it either. Martha Nussbaum observes that resolution of moral trifles demand care for situation and for that matter not following impersonal rules but acting virtuously that gives autonomy as moral agents.¹⁶

It is important to note that Stephen Darwall conceives of two types of virtue ethics, namely, moral and non-moral, that is, whether in virtue ethics moral virtues are centrally placed or non-moral virtues make a cut. In a sense, if non-moral virtues are central to virtue ethics, a paradigm or ideal is conceived of, virtuosity ought to be evaluated in view of pursuing such an ideal. In this sense, Aristotle's eudemonism is an instance of non-moral virtue ethics, and being wise, temperate and just in thought and deed is self-perfecting in nature. However, Francis Hutcheson has propounded a moral type of virtue ethics in which focus is on all that worthwhile motives that instigate an agent to produce good for him/her as well as for non-human beings. For instance, benevolence is a virtue not because it is amenable to a pragmatic end of life but it motivates an agent to produce good over evil in the world. However, Stephen Darwall has a different opinion. Moral virtues, for him are distinctive of intrinsic moral worth of an agent, whereas non-moral virtues are distinctive of particular traits that enable a person to realise worthwhile ends. Darwall observes that a "normative virtue ethics may be advanced simply as a normative view about which truth in human beings are worthy of esteem (or disdain)".¹⁷

In the recent times virtue ethical approaches are classified as agent based, agent-prior, and agent-focused, with clumsy overlapping and interpretations. There are conceptions of act-based and act-focused virtue ethics as well. Avoiding overlapping and confusions, it may be said that agent-based virtue ethics holds that motives and even character traits are the grounding bases for ethics. When it comes to

motivation, it should be overall than occasional. Hursthouse and Slote are proponents of agent-based virtue ethics and distinctively not supporting Aristotelian paradigm theory. The reason is that even if someone is benevolent and go on doing so for well-being, rather than achieving it, the habitual action might do a lot of harm to the person. Slote tells us that it is not the paradigm of well-being on which our good motives depend, rather good motives and correlative actions enable well-being. This is justifiable in as far as having right reasons for doing something good counts most. When we speak about right actions, we need to see the 'right reason' in motives of actions and inherent goodness of an agent to do well. Slote further distinguishes warm and cool agent-based ethics. According to him Hutcheson and Martineau are supporters of 'warm' agent-based ethics because these thinkers give more stress on motivation for imbibing traits needed for an ideal character development.¹⁸ On the other hand, Plato holds imbibing traits for ideal character solely depends on contemplation of the idea of the Good or the Form of the Good — living moral life is contemplation of Supreme Good (not highest good of Aristotle). This is 'cool' type of agent-based ethics. Agent-based virtue ethics, of late, has been debating about considering an agent and his or her artaic motives at a point of time or to consider moral agents as such to suggest motives expected of them for ideal character.

Slote is of the opinion that Aristotle's virtue ethics may be seen as agent-focused rather than Plato's agent-prior view because he or she focuses more on artaic or character traits of an agent than a general Platonic conception of contemplation of the Good. However, Aristotle does not refer to what traits of 'an agent' make 'an action' right, therefore, he is not a supporter of an act-focused ethics rather, an act-based thinker no doubt because situatedness of an agent and his or her freedom for moral choice between extremes are of great importance.

Section IV: Possibility and Method of Virtue Incultation

The clarion call for imbibing or inculcating virtues (if we are not too keen about genetic virtues), raises different set of problem. First why should we do so? Second, which set of virtues need to be

inculcated and in what ways? The problem of justification or the 'why' problem is solved by saying that virtues are perfect character of a man and in being good, we also do well. Greater problems are with which virtues and in what ways. The 'which' issue is resolved by suggesting variable set of virtues keeping in view moral agent's, situatedness and unique condition in life. It must have been a real problem of *Droṇa* the teacher of *Pāṇḍavas* and *Kauravas* to find out set of virtues to be inculcated in *Duryodhana* vis-à-vis *Yudhisthira*, and despite all efforts *Duryodhana* told *Kṛṣṇa* the counsellor that, in fact, after knowing about virtues and vices, he is able to do what he really can do (and we know what he was capable of). Did set of virtues fail? Or, did *Droṇa's* method fail? A sceptical position is that there is no way to inculcate virtues in my own person or in another because it is completely artificial and imaginary. Moreover, no external intervention should be allowed by any agency for arbitrary selection of virtues and attempts to imbibe it, particularly in our schools and colleges because the attempt is unethical in being authoritative and leave little or no room for freedom, independent thinking and discovering virtues. Virtues are to be discovered by us; they neither dawn on us nor are they artificially imbibed. However, the proponents of practical virtue ethics (than the purely theoretical ones) have great faith on social institutions and organisations in inculcating virtues. They have faith in practical virtue inculcation even in professional life. Oakley and Cocking holds that "a good profession, on our virtue ethics approach is the one which involves a commitment to a key human good, a good which plays a crucial role in enabling us to live a humanly flourishing life".¹⁹

Methods of virtue inculcation in schools, college and professional fronts are formal, non-formal, and informal. It may be done through a formal learning process, officially structured and well organised by public or private bodies that lead to formal level of recognised qualification. The method that does not demand such formal level of recognised qualification, distinguishes 'informal' method, whereas the method inculcating a number of non-structured inculcation through story-telling, anecdotes, community works, social participation are non-formal methods of virtue inculcation. In the recent times there is a lot

of energy given to justify anyone or all these methods of virtue inculcation, though fixed set of virtues as sacred mixed with ulterior political agenda often ruin the entire project.

A not so familiar but effective way of virtue inculcation is critical thinking, deliberating, and corroborating to discover values for each of us in vast communities. This enables clarification of virtues and values, and participation in virtue inculcation where inculcator-inculcated duality is kept aside. Virtue inculcation is not a linear affair as in formal and non-formal methods or even in informal method where set of virtues in set-patterns are taken uncritically without social or interpersonal deliberation for inculcation or at least attempted to do that — the entire process is unethically structured. One way to come out of unethical method of virtue inculcation is the deliberative-critical method. A conclusive note will consider this point.

Conclusive Note

Virtue theories and virtue ethical perceptions are criticised for their logical incongruence. An important feature of virtue ethics is its search for unifying features of different virtue theories. These features of unification are that virtue theories assume normative grounds, though some thinkers justify a disjunction between normative grounding and virtue theories. A good example for such disjunction is Slote's non-normative agent-based virtue ethics. However, the idea is illogical in as far as virtues deemed to be important for an agent or agents, in course of 'social development' were valuable for the good consequences they produce. But the charge might boomerang while inquiring what after all are these assumed good consequences? We did not wholeheartedly accept flourishing as a good consequence for its apparent vagueness and most importantly for having doubt about the consequence about which we can be damn sure. What after all is the criterion for judging that here and now such and such agent has flourished or is in a state of wellness (not well-offness though)? The flautist is judged to have flourished by competent flute experts on the basis of grammatical, aesthetic, and pleasant renditions. Do we conceive of maestros of life as did J. S. Mill in *Utilitarianism* while

conceiving of competent judges to judge quality of pleasure'? If we do, as Aristotle thought to be the case, *Phronimos* would be no less chauvinist than Plato's Philosopher King. A related problem is that life is fraught with moral dilemmas needing urgent resolution particularly at the occupational and professional level. Plain and simple truth is that virtues often conflict, as in the cases of self-love and benevolence as well as gratification and renunciation. How do we resolve such dilemmas? Not in the way Butler suggested by taking recourse to our divine conscience or for that matter an authority. An interesting reply may be that if we have (and we do have) the virtue of moving from disagreement to agreement on logical grounds, that is, being logical in social discourses, we have a good chance for corroborating our moral perceptions.

Further problem is that stiff moral dilemmas facing modern day professionals, as in case of abortion, euthanasia, artificial intelligence, and so on, is not a problem of ordinary stature and which is also true of Parama facing infidelity in her life. These problems are value-loaded and may not be solved by normative prescriptions alone or by awaiting an agent to be truly and completely virtuous. It is too impractical to wait for a paradigmatic virtuous state to solve an issue. Knowing about repository of virtue may not be illuminating either. Perhaps the solution lies in coming virtuously in social dialogue to find out decisions with a human face and of real pragmatic worth. Parama perhaps did it rightly in virtuously debating in social association to take up a new life than another hackneyed journey as stereotyped housewife in her heartless family. Virtue inculcation demands a method of social critique of virtues in real life situations and correlative discovery of virtuous decision making for mechanics of duty in occupational and professional life teeming with value-loaded problems of practical urgency.

Notes

¹ George Pence, "Virtue Theory", in Peter Singer, ed., *A Companion to Ethics*, Oxford, 1991, p. 250.

² For detailed accounts of theory-anti-theory debate, refer to Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism and Demands of Morality", in Samuel Scheffler,

ed., *Consequentialism and its critics*, Oxford, 1988; Philip J. Ivanhoe, "Character Consequentialism: An Early Confucian Contribution to Contemporary Ethical Theory", *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 19(1), 1991, pp. 55-70.

³ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, London, 1984, p. 182.

⁴ The approach of Plato in elaborating the nature and significance of four cardinal virtues is vividly explained in G. M. A. Grube, ed., *The Republic*, Indianapolis, 1974. It is different from the account of Aristotle, in W. D. Ross, ed., *The Nichomachean Ethics*, Oxford, 1980. First, Plato relates the hierarchically arranged virtues of wisdom, courage and temperance as predominant character dispositions of Philosopher Kings, Auxiliaries and Economic people respectively, having distinctive social tasks to perform; and justice is not to trespass into the territory of duty allotted to these classes. However, Aristotle does not give justice the similar controlling and harmonising role. He does not relate other three cardinal virtues to particular class of people having specific obligations. For him, justice is lawful and equal distribution of rights and proportionate correctness in legal affairs. Furthermore, virtues are explained in view of mean in relation to us - mean that is between excess and defects. For instance, courage is the mean state of character wherein we choose between rashness and cowardice.

⁵ Joseph Butler, in *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*, London, 1726, argues that a proper analysis of human nature would enable us to understand that a virtuous person is the one whose passion and affections or specific feelings, self-love and benevolence are in perfect control under conscience that contribute to the constitution of harmonious nature. Conscience is a faculty of knowing, what things are valuable and controlling the elements of nature. Conscience is unfailing and absolute moral authority- a voice of God in man. In this sense, self-love is neither pathological love nor idealistic love but agapistic love, that is, Divine love instantiated in Jesus' love towards humanity. It is precisely, empathetic in nature.

Lord Shaftsbury, in *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit*, J. M. Robertson, ed., Indianapolis, 1740, holds that being virtuous is not being sensible or being rationally sensible so that good may be distinguished from evil to live moral life. Human beings have moral sense that checks and balances their feelings, emotion and motives, thereby naturally make us virtuous. Such moral sense present in us is intuitively known. It is basic to a virtuous human being. Similar ideas are expressed by Frederick Hutcheson, in *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtuosity*, Indianapolis, 1738. He puts in his theory the major conclusion of virtuosity advocated by Butler and Shaftsbury. On the one hand, he thinks that virtues are present in us and known intuitively, and on the other hand, he says that the three basic motives of human action, namely, self-love, benevolence and moral sense are coordinated and harmonised by religion.

⁶ Elaborate accounts of 'varṇāśrama' and 'āpaddharma' by Manu and Praśastapāda are available in *Mānava* and *Praśastapāda Dharmasūtras*. The former may be

found, in S. N. Sen & A. K. Bag, ed., *Śulba Sūtras of Baudhāyana, Āpastamba, Kātyāyana and Mānava*, New Delhi, 1983; and the latter, in G. N. Jha, ed., *Padārtha-dharma-saṅgraha with Śrīdhara's Nyāyakandalī*, Cambridge, 1916.

- ⁷ The growth of virtue-based ethical thinking owe to the anti-normative stance taken by the following thinkers: Philippa Foot, *Virtue and Vice*, Berkeley, 1978; Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck*, Cambridge, 1981, and Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 1984; apart from the seminal paper of G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy", *Philosophy*, 33, 1958, pp. 1-19.
- ⁸ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, London, 1984, p. xiv.
- ⁹ The following works are worth reading to know about contemporary developments in virtue ethics: Annette Baier, "Radical Virtue Ethics", in P. A. French et.al, eds, *Ethical Theory: Character and Virtue*, Notre Dame, 1988; Michael Slote, "Virtue Ethics", in Marcia Baron, ed., *Three Methods of Ethics*, Oxford, 1997; Christine Swanton, *Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View*, Oxford, 2003 and Stephen Darwall ed, *Virtue Ethics*, Massachusetts, 2003.
- ¹⁰ For a detailed account, readers may refer to James Rachels, *Elements of Moral Philosophy*, New York, 1988.
- ¹¹ Departing from Anscombe's and MacIntyre's arguments that bland normativity in moral resolution is of no use, the essay of Rosalind Hursthouse, "Normative Virtue Ethics", in Stephen Darwall, ed., *Virtue Ethics*, Massachusetts, 2003, p. 198, argues that there is a strong possibility of normatively grounded virtue ethics.
- ¹² Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel*, James & John Knapton, London, 1729.
- ¹³ Michael Slote, "Virtue Ethics", in Marcia Baron, Philip Pettit and Michael Slote. eds, *The Methods of Ethics*, Oxford, 1997, p. 180.
- ¹⁴ Peter Railton, W. K. Frankena and Barbara Harman have eloquently argued that normative rule-following begs basic virtues. To follow utilitarian rules, one needs to be beneficent, and in being respectful towards duty, a person follows deontology. These ideas have been explained by Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism and Demands of Morality" in Samuel Scheffler, ed., *Consequentialism and its Critics*, Oxford, 1988; W. K. Frankena, *Ethics*, New Jersey, 1963, and B. Harman, *The Practice of Moral Judgement*, Massachusetts, 1993.
- ¹⁵ Nicholas F. Gier, "Dharma Morality as Virtue Ethics", in P. Bilimoria and J. Prabhu, eds, *Indian Ethics: Classical Traditions and Contemporary Challenges*, Vol. 2, New York, 2012.
- ¹⁶ For details refer to Martha Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 13(1), 1987, pp. 32-53.
- ¹⁷ Stephen Darwall, ed., *Virtue Ethics*, Massachusetts, 2003, p. 2.
- ¹⁸ Warm agent-based virtue ethics has been well explained by F. Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtues*, Indianapolis, 2012; and J. Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, Oxford Calender Press, 1889.
- ¹⁹ J. Oakley, and D. Cocking, *Virtue Ethics and Professional Roles*, Cambridge, 2001, p. 74.

*Legendary Modern Arabic Blind Writer Ṭāha Ḥusayn as
Portrayed by Himself and His Wife Suzanne Bresseau*

Badiur Rahman

Prologue

Ṭāha Ḥusayn (1898-1973) was born in a village near Maghagha in Upper Egypt. He lost his eye-sight at the age of two. He memorised the holy Qur'an by the age of nine. He studied linguistics and Islamic studies for seven years in al-Azhar, Cairo; but he was made fail in the final examination for his modern outlook. He therefore, joined the newly founded Egyptian University where European teachers like Carlo Alfonso, Nallino, M. Enno Littman, Guidii etc. were teaching. Having passed the final examination with distinction he submitted a brilliant thesis on Abul 'Alā al-Ma'arri, the great blind eleventh century Arab poet, known for his pessimistic vision.

Thereafter he passed Licentiate degree from Sorbonne, Paris; received another doctorate from there for a wonderful thesis, written in French, on the social philosophy of Ibn Khaldun. On return he began to teach ancient Greek history in the Cairo University. Due to his liberal views in some of his books, his life was not peaceful; he was even compelled to resign from his teaching service, though it was reinstated after three years by another government. In 1942, he established the University of Alexandria, and later he proved an outstanding Minister of Education and left an indelible mark by making school education free, modernising school syllabi, introducing university commission, and by opening doors of education to marginalised girls.

Ṭāha lived fifty-eight years with Suzanne, a Christian French wife, with due love and respect, who on the other hand, succeeded in reconciling him through her sustained discreet and constant encouragement; and changed the

man's innate pessimistic outlook dramatically and helped flourish Ṭāha as a legendary writer.

For his secular ideology Ṭāha held interreligious dialogue with a host of historic personalities, e.g. Andre Gide, Cocteau, Senghor, La Pira, Massignon, etc. to encourage mutual understanding. He was an activist for human rights and was associated with UNESCO. But his liberal vein of thought could not be accepted by a group; the most antagonistic were those who benefitted more from him.

This great Egyptian blind writer is credited for writing more than sixty volumes in various branches of prose literature including autobiography, a new genre introduced in modern Arabic, which earned accolade throughout Europe and was translated, like his several publications, into various languages of the world. For the superb contribution in the intellectual sphere he was awarded honorary doctorates by more than a dozen universities of the East and the West. He was a recipient of the Robe of the Nile and the highest honour of France for literature. He is the first modern Arabic writer whose name was nominated for Nobel Prize.

***Suzanne Bresseau** (1895-1989), a catholic Christian, was born at Lusigny-sur-Ouche of Cote d'Or, France. Having passed 12th standard she graduated from Montpellier. While Ṭāha was a student at Montpellier she was a reader to blind Ṭāha for French and Latin from 1915. Later she became his secretary; wrote his exam scripts as scribe and assisted him for his thesis. Finally, she got married to Ṭāha in 1917 and began her long trajectory—rich in joys but also bristling with hardships.*

Throughout fifty-eight years of life-together she always remained unfailing support and encouragement to Ṭāha and brought him out of pessimism. The role she played in the making of Ṭāha an icon of modern Arabic can never be imagined.

*Two years after the demise of Ṭāha, Suzanne wrote a memoir, *Avec toi*, in French, as she did not know Arabic. Her intention was to get it translated into Arabic, to acquaint the Arab readers with many hitherto unknown facets of their favourite writer. The book is a precious testimony of their life-together*;*

* Maintaining no chronological order, for three years every day she wrote whatever she could remember of their life together.

After Ṭāha died, Suzanne lived sixteen years alone in Ramatan, their dream house, and when she died she was buried at the Latin cemetery, Cairo.

This write up is a humble attempt to throw light on their extraordinary love and exemplary respect for secularism, and especially Ṭāha's manifold literary and educational activities.

Dr Ṭāha Ḥusayn, before venturing forth to France for higher studies, had written one article against inter-religious marriage. He acknowledged that the Islamic law allowed Muslim men to marry Christian or Jewish women, but Ṭāha argued that he was afraid that due to the impact of the European wives the Muslim husbands would inevitably lose their Muslim cultural identity.¹ His opinion in this regard, as expressed in the article concerned, was that marriage of a Muslim man with a European woman belonging to other religion is now 'sinful and hateful'. Furthermore, he ascertained that the reasons behind such marriage by a Muslim husband are due to his weakness for the beauty of European woman and her feigned cultural and intellectual superiority. Ṭāha also expressed his idea about the result of such marriage, foreseeing a miserable adherence towards the religion of his wife leading to complete transformation of not only the husband's ideology but his offsprings too.

To quote P. Cachia "less than seven years later, he had himself married a French woman who has remained a devout Catholic, yet to whose beneficial influence he has repeatedly paid tribute".²

Love of Ṭāha

The great lady in question is Suzanne Bresseau (1895-1989). It was Ṭāha Ḥusayn who had, at first, fallen in her love and Suzanne fortunately accepted his hand after pondering over the serious question. It was she who always stood by him, inspired him and helped Ṭāha flourish as we find him today. Ṭāha once said "without her I would have been nothing".³

In his wonderful autobiography, *al-Ayyām* (three parts), Ṭāha himself proclaimed his passionate love for Suzanne. For the first time we come across with such feeling mentioning her as a passing reference

saying 'he did not abandon this habit until he got married, when she brought him out of many habits he had grown into".⁴

Ṭāha's extreme power of sensibility from childhood leading to pessimism and Suzan's role as his saviour

Ṭāha said this in the fourth chapter of his *al-Ayyām*, part I, when stating about an incident that had happened at the dining table, at the time of eating along with his father, brothers and sisters. From that time, he abandoned many types of food which are taken with the help of spoons; and desired to get his food separately in a place where nobody could see him while he was eating. This sceptic aptitude he grew emulating the blind Syrian poet Abul 'Alā al- Ma'arri (973-1057A.D.).

Truly speaking Ṭāha was very sensitive from early childhood. After a trifle incident his lifestyle began to change. He was becoming all the more introvert; narrowing his childish world to a limited one; in play with the playmates, in eating before others, in conversation and dealings with his brothers and sisters, etc. But it was Suzanne who brought Ṭāha out of all those self-imposed prohibitions and helped him display his latent talent and helped secure and consolidate his due position. Therefore, there is no wonder when we see him bursting forth as educator, thinker, and writer of many subjects. He blasted a trail that led, through many tribulations, to a wide recognition as a leader of modernism and earned many national and international honours. For all these the pivotal source of inspiration and courage was Suzanne. Again, at the end of this part I of *al-Ayyām* we get Ṭāha referring to Suzanne with esteem as an 'angel'.⁵

Ṭāha's days at Montpellier

But sufficiently abundant discussion of this 'angel' is to be found from the eleventh chapter and onwards of the third part of *al-Ayyām*. In the chapter entitled "*al-Fata fi Fransa*"⁶ (The young man in France) he described how did he begin studies in Montpellier and how much he had to pay more attention to French and Latin for obtaining *Licentiate*. For better proficiency Ṭāha tried Brail system for these

languages but did not find this system beneficial for him; therefore, he depended upon a lady 'Reader' who had a very 'sweet voice'. She read to him French and Latin classics; Ṭāha before long fell in love with that 'sweet voiced lady'; but this love was from his side only. During the summer vacation the reader was out of the city; Ṭāha badly felt her absence during that period; still he heard murmuring of that sweet voice all the time, day and night, as if he was hearing that voice reading out to him this or that book.⁷ But a letter brought by his friend el-Dir'imi came as a bolt from the blue. The letter from the authority of Cairo University contained order to the incumbents to avail the first available ship bound for Cairo. So in the month of September, 1915 A.D. Ṭāha boarded a ship along with el-Dir'imi for their native land. But Ṭāha was not at all happy for his return to his country and considered it as if he is leading to death; presumably for going far away from that 'sweet voiced lady'. However, Ṭāha is found vigorously lovelorn in the chapter entitled '*al- baut al-'Adhb'* i.e. the 'sweet voice'.⁸

Return of Ṭāha from Montpellier due to World War-I and his worst days in Egypt

He considered the six days' voyage for Egypt tedious and unusually boring; the only respite was the recollection of that 'sweet voice'. Fortunately that voice accompanied him throughout the tenure of the voyage — sometimes whispering to him hope while the others leading him to despair.⁹ During his three months forced stay in Cairo, Ṭāha often felt happy for the 'sweet voice' which often whispered into his ears, sometimes awakened him from slumber all on a sudden making him awfully happy.¹⁰ He would be happy all the more to get occasional letters from that lady ... letters full of hope and encouragement. The petals of roses that were sent along with those letters were preserved by Ṭāha like amulets so that he does not forget her at all.¹¹

During his three months stay in Egypt Ṭāha grew quite irritable in nature perhaps because of being far away from the lady of 'sweet voice'; even one of his friends once said to him: "control yourself and

behave". During that period of stay in Cairo he whiled away his time restlessly; virtually doing no academic work except that he got his dissertation on Abul 'Alā published as per the suggestion of Abdul Hamīd Hamadi, editor of *al-Sufur*.¹² After much addition and alteration he titled the book as *Tajdīdu Dhikra Abil 'Alā* for which the publisher did not pay a farthing to him.

Lovelorn Ṭāha returning to Paris

However, after three months we see Ṭāha sailing in a ship along with el-Dir'imi from Port Said for Napoli to board a train from there to France. They stayed one day at Napoli; when loitering in its streets Ṭāha insisted el-Dir'imi to take him to the post office where he got two letters sent by the lady from Paris. El-Dir'imi read out those letters twice to him; when still asked by Ṭāha to read them again el-Dir'imi declined and said: "repeated reading of the letters in Napoli is of no use when both of us have memorised her letters!"¹³

It is quite evident that Ṭāha was completely engrossed in the thought of the 'sweet voiced' lady. So it is quite natural when we see a chapter of the book *al-Ayyām* is entitled "*Qissatul Hubb*" i.e. Story of Love. Now his life in Paris was an admixture of sweetness and bitterness, easy as well as difficult; because he tasted therein bounty of the soul, comfort of the heart and satisfaction of the conscience. But financially he was in hardship; because his scholarship was only three hundred Frank [perhaps per month]; he had to spend out of it for staying, eating and thus living most ordinarily, and never visiting any coffee shop or opera house for which Paris is famous. He meticulously attended lectures in the university and kept himself imbued in recapitulating class lectures; and trying utmost to save every penny. But he paid handsome amount to the lady Reader who spent hours reading to him classics of French and Latin.¹⁴ After he did miserably bad in the class of a professor of history who had asked him to write about the national life of France after the fall of Napoleon, he was instructed by the teacher to improve French if he wanted to pass the examination of Sorbonne. Therefore, the duty hour of the

lady Reader increased and thus his association with her multiplied. But due to her sudden illness she could not come to him for a couple of days. Ṭāha could not resist himself from visiting her; nor could he resist declaring that he loves her; but she declined. He then asked: “what is the harm in it?” and added: he does not want any answer for his love rather he loves her for love’s sake. But she did not reply him about it and changed the course of conversation.¹⁵

After some time, Ṭāha returned from there taking firm resolution to adopt a new way of life. He made self-retrospection; admittedly said to himself that it is true that he fell in love of the ‘sweet voice’ first thereafter he fell in love with the mistress having sweet voice; that is why his going to Egypt was painful; on the other hand his deep desire for coming to France was for enabling him direct hearing of the ‘sweet voice’! He out of despair thought that creation of love in the hearts of human being was not meant for him nor was he created for love. Sometimes he blamed himself for disclosing his love before her and at others he found her quite right by refusing him as it should have been.¹⁶ Since then he did not speak about it to anyone and kept the matter within himself.

The lady after her recovery resumed her duties like reading out French and Latin literatures to Ṭāha, reaching him to the classes of Sorbonne and taking him back, etc. But none of them spoke anything other than what was necessary. The health of Ṭāha was deteriorating fast for deep and silent grief of failure in love. He could not sleep at night nor could he eat properly; naturally its mark was evident on his health. The landlord and others were worried for his deteriorating health; they even tried to take him to doctor but he refused. Ultimately when the lady concerned asked him about the reason behind it, Ṭāha disclosed to her that due to her refusal in love he has lost all interest in life. The lady still kept silent and performed her duties for the day. While leaving in the evening she said that she is still in a fix and could not take any decision as yet. Then she said: “in the ensuing summer vacation I will write letters to you from the country side; if in any of my letters you are invited to join us then only you can think

that I accepted your proposal; otherwise if you don't get my invitation then be sure that we have friendship and only friendship"¹⁷.

The summer had set in and the separation began; a few letters he got from her but the most desired invitation was wanting in them; almost a month passed and finally there was the most wanted invitation in a letter to spend the rest of the vacation with her and her family. His friend el-Dir'imi got him boarded alone in an evening train; requested fellow travellers to look after him and to help at the time of disembarkation. Ṭāha was not in a position to feel whether the journey was long or short rather he dreamt the moment when he will listen to the 'sweet voice' by next day noon calling him tenderly with affection and felicity; so much so that he considered that day as a resurrection in his life.

Role of Suzanne in the making of Ṭāha

The fifteenth chapter of *al-Ayyām*, part III, is entitled as *al-Mar'atuallati Absartu bi 'Aynayha* i.e., "the lady through whose eyes I see". This title itself is self-explanatory to reveal how much Ṭāha was indebted to Suzanne. From now onwards it is found that he is changing pessimistic views about the world and its people. He gradually began leaning to sociability and finally to love for mankind. Now whenever he conversed with people or listened to them, or frequented the classes or listened that which were read upon him – in everything he found life with which he was not akin to so long.¹⁸

In the same chapter Ṭāha delineated by his superb writing skill how Suzanne helped him surpass all the hurdles for passing *Licence eslettres*, i.e., licentiate.²⁰ They toiled a lot over day and night for mastering French as well as Latin at the cost of courtship. However, due to their joint effort he passed *Licence* which no Egyptian could pass after him from Sorbonne. At the same time he was getting ready for doctoral thesis.

Ṭāha described how he got permission for marriage and research

Ṭāha was sent by the Cairo University only for *Licence* and not for further research work; moreover, there was a clause in the scholarship

that the deputed students on scholarship cannot marry during the tenure of study. Therefore, Ṭāha informed the authorities of Cairo University about both the matters; the Cairo University suggested him to go for a diploma after the *Licence*; in that case the University will have to bear less expenditure. But due to his repeated requests he was allowed to prepare thesis on condition that before its submission he has to get it checked and cleared by the Cairo University; this checking was imposed after Dr. Mansur's thesis made hue and cry in Egypt.

As soon as he passed *Licence* (in July 1917) his earnest reading of Arabic and French books, and translations of other texts in European languages made him adept for his research project. Thereafter he went on dictating Suzanne to write down; as soon as he completed a chapter, he asked her to make him hear it; once he was satisfied, he brought it to his supervisor, Professor Casanova, the great French Orientalist. Professor Durkheim, an expert in the Arabs and Islamic Affairs was the co-supervisor; therefore, Ṭāha had to get clearance of his writings from both of them.

Ṭāha after great toil wrote the thesis in superb French, entitled '*Etude analytique et critique de la philosophie sociale d'ibn Khaldoun*' i.e., Analytical and Critical Study of Social Philosophy of ibn-Khaldun, and sent it to Cairo for necessary permission to submit in Sorbonne. Now he gets permission for both — permission for submission of the thesis and for marriage. Therefore, after submission of the thesis in Sorbonne he opted for the viva a little bit late for getting married, which he celebrated on the ninth of August, 1917, and left Paris for northern part of France. The newly married couple could not enjoy their new phase of life for the ensuing viva examination; they remained completely engrossed in its preparation. After the summer they returned to Paris. The day Ṭāha excellently performed in the viva of the history of medieval period before Professor Charles Dayl he forcibly took Suzanne for lunch in a hotel²⁰; after some time, he had to face viva to be taken by Professor Raymond Juin. Ṭāha was extremely worried, apprehending he may not be asked about natural geography;

and instead preferred political or social geography. And lo! He was asked to describe the Rhone valley. Ṭāha refused to answer. The examiner said “when you are asked a question you are to answer that”. He again declined. The professor asked him to go away and called another candidate. Ṭāha returned aggrieved and frustrated; he was sure that he cannot pass²¹. He was naturally very upset but even at that crucial moment Suzanne affectionately told him with a sweet smile: “how do you like to have a cup of coffee for getting yourself ready for the viva of Philosophy?” “What is the utility of facing viva of Philosophy when the whole examination has jeopardised”, said Ṭāha. For her constant insistence he faced the remaining viva. Ṭāha was completely in despair in the evening but she was still hopeful. For a couple of days, they did not talk about the examinations still they were getting prepared for questions to be asked in defence of the thesis submitted at Sorbonne for doctoral degree. One day she did neither talk to him nor wished him in the morning but all on a sudden she kissed him and whispered that “you have passed”. Ṭāha was surprised when he came to know that for his overall excellent orals, he was awarded grace marks in Geography though he deserved zero.²²

However, during that time Professor Durkheim, the supervisor of the thesis from philosophical aspect, had died; so, Professor Boujalle, one of the students of the deceased professor, was appointed for the purpose. But in Sorbonne it is mandatory that before the viva in defence of the thesis the incumbent has to deliver two lectures on subjects given by the supervisors. The professor of Oriental Studies said that he will ask questions from the thesis itself; professor of philosophy wanted to hear social science as thought by Comte Auguste while the famous historian of Rome, Gustave Blok asked to hear from him about the affairs of a Provincial Ruler as depicted by the Younger Pliny in his epistles – but that from the Latin text only.

However, the task was made all the more gruesome particularly for asking to deliver lecture in accordance to the Latin text. Therefore, he revised the original Latin epistles of that ancient Latin writer along with French translations. On the day of lecture, Ṭāha, though trembling

from inside, delivered wonderful lectures before the supervisors, the French audience and Suzanne; so much so that the professor of history who was the chairman of the Committee declared that the faculty awards him the degree of doctorate *cumsum malaude*.²³ Thereafter he did further higher studies for diploma under the above-mentioned professor of history.

The professor entrusted upon him the study of issues that were prevalent in Rome and role of the regional administrators against the Ruler as described by Tasit;²⁴ he also made references of several primary sources. Ṭāha was in trouble for unavailability of most of the primary sources in Latin while a few that were available in the library were not permitted for home lending. Therefore, he wrote to Egypt for finance which was at first regretted but after several reminders extra grant was sanctioned on condition that the books purchased on that account are to be deposited in the Cairo University.

Ṭāha's study was going on meticulously but after the bombardment in the vicinity of Latin Quarter, where he was residing, he had to shift to Montpellier along with his expecting wife Suzanne; there he began to learn Greek out of necessity which Suzanne also joined out of thirst for knowledge; and she gave birth to Amīna there in the month of June.²⁵ During her expectancy and even before that till she gave birth to the child she rendered unusual sustainable help to Ṭāha in his studies. He remained engrossed hearing that Reader reading to him, from the morning, two books on the civil and criminal jurisprudence of the Romans by the great German Mmish. He also recalls that often he would dictate chapters of his dissertation to Suzanne keeping their baby in his lap; after writing down the dictation Suzanne would take the baby and try to make her asleep by means of children's songs; and when the baby slept, she would go to the kitchen for cooking food.

Return of Ṭāha from Paris to Egypt

However, Ṭāha submitted his dissertation in Sorbonne and was awarded doctoral degree and he achieved great success in the higher

diploma examination. Now it was the time for his going back to Egypt along with Suzanne and the baby. The Egyptian university authority declined to pay the cost of fare for Suzanne; the matter was solved by the Director of the Students' Foreign Delegation, an Englishman, who also agreed to pay the shipping freight for a large number of his books.

Ṭāha with his family had reached Marseilles one day before boarding the ship bound for Alexandria but due to the strike by the sea men of that ship, they had to stuck up there for twenty-five days; and circumstances forced him to borrow from one of the co-travellers. In Alexandria he stayed one week with one of his friends, Hasan Pasha Abdur Razzaq, who happened to be the governor of Alexandria; then they boarded the train for Cairo with Egyptian currency through his courtesy.

Ṭāha begins his teaching career with unforeseen problems

After reaching Cairo they stayed a couple of days with the family of one of Ṭāha's brothers but he decided to live separately for academic reasons; though he was in dearth of money, the university did not pay him anything, not even as an advance. One professor Muḥammad Ramaḍān took him to a financing company from where he got one hundred Egyptian pounds and the said professor was his guarantor. He arranged for them a house on rent in Sakakini locality and he helped them purchase necessary household goods and furniture. Ṭāha was preoccupied with the thought that soon he has to begin teaching in the university for which he had to prepare himself since a few lectures of his will be attended by the members of the Board of Directors. Before long he sank into books and the 'sweet voice' resumed reading on and on along with her household work and child care.

On the appointed day Ṭāha went forward to the lecture hall; Thuru'a Pasha received him and introduced him to the audience. Ṭāha delivered his lecture and won the hearts of all. The subject of his teaching he had opted, for one year, was Greek history. He felt that the geographical description of that country was of prime importance to understand history of the concerned country. Therefore, he delivered a lecture on

that and captured the hearts of all listeners. This lecture was exclusively on what he had heard from Suzanne and he complied with as she suggested for it. Her suggestion was to take the model she had prepared, on a piece of paper, the exact shape of Greece with elevation of its mountains, with levels for its plain land, with touchable varied colourings on the seas encircling the country, etc. She had repeatedly browsed his hand over that model and advised him to begin from south to north, and then turn from east to west to make clear where the oceans are and where had situated the ancient cities.²⁶ The audience, including Thuru'a Pasha who was present there in the lecture, were spell bound.

A few days after one young officer from the Palace (of Khedive) came to Ṭāha and said that he was called for by Shukri Pasha, the chief administrator (*Raeesud Diwan*); and to be accompanied by him. At first Ṭāha could not assess the reason for calling him, therefore he reluctantly went there, after long conversation Shukri Pasha whispered to him that: "the Sultan wants to see you"; one officer of the palace had brought a big register who fixed the appointment at eleven o'clock in the next morning and asked him to come dressed in suit.²⁷ According to the appointment he met the Sultan who treated him very politely and made him seated near him; then asked what he did study there in France and what rank he obtained. On hearing everything from Ṭāha, the Sultan was very pleased and told him that during Ṭāha's student life he was the Chancellor of the university, and then added "I called you to tell that whenever you are in need of anything or in need of my assistance you come to me".²⁸

Now Suzanne was not in a position to give time as required by Ṭāha for reading books before him, as she had to look after the growing child and manage domestic affairs, etc. Therefore, he required a secretary to assist him in academic matters; so much so that he wrote to the university authorities for hike in his salary which was declined. Being disgusted he wrote another letter expressing his anger and tendered his resignation. When Suzanne came to know the matter,

she suggested Ṭāha to withdraw that letter and to pray to be exonerated, which he complied with. But within a few days he was called by the Sultan and the matter was addressed in favour of him. Ṭāha was so grateful to him for this cause that he dedicated his book entitled '*Ṣuḥuf Mukhtāramin al-She'ral-Tamthilyal-Unāni*', written after coming back to Egypt, and handed it to him personally 'just to get relief from his indebtedness from earlier benevolence', as stated by Ṭāha. Suzanne played pivotal role in the making of Ṭāha and grooming him; and helped him flourish as we get him today. It was she who always stood by his side, inspired him, encouraged him and made him feel the genius latent in him. It was she who left the easy-going life of France and sacrificed herself for tough life in an alien African country — where she shared all ups and downs of her blind Muslim husband quite pleasantly and agreeably. For her sustained felicity, bounty and favours Ṭāha acknowledged that, "Without her he would have been nothing". It is not at all exaggeration when we find him bestowing upon her the position of 'angel' and often calling her 'my eyes'. It is this great lady who not only lived pretty long fifty-seven years with this legendary personality of modern Arabic literature but had witnessed many vibrant moments of Ṭāha's life very closely rather directly; from his day to day life to his national and international conferences, meetings with academicians of world repute — she accompanied him throughout his life. Therefore she rightly deserves to bring before us many aspects of Ṭāha's eventful long life about which mere three parts of Ṭāha's famous autobiography *al-Ayyām* or his stray and scattered incidents of life, as found in his other books like *Fial-Ṣaiif* (1928) or in *Adīb* (circa 1934) or in his memoir *Mudhakkirāt* (1967), etc. are not sufficient. Rather Suzanne's French book '*Avec toi*'²⁹ is a great supplement to many things about Ṭāha.

So long we have seen glimpses of what importance this lady had in the life of Ṭāha as stated by him but now we will see, through *Avec toi*, what position Ṭāha had occupied in the life of this Catholic lady.

Background of writing *Avec toi* by Suzanne

At the age of eighty, with fragile health and weak eye-sight, Suzanne at the request of her son, M'unis Ṭāha Ḥusayn, took up the task of writing down '*Avec toi*' in French as she did not know Arabic. The task was gruesome to recollect sixty years' memories of such a blind Egyptian, who became the greatest Arab writer in the twentieth century. After arduous efforts of two years she could prepare manuscript of three hundred pages which she had typed herself. Her intention was to publish its Arabic translation for the Arab readers to bring before them different aspects of the life and achievements of this iconic personality of modern Arabic literature. The matter of selecting Arabic translator was vested upon Jacques Berque, the great French scholar of Arabic, and Professor, College de France and translator of the holy Qur'ān in French. Therefore Badruddin 'Arudki³⁰ translated it and entitled '*Ma'ak*' which was published in 1977 from Darul Ma'arif, Egypt, which had always been publisher of all books of Ṭāha Ḥusayn; and for its well acceptance by the Arab readers another edition was published from *al-Markazul Qawmi Li al-Tarjamah* in 2008. The French edition '*Avec toi*' was published in 2011 with a lucid introduction by Amīna Ṭāha Ḥussein (Ukada), and useful references, notes and epilogues etc. by Zina Weygand and Bruno Ronfard. However, this French version has again been translated into Arabic by Badruddin 'Arudki, revised by Mahmud Amīn al-'Alām, published by Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture, Cairo, 2015.

Highlights from *Ma'aka*, Arabic translation of *Avec toi*

Suzanne Bresseau, lived almost seventy one years of her life in Cairo (from 1918 to the end of her life in 1989 in Egypt; and from 1915 to 1973 with Ṭāha Ḥusayn) for such a blind man who became the 'doyen of modern Arabic literature' and who earned exceptional fame and name for the services he rendered in the field of education, science and culture. Suzanne sacrificed the cosy life of France for her husband who had established several academic institutions and universities across the world, and who was honoured in the East as well as in the

West. This Suzanne always stood by the side of this gigantic personality as a sincere and loving well-wisher; always encouraging him at odd times which he often faced and shared with him all of his successes and pathos; it was she who always accompanied Ṭāha even in banquets given by Kings and dignitaries in the honour of this exemplary man.

Besides the description of Ṭāha regarding the first face to face meeting with Suzanne we get more details in the *Ma'aka's* foot note no.16, P. 289, that Ṭāha in an article in a special issue of *al-Hilal* on Woman and Love³¹ said that "it was 12th May 1915 at Montpellier at about six or seven o'clock, and after two tempests that normally lash on some of the cities of France and which foretell the coming of the summer... at that moment I heard a knock at my door while I have been waiting for this visit but was worried that this gull may not hinder my waiting; the door was opened and a girl along with her mother entered the room. "Then he added : "it was quite natural that our conversation would not be that easy... but I felt within myself that this will entail several conversations in future and our bond will not end here and my heart was overflowing with joy and hope; we decided that we should sit together every noon and read lots of books: literature, philosophy, history; I will not hide from you that I slept that night peacefully and comfortably; and that day is the happiest birth day in my life ... and that is why I celebrate that day whatever may be the circumstances".

Suzanne deserves to be glorified for writing *Avec toi*, a memoir on Ṭāha, regarding which Jacques Berque said: "it is one of the deepest and most accurate studies written in French about the life and novelties of Ṭāha Ḥusayn.³² The book in question, written in two years, during 1975-76, begins with a pithy statement of Ṭāha: "we do not live to be happy". "He had uttered it", as Suzanne recalls, "in 1934, when I was confused, but now I realise what did you mean by it. I know that if the condition of a person be like that of Ṭāha he can never live happily... we were on the verge of despair and I used to think, nay, we do not live to be happy nor could we make others happy. But I was wrong; you bestowed on me all delights and showed all possible courage,

fidelity and hope. You were quite aware that this happiness does not exist on this earth; for your being spiritually so elevated you did never aspire for this worldly happiness; what can prevent me from hoping that very happiness is now granted to you!" [after your demise].

Suzanne recollects one utterance of Ṭāha that "we are not at all habitual to suffer the pains of segregation"; but unfortunately, at the centre of Dolomites she is remembering him alone on ninth July 1975 i.e. after passing fifty-eight years' life together and after almost two years of Ṭāha's passing away. During last eight years they spent long weeks in summer in the heart of this valley; two years ago they had spent a few weeks there together. Later on Ṭāha wanted to visit it again but he was not in a position to walk nor she liked to visit the place leaving him alone. During their last sojourn together Ṭāha's secretary would read to him the holy *Qur'ān* and the holy *Torah* – the scriptures which were always carried in the bags along with other classical as well as modern books. In the morning she used to make him hear news and articles from the Italian paper *Corriere della Sera* through her interpretation as he did not know that language. In the evening they used to hear news broadcast of Monte Carlo or local French broadcast from a transistor. They also yearned for good musical soiree and they were all the more happy on getting Statesboro festivity or a drama in Dolomites.

All these flashed in the screen of Suzanne's memory only to sadden her forlorn life; but before long another memory overtakes her. She had reached at Gardone on 21st June 1974 by a hire cab. What she had written that day I quote: "whenever I perceived you are near me I felt you at my left side though you always used to sit at my right in the car and I used to hold your left hand... I know well that I cannot sit by your side anymore"...³³ Again for 23rd June she said that "after some time I will listen to Monte Carlo as I listened yesterday and which put me to your proximity absolutely; therefore the symphony of Faust could not reach its beauty".

Suzanne recalls the memory of her first encounter with Ṭāha as we have seen Ṭāha cherishing that memory in *al-Ayyām*, part III. But the

addition she made in this connection and the personal feeling about that incident deserve to be noted.

On 12th May 1915 she along with her mother met him at Montpellier when she did not know her fate nor her mother could guess anything about it; she was all the more perplexed because for the first time she was talking to a blind. Thereafter she began to pay visits to the room of the university student from time to time, reading out to him from French books. Perhaps destiny had fixed something for her; she once overheard an Italian professor, who used to teach him Latin, saying to Ṭāha "this girl is going to be your wife."³⁴ And ultimately that happened.

Due to the war trodden condition of France, the Egyptian students on scholarship were called back by the Egyptian University and they returned to Paris in 1916. From that time, Ṭāha stayed in one of the rooms, let out to him by Suzanne's mother, in Paris. In those days one elderly lady used to take Ṭāha to Sorbonne and take him back from there. Gradually Suzanne intervened; took that task too on herself besides reading less French books to him but talking more with him. Thus, he was developing French unexpectedly.

One day, all on a sudden, Ṭāha said to her, as Suzanne says, "Excuse me, I must say you one thing: I love you". She screamed and got confused out of suddenness. She replied: "but I don't"; considering the love that exists between man and woman. Therefore, he mournfully said: "that I know well and perhaps it is not possible."³⁵

Time went on and one day she declared in her family that she wants to marry that young man. All of her family members screamed out: "What! Marry this foreigner? Marry this blind? Moreover, marry this Muslim? No doubt, you became crazy man." But Suzanne says: "I choose sublime life, though some of my friends too warned me." She recollects one of his statements: "may be our relation between us will supersede our love"; as there exists that sublime element which can be called magnificence and trust which will never put her to shame. But at that juncture one uncle of Suzanne, who was a clergy

man, helped her in taking final decision. This uncle met Ṭāha in the open fields of Pyrenees and talked to him for two hours exchanging their views. At the time of return he said to Suzanne that “you can execute as you have decided... don’t be afraid.”³⁶

She decided to get married but Ṭāha had to take permission from Cairo as it was a taboo for students studying with scholarship.

Suzanne’s continuous assistance in the studies of Ṭāha in Sorbonne.

Suzanne very seriously began to work with Ṭāha so that he gets through in the classical literatures; but passing this examination was very difficult for a man like him who did very little study of Latin nor did sufficient study of French and nor had adequate knowledge of History. Besides all these Suzanne had to make him up-to-date in Geography too by preparing for him maps that can be deciphered by touch. She used to begin her reading a bit after the breakfast.

The Rector, Croiset, was kind enough to grant permission to her to be Ṭāha’s writer in the *Licence* examination; and he had also arranged separate room for them, and out of his trust upon them there was not even invigilation for them. However, he was successful in the examination with twelve rating.

Thereafter they devoted themselves in getting the thesis ready. Suzanne was astonished to think that how would a blind man, with little knowledge of western culture, be able to obtain certificate (*ijazah*), diploma in higher studies and submit thesis for doctorate! However, the days were becoming hard to harder from academic as well as financial point of view; even then Ṭāha presented her a beautiful portrait of *La vierge de Londre* by Botticelli, which he had purchased from Bonaparte street on her birthday; and which she kept carefully in her bed room throughout her life. “Our sweetest moments were,” says Suzanne, “when we could rarely go out for listening musical soirees which were held every Sunday; otherwise we kept ourselves content by reading beautiful books”.³⁷

Ṭāha's Marriage as described by Suzanne

As per declaration they got married on 9th August 1917 very ordinarily. All the gathering forced Suzanne to put on white marriage gown and to have a horse carriage ride. The roads were filled with war soldiers on leave. They wished the couple shouting: "happy marriage to you", and she was responding: "thank you", but thinking how great are they who can extend good wishes to others while they are on the point of death unpredictable. Thereafter they went out to a village called Pau in the lap of Pyrenees and spent almost the vacation days.

Ṭāha's post marriage days as penned down by Suzanne

After submitting the dissertation Ṭāha prudently defended all vivas and received congratulations of the examining board. Due to frequent bombardment by the Germans at Paris the expecting mother Suzanne was taken away to Montpellier where Amīna was born on fifth of June [1918].

Thereafter Suzanne has described the day they wanted to board the ship at Marseille for Alexandria where they were stuck up for three weeks. Naturally that voyage was painful for them and for the baby of sixteen months. However, on reaching Alexandria they were cordially received by Hasan Abdur Razzaq, a friend of Ṭāha and Governor of Alexandria, where they stayed for a few days. Then they boarded a train for Cairo where al-Marsafi, another friend of Ṭāha, received them. And from now their real life began — life with ups and downs, happiness and sorrows; but Suzanne accepted every untoward situation cheerfully and gladly as she loved Ṭāha immensely.

She had left Paris and lived long fifty-eight years with Ṭāha, standing by his side every moment for the blooming of the multifaceted genius Ṭāha. But his life was full of ups and downs, now facing agitation of the people for his book *Fi al-Sh'er al-Jaheli* for rivalry against difference of opinion either in reforming education, social and cultural life or for difference in political policies and views. As we know what a grave agitation he had to face for the book entitled

Fial-She'ral-Jāhili and what enmity he invited for the volumes *Mustaqbalu al-Thaqāfah Fi Miṣr* and his other articles published in the leading journals like *al-'Ilm*, *al-Hilal*, *al-Sufur*, *al-Siasah*, *al-Ahram*, etc., particularly for his writings against Jame Azhar and the ministry of Waqf-against which Mustafa Ṣādiq al-Rafī'i, Sayed Qutb, Muḥibbuddin al-Khatib started war against him in their writings. But at all junctures and pathos Suzanne extended her helping hand to Ṭāha and encouraged him sustainably.

Their bond of love for each other

Her absence, however short it may be, was unbearable to Ṭāha. In this connection I would like to refer to one letter of Ṭāha written to Suzanne when she had gone to Paris along with their children for better treatment of their daughter. He wrote: 'what a strange! I had thought that in your absence I will write down a lot, but I could not write anything. You can tell me it is incumbent that I write down the famous book, and complete my autobiography, and I should work on *Book of Jules Rinard*, as I should write articles; everything is necessary. But I cannot do anything without your encouragement... you went away and all my intelligence dried up; you took away my heart, my soul and everything ...".³⁸

The condition of Suzanne in the absence of Ṭāha was never better than him; and she is seen exhaling alone deep sighs every moment after Ṭāha's demise; as it is evident in every line of her memoir *Ma'ak*; in every object with which Ṭāha had a bit association reminds her that he is no longer with her. The silent sobbing can well be traced in her following statement: "after the dinner on 26th May (1974) I tried a number of musical records as I usually listened, the Mozart and Stravenski's symphony, in the evening in soft sound and which you too liked and listened with passionate serenity; even today when I hear it I feel that you are also hearing with me".

Suzanne accounts for her life with Ṭāha and after his demise

She is remembering him every now and then; if at one time recollecting the hard days they passed together and at others

remembering abundant happiness they enjoyed in their lives. She remembers their staying on rented houses at Sakakini street then shifting to Hawayati street, then staying at *share 'Sa'id* and at Almina (where for the first time they had purchased a second hand car only to add more trouble in their life), and their living at al-Barudi street with this or that uncomfortable situation or in want of necessary amenities— and finally shifting to their own dream house “Ramatan” in 1956. This villa contained two separate flats, one for Ṭāha and Suzanne and other for the family of Mu'nis and Laila. The villa was surrounded by a spacious garden with a cosy lawn, encircled by jonquil, rose, acacia etc. which bloomed in different colours; there was sitting slab under the shade.³⁹ They had two-three pets too in the Ramatan; and its garden was like a sanctuary for hosts of birds and butterflies; the chanting of these birds were very much liked by Ṭāha. Even the birds sneaked the windows of their rooms at their pleasure. Ṭāha loved curlew bird too because people believed that its one shriek or its one flutter of wing soars the sky swiftly; therefore, a pair of curlew were kept in the garden. Perhaps keeping the matter in his mind he entitled one of his novels as '*Du'āual-Karawān*', i.e., The Call of the Curlew.

This Ramaton villa was always a vibrant place of meeting of renowned litterateurs, poets, thinkers, politicians of national and international repute, e.g., Andre Gide, Cocteau, Leopold Sedar Senghor⁴⁰, La Pira, Massignon, Dr Zakir Ḥusayn⁴¹, Jacques Berque⁴² and Anawati – to mention but a few. The present authoress is writing her memoir *Ma'ak, Avoc toi, i.e.*, for the deceased husband in that quite villa all alone⁴³. which has now become unbearably quiet.

Ṭāha's Liberalism and faith in Secularism

But during the life-time of Ṭāha whenever Suzanne heard someone of the Egyptian society trying to question Ṭāha for his inter-religious marriage she felt hurt. Suzanne in two pages of *Ma'ak* has described such silly questions raised by someone and then questioning continued by Shaikh Bukhayt⁴⁴ only to humiliate Ṭāha. Ṭāha had retorted: “I met a girl, then I loved her, so I married her; had I not done so I

would have remained a bachelor or had I married (someone else) it would have been hypocrisy."⁴⁵

Ṭāha himself was very liberal and secular in mind. Suzanne was a Catholic Christian who used to go to church, attend Masses and used to celebrate all Christian festivals devotedly.⁴⁶ She used to recite the *Bible* regularly. Sometimes when she would be praying she could often hear Ṭāha reciting the holy *Qur'ān* in another room. He would tell her many things from the *Qur'ān*; he repeatedly recited to her the "*Basmalā*" which was very favourite to him; and he himself would read the *Torah*, and she would hear him anecdotes of Jesus. He often repeatedly would say, "we can never charge Allah with lie". The same thing is said by St. Pauls that "certainly we cannot charge God with falsehood and woe to the liers".⁴⁷

Ṭāha and Suzanne lived together for about sixty years with due respect to each other's religion; that is why they had a large number of distinguished friends and dignitaries belonging to various religions and countries who admired the novelties of Ṭāha's writings and his liberal views. But Ṭāha had to pay high price for his liberalism. Besides, the earlier agitation for writing *Fi al-She'ral-Jāhili*, there started another agitation of greater magnitude and dimension against him in May 1932; this time the agitators wanted to crush him completely. Even his resignation from teaching, where he was a dynamic force for infusing renaissance in education, could not pacify the pandemonium; the agitators wanted to burn all his books, therefore they besieged his house; started hurling abuses and tried to stop every means of livelihood e.g. stopping the sale of the journal he published, sale of his books, etc.⁴⁸

Darkest days of Ṭāha after he lost University service.

That stalemate went on for three years till the end of 1934, but Ṭāha was reluctant and did not surrender to their whims except resigning from teaching service. It is true that misfortune does not come alone. During those days M'unis, Ṭāha's baby son, got Pneumonia and he had just recovered when Ṭāha himself fell sick; so

much so that he remained bedridden for eleven days during which Suzanne nursed him day and night without any rest and sleep albeit the help of Farid.⁴⁹

Soon after recovery Ṭāha resumed writing literary column with fragile health for *al-Siyāṣah* journal at a trifling honorarium of thirty Egyptian pounds. Then he was compelled to vacate the official quarter meant for the in-service teachers. Suzanne says that “we were rather ousted from there”. But they were fortunate enough that the Heliopolis⁵⁰ Company housed them in a better villa than they had before excepting the garden. People said that: “al-Sidqi⁵¹ ousted Dr. Ṭāha from one house and lo! He is residing in a better house than before!”

Suzanne spent a lot of her energy in arranging household goods in the new house but spent more enthusiasm in arranging Ṭāha’s large number of books. Quite naturally their financial condition was getting bad to worse. During those days Ṭāha received a letter, full of compassion, from Massignon,⁵² asking whether he wanted to go to United States or not, because the matter (in Egypt) had affected him severely. But after three days’ pondering over the offer Ṭāha wrote to Professor Massignon that “his letter has awakened him; he is a deposed teacher and he is such a learned man who is prohibited from work. It is incumbent that he should not involve in politics; he will write books and earn livelihood. As regards America he will be a foreigner there where he shall look at the life of the people but cannot join them; he then must have to live but with limited duty”.⁵³ The resignation of Ṭāha had an impact on the intellectuals of the contemporary time. His friend and admirer Aḥmad Lumfial-Sayyid⁵⁴ resigned from the post of university chancellor and many a foreign teacher of the university declined to return to Egypt unless Ṭāha was reinstated.⁵⁵ But soon a group of students met him and requested him to teach them; therefore he began to deliver lectures every Friday in his residence. The day he delivered a lecture on Valery in the American University, the overcrowded lawn of the university applauded him loudly, and surprisingly there were many Azharies.

This prodigy remained unbounded in various scholarly works. He started issuing *al-Risālah* journal along with Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt; then worked for other journals like *al-Kātib*, *al-Wadī'* beside writing his other books.

Ṭāha also worked for the *Kawkab al-Sharq*. Once in the scorching heat of summer the air condition machine of the press was out of order for several days but he had to work in that unbearable heat. The sale of the journal had increased for his writings from 4000 copies to 20,000 copies, but the publisher did not hike his remuneration. In the same way Naḥḥās Pasha for his *al-Wadī'* journal put pressure on Ṭāha for regular literary feature as well as articles for foreign journals. Ṭāha was overburdened; but wherever he went he found that people, particularly the youths, were passionately in his favour which he considered as his mental support.

During those hard days publication of the book '*Alā Hāmish al-Sīrah*' in 1933 had brought the family a bit relief due to fetching one hundred Egyptian pounds; another solace was that *al-Ayyām's* French translation was published.⁵⁶

Ṭāha reinstated in the University

In 1933 Sidqi had to resign and ultimately Nasīm Pasha became chief minister in November 1934, and the chair of the University was returned to Ṭāha Ḥusayn in December; and a large number of joyous students took him to the University.⁵⁷ Soon he became '*Amīd*, i.e., the Dean on the Faculty of Arts. During his most disturbed time he proved to be most productive in respect of publishing books. Suzanne says that 'by 1945 he had thirty-seven books in his credit but now the number reached to about fifty',⁵⁸ besides his numerous lectures and innumerable articles.

Ṭāha was a great reformer of education

Being encouraged by the sustainable support of his wife, he set about reforming Egyptian society, especially the field of education. In 1942, he established the University of Alexandria and was appointed its Rector.⁵⁹ When he became the Minister of Education, he left an

indelible mark, especially through making school education free and by establishing schools in the nook and corners of the country, and thorough revision and modernisation of the school syllabi and opening the door for girls' education. Ṭāha fought throughout his life to open up access to education and emancipation for his people especially for marginalised women, so as to extricate them from religious and social obscurantism. It was he and Lumfi who had opened doors for girls in the University. The most famous among Ṭāha's girl students was Suhayr Qalmāwi, who was called "Spiritual daughter of Ṭāha," and who did her Ph. D. under his supervision on *Kitāb Alf Laylah Wa Laylah*, i.e., The Book of the Thousand Nights and one Night. He also established one medical college, Ibrahim University (presently 'Ain Shams University), founded the Islamic Institute in Madrid and established one chair post for Arabic language and culture in Athens University; for all these Ṭāha had to undertake hectic tours.

Ṭāha's academic tours and role of Suzanne

Suzanne accompanied Ṭāha in his every academic tour. In September 1935 the 19th International Congress of the Orientalists was held in Rome where she had to accompany him. During that Congress Ṭāha became acquainted with Cardinal Archbishop Tisserant, one of the delegates, who took them to the eleventh Pope Pius, who himself was a distinguished orientalist and had spoken about Ṭāha as well as Suzanne in the welcome address of the Oriental Congress in Castelgandolfo. Professor Carlo Alphonso Nallino⁶⁰, one of the brilliant teachers of Ṭāha in the Egyptian University, spoke highly about Ṭāha in the first session which he was chairing.

Ṭāha was often invited for attending lots of academic seminars and conferences held within the country and abroad; so, Suzanne had to accompany him wherever he went. In September 1952, the Congress of the Artists and Writers was held in the Cini Foundation, in San Giorgio Island, Venice. Andre Lhote (1885-1962), a renowned sculptor, was its organiser. In one Italian paper the great men like Rouault, Honegger and Moore wrote about the content of the Congress while

Ṭāha defended the dignity of Art. He proclaimed that “writing is also an act (of art) and no writer and artist can achieve excellence without sincerity...his position is like that of the hero of Dante carrying the torch on his shoulder to enlighten the road for those who are following”.⁶¹ In that Congress, Jules Romains, Maria Nallino, the daughter of professor Nallino, etc. were present.

For four successive years from 1953 there were a number of meetings organised by Giorgio Lapiera, governor of Florence, on the topic “Christian Civilisation and Peace”, and Ṭāha Ḥusayn was its chief convener. That is why in its every meeting altered by Suzanne she heard his message, announced from the rostrum “message of unity, good-will, justice and peace...the message brought to you on behalf of the people of the Mediterranean sea and on behalf of the whole family of human being”⁶². The media of Florence was astonished to hear such a wonderful message from a Muslim.

Ṭāha’s involvement with UNESCO

Suzanne recollected that in 1935, they had attended UNESCO’s general conference in Florence, where she had met Mirna Loy, a member American delegate and Torres Bodet with whom Ṭāha had real friendship.

At the age of sixty-five Ṭāha was appointed the chief of the Egyptian delegates to attend a congress of the UNESCO held in Montovido but due to his infirm health he sent a letter expressing his inability to attend and wishing all success of the conference. But after seven years, the National Board of UNESCO arranged lectures and exhibition of the books of Ṭāha along with their annotations and reviews.

At the age of sixty five he attended a conference of the Arabian University in Jeddah and in that conference Suzanne could not accompany him, but Amīn al-Kholi looked after him though there was his Christian secretary, Farid. Huge number of delegates had attended the conference; many poets had composed poems on Ṭāha. There were good wishes from students, and people showered flowers upon him. From there Ṭāha had written a letter to Suzanne which

reveals his deep love for her even at that advanced age; the letter reads like: “come to my arms, keep your head on my shoulder and leave your heart listen to my heart.”⁶³

Suzanne, an assiduous and efficient assistant, was an indispensable travelling companion of Ṭāha. After 1948 they went to Madrid again on a university invitation; Ṭāha had delivered lectures in Madrid as well as in Granada. Suzanne says that Emilio Garcia Gomez⁶⁴ had accompanied them for al-Ḥamra⁶⁵ visit.

Ṭāha and Suzanne had paid visit to Madrid and Toledo in 1950 in their official tour to lay the foundation of the Institute of Islamic Studies. From Toledo they were taken away by Wayment⁶⁶ in his car to Oxford where in its Sheldon Theatre the Lecturer General delivered a reception lecture in Latin; from there they went to Manchester where Ṭāha was received by its Lord; and in the Town Hall’s lawn he was conferred with honorary doctorate. In the dinner of Manchester University, one professor of French of that University very humbly made a complement to Ṭāha by uttering a couplet of *al-Mutanabbi*,⁶⁷ the famous Abbasid poet.

Then before going back to London they went to Cambridge University and had their lunch with E. M. Forster⁶⁸ and there, in the evening, Ṭāha fell down senseless; naturally it was a headline in the next day’s newspapers that “Egyptian education minister fell unconscious while given reception”.

Ṭāha was so popular that often he was called to deliver lecture which he happily accepted; the most remarkable was his lecture on the freedom of writers. He also wrote a huge number of articles on various subjects magnificently; for one of his such superb articles on Cyprus (*Qabrac*) a Greek ambassador met him in 1955 and Mikhail Kristodoulou Mouskos⁶⁹ desired to meet him while he was in tour of Egypt in 1958.

Ṭāha’s awareness of intertintional affairs

Ṭāha wrote nearly six chapters of *‘Ali wa Banuh’* in Tyrol earlier but he resumed writing it 1953 and begun writing *al-Ayyām*, part III, also; keeping himself little perturbed for the revolt of 1952 in Egypt. But when the Suez was nationalised and the relation of Egypt with

France worsened Suzanne suffered from identity crisis; naturally Ṭāha was a bit upset. When the Sultan of Morocco was exiled from his country by the French, Ṭāha was so aggrieved that he returned the Robe of Honour to France – but that matter caused pain to Suzanne.

**Physical assault on Ṭāha, its effect and his attachment with al
*Majma' al Laghawi***

In the month of October 1960, when Suzanne and Ṭāha were boarding the ship Oceania two pirates attacked Ṭāha, which caused severe injury in his spinal cord; he was operated upon but got paralysis; even he lost the normal use of his legs. Therefore, standing alone and walking without help of her was not possible for him. Even then Suzanne considered the rest twelve years of their life a blessing for them—as they became more closer to each other; since the number of visitors began to dwindle and he also stopped going outside except going to the *al-Majma' al- Laghawi's* office. Suzanne says that: “he then devoted most of his energies in the activities of al-Majma' al-Laghawi of which he was president till his death and for which he curtailed many personal writings.

Ṭāha's Love for tour and passion for writing

In spite of various hurdles, they were fond of going outside the country, particularly to Italy, to get rid of scorching heat of Egypt; usually they preferred sea route. It was Suzanne who had to get reservation and arrange foreign exchange etc. With all apprehension that she may not have to cancel the trip, as some times she had to, on Ṭāha's health ground. However, those trips were possible because Dr. Serj Ghāli, the house physician, though sometimes Ṭāha's secretary could not accompany. In 1961, they reached Padou passing by Venice; it was a nice morning to have coffee at Pedrochhi coffee shop and to dine in the open sky in the nearby small hotel. “We strolled”, says Suzanne, “in the ‘Arena’ garden; made him seated, and Farīd read him the paper *Lomond* and I went on looking at the Giotto's wall frescos made on the small Secrovegni church in the garden itself”. Formerly when Ṭāha was education minister their route of Italy trip

was through Paris. In those days they went to Italy along with their son M'unis, who was posted in Paris, in his small Citron car; in that case they would pass through Bourgeony, Suzanne's birth place. In Italy they visited Morienna valley, Cenis hill, Suse, Torino, Milano, Bergame, then went to Bolzano and Colle Isarco. This Colle is situated seven kilometres away from Brenner, at the height of one thousand two hundred meters, with a very scanty population. Tourists from Milano, Rome, and Napoli throng there every year. Ṭāha in its sprawling hotel not only replenished leisurely but wrote a lot of articles just as he wrote down the third part of *al-Ayyām* and the greater part of his book *al-Fitnahal-Kubra*⁷⁰.

Suzanne said that, Italy was a favourite place to Ṭāha for its numerous small mountains, its scenic beauty, its surging shores of sea, its lush green trees, and admixture of modernity with nine centuries' antiquities. Therefore, his sojourn there took place in 1954, 1955 and in subsequent years too. In 1955, when they were in the Hotel Palāce Italia, one of the guests of the hotel had exclaimed "Look! Look! Is not it a strange! What a surprise!" he was pointing to Ṭāha and to a review of the book "*The 100 Most Important Men in the World*", by Donald Robinson. As we know that Ṭāha's name was there among the first ten such important men along with the names of Bertrand Russell⁷¹, Churchill, Einstein⁷² Albert Schweitzer⁷³, Lavrenti Pablovitch Beria⁷⁵ etc. This book has seen several editions with omission of this name and inclusion of other name; but Ṭāha's name has always remained.

Ṭāha Ḥusayn assisted a lot in various projects of the UNESCO. He was very serious in its 'The East and the West' project and as he was one of the members of the Advisory Committee he participated in its first four sittings but in its fifth meeting in 1963 he was unable to participate for his health problem and had suggested to replace someone else in his place though he never disowned his contacts with the organisation. That is why when Miss Jeanne Hersh contacted him for (preparing a collection from holy scriptures, enacting to be a true human being, for the propagation of Human Rights by the

UNESCO) accurate meaning of verse nos. 64 and 65 of the chapter *al-An'ām* and the chapter *al-Ghāshiah* of the holy *Qur'ān*, he gladly accepted the assignment as he had a special passion for the *Qur'ān*.

Ṭāha's busy schedule

Besides teaching in the University, writing books, writing articles for journals and magazines Ṭāha had to undertake other academic activities too. Suzanne described in details how Ṭāha meticulously responded to the letters of the students, researchers and even young writers. In the same way he had to deliver talks in the radio and face television interviews.

Suzanne has described about one television interview of Ṭāha held in 1961. It was their first trip to Italy after his spinal cord fracture; this interview was shot in an evening, just after his coming out of the hospital. Quite naturally Suzanne was worried for his sitting long and his exposure to huge lights which will radiate excessive heat; the technicians had convinced her that they will take hardly one hour. But when the questionnaires prolonged to two hours and Suzanne intervened; Ṭāha cheerfully replied: "Leave me; my age is now only thirty!" Suzanne has delineated well about another tele-interview shot at Cairo in 1966 just after television was introduced there. This interview had prolonged for three hours but Ṭāha replied all questions quite confidently with remarkable tranquility.

Suzanne from her past experience of the residence at Barudi street, where every day large number of dignitaries thronged to Ṭāha, had made a quite spacious saloon-like hall in Ramatan for his visitors. When Ṭāha's movement was restricted for his physical condition this hall became the place of congregation for the press, photographers, intellectuals, men of letters etc.; at the end of 1965 President Gamal Abdal Naser adorned the place when bestowing the prestigious Nile Robe to Ṭāha. In this hall the honorary doctorate by the University of Palermo⁷⁵ was accorded to him in 1966, and such two honorary doctorates by the Universities of Madrid and Granada were conferred upon him in the year 1970.⁷⁶ In this connection it should be mentioned

that as a mark of excellent feats in the field of literary renaissance Ṭāha Ḥusayn was awarded honorary doctorates from various Universities of the world; to mention but a few are as follows: University of Leon (1930), University of Montpellier (1946), University of Rome. The ambassador of Egypt in Rome had hosted a dinner in the honour of Ṭāha near Vatican where Cardinal Tisserant along with six Bishops was present. He was also recipient of such honorary doctorate from the University of Athens in 1953; in all such occasions Suzanne had to accompany him.

Last years of Ṭāha

During the last few years when Ṭāha was quite unable to go out of Ramatan, many distinguished literary personalities and foreign dignitaries paid visit to him at his residence Ramatan; a few among them were: Nobel laureate Ivo Andric⁷⁷, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Han Suyin⁷⁸, Regis Blachere⁷⁹, Jacques Berque, etc.

Among others who frequented Ramatan in those days were: Ṭāha's younger brother Abdul Majid, Thuruat Abazah, Suhair Qalmāwi, Kāmil, Father Anwati, Father Jomier, Mary, Jon, Dawlat Abyaz⁸⁰ and his family, Shaikh Abu Riah, Usuf al- Siba'i⁸¹ etc. Their interactions kept the house vibrant and lively; and Ṭāha got much comfort in it and considered it as a source of relief from his fatigue and pain.

But with the fast deteriorating health of Ṭāha, moreover for his growing hearing impairment, the number of visitors began to dwindle. In this regard the remarks of Suzanne deserve mention. She says that, "Death alone does not leave a gulf; there are people who did not know the way to our house during the last years of his life. We had thought some of them are our real friends but we were wrong. Ṭāha began to adapt the forsaking. Some names are flashing in my mind but I am not going to reveal them. But it is strange to see the people who were much indebted to him were the most furthest; there were others who had forgotten him but mentioned his name (in their writings); there was even a group of his antagonists who attacked rather abused Ṭāha though they were formerly helped by him..."⁸²

It is true that the present Ramatan was not that of former Ramatan, full of distinguished visitors; excepting Kāmil who regularly visited Ṭāha and Suhair Qalmāwi who visited him very occasionally.

Last days of Ṭāha and his death

On Saturday, 27th October 1973, there was no sign of disease in Ṭāha but at 3 o'clock in the afternoon he felt constraint; he wanted to say something but hardly could say anything as he was panting. Being panic stricken Suzanne called the doctor but did not reveal it to him; when the doctor came his condition was alright. In that very moment a telegram of the United Nations Organisation had reached conveying that he is selected for the award of Human Rights and the award will be conferred in New York on 10th December. It was the doctor who read the message to him with enthusiasm. But Ṭāha did not say anything except that he moved his hand in such a way that Suzanne only could understand that he wanted to say "what importance it has!"

The doctor pushed a Cortygen injection and suggested some light sedative for the night and left them saying that, "it will be all right now and he will feel comfortable". Thereafter the secretary, after completing his shift at eight thirty at night, went away home; just as other servants too. Suzanne says: "I was alone with him. He wanted me to make him lie on his back but it was not possible because of the condition of his back bone. But he, like a child, went on saying "do you not want to? Do you?" after a while he said that "they want my harm; they are notorious people". When Suzanne asked him: "who are they?" He replied: "all people." "Me too?", asked Suzanne. He retorted: "no, not you". Actually, he was recapitulating the consequences he has been facing by the abuses of those who were in need of him for long years. Then he said to Suzanne as per his habit: "give me your hands"; which he kissed.

Then the parting night came. He had called her several times that night almost for no certain necessity. Out of fatigue Suzanne had fallen asleep. She could wake up only at six o'clock; she fetched him a little bit of milk as he muttered: "bas". Thereafter she made him

suck honey by a spoon and when wanted to give him a biscuit she found that he was not breathing nor there was pulse beat. Therefore, she called the doctor Ghali who reached after half an hour.

Suzanne was sitting beside the corpse not weeping but murmuring “O my friend, O my dear friend”. It is true that he was the only friend and the best friend to her.

As Ṭāha’s daughter Amina was in New York and his son Mu’nis was in Paris, Suzanne out of bewilderment had uttered “I am totally alone”. Friends and relatives who were present all voiced together that not only they but the whole country is with her. That day Dr. Ghali, Jan Francis, Susan al-Zayyāt⁸³ and her husband, Mary Kahil, Father Shahata Qanwati etc. completed all rituals of funeral. Jan, Suzanne’s friend, took out the marriage ring from the finger of Ṭāha to give it to her and that was the morning of Friday, the third of Ramadan.

Total funeral was covered by press, radio and television. That day the whole nation witnessed parting of a complex personality whose characteristic features were courage, tenacity, intellectual openness, love for his religion and country, and respect for others’ religion and country. He truly deserved to be loved by Suzanne while he himself truly loved Suzanne extraordinarily till his last breath.

Notes

¹ Introduction of *An Egyptian Childhood*, by: Pierre Cachia, Professor of Arabic Language and Literature, Columbia University, New York. The complete title of the book: *An Egyptian Childhood, The Autobiography of Ṭāha Hussein*, Translated by E. H. Paxton Heinemann, London, 1932, with reference to the series of Ṭāha’s articles published in *al-Hidaya* in 1911.

² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³ و قد قال هو نفسه إنه لولا زوجته لما كان شينا ، vide: *Muqaddimah*, by Amīna Ṭāha Ḥusayn (Okada) for the book, *Avec toi*, written by her mother, Suzanne, in French (Arabic translation is entitled *Ma’ak, Muassasah Hindāwi lit Ta’lim wa al-Thaqāfah*, Egypt, 2015, p. 18.

⁴ *Al-Ayyām*, part, I, Darul Ma’arif, Egypt, N.D., p. 22.

⁵ فإن سألتني كيف انتهى إلى حيث هو الآن، و كيف أصبح شكله مقبولاً لا تتحمله العين ولا تزدريه... أتعرفينه؟ انظري إليه! هو هذا الملك القائم الذي يحنو على سريرك إذا أمميت... لقد حنا يا ابنتي هذا الملك على أبيك، قبله من البؤس نعيماء، و من اليأس أملاً و من الفقر غنى، و من الشقاء سعادة و صفوا! الألبام، الجزء الأول، ص 151-152.

For its English translation Vide: *An Egyptian Childhood*, p. 79. N.B. Dr. Ṭāha Ḥusayn completed dictation of this part of *al- Ayyām*, to his secretary only in nine days while holidaying in France to get respite from the harassment of the Egyptian people, press and even by the Parliament who considered his earlier book on pre-Islamic poetry *Fi al-shi'r al-jāhili* as impious. However this *Al-Ayyām*, part I was first published in *Al-Hilal*, between December 1926 and July 1927 and earned enormous acceptance and success. This autobiography of Ṭāha was the first piece of modern Arabic writing to be recognised as a master piece, and its English translation was the first accolade it received from outside the Arab world. And Ṭāha was the first Arab writer in the genre of autobiography who left tremendous impact upon the successive Arab writers to try their hands in this field. So much so that *al-Ayyām* has been translated into various European and non European languages. The second part of *al-Ayyām* too was written in Europe in 1934 and its English translation was made by Hilary Wayment as *The Stream of Days* (London, Longman, 1948, while the third part has been translated by Kenneth Cragg as *A Passage to France* (Leiden, Brill, 1976).

⁶ *al-Ayyām*, part III, Darul Ma'arif, seventh edition, 1982, pp. 79-86.

⁷ 86- فقد كان الصوت يصحبه دائما، لا يكاد يخلو إلى نفسه في ليل أو نهار، الأيام، الجزء الثالث، ص-

⁸ 87-94 الأيام الجزء الثالث، ص __

⁹ 88. وقد صحبه هذا الصوت أيام السفينة يناجيه مناجاة اليأس مرة، و مناجاة الأمل مرة أخرى... الجزء الثالث، ص __

¹⁰ *al-Ayyām*, part-III, 1982, p. 90.

¹¹ To quote from *Al-Ayyām*, part iii, 1982, p. 90.

" وكان يسعد بذلك الصوت العذب الذي كان يناجيه بين حين وحين، وربما أيقضه من نومه مفرغاً، مسروراً مع ذلك بهذا الفزع. وكان يسعد بهذه الرسائل التي كانت تصل إليه بين حين وحين فيها كثير من الأمل المشوق، وكثير من التشجيع على احتمال الذنابات، وربما اشتملت بعض هذه الرسائل على زهرة قد جفت وأرسلت إليه ليحملها كما تحمل التمامون لتذكره إن عرض له النسيان."

¹² *ibid*, p. 90-91.

¹³ *ibid*, p 94.

¹⁴ *ibid*, p. 103.

¹⁵ *ibid*, p. 108.

¹⁶ وهو قد انصرف عن صاحبه في ذلك اليوم راضيا عن نفسه ساخطا عليها. راضيا عنها لأنها قالت ما لم يكن بد من أن يقال 110 ساخطا عليها لأنها عرضته بهذه الكلمة لشر عظيم..... (الأيام، ص

¹⁷ *ibid*, p. 112, to quote:

قالت: فإني فكرت فيما أنبأتني به، وأطلت فيه التفكير، ولم أنته بعد إلى شيء، وقد أوشك الصيف أن يظلنا وسنفترق، فاصبر حتى إذا كان افتراقنا فستتصل بيننا الرسائل كما تعودنا أن نفعل. فإذا قرأت في بعض رسائلني أنني ادعوك إلى أن تنفق معنا بقية الصيف فاعلم أنني قد أجبتك إلى ما تريد، وإن لم تقرأ هذه الدعوة حتى ينقضي الصيف فاعلم أنها الصداقة الصادقة بينك وبينني ليس غير.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14; The following statement may be allowed to quote :

وكان لا يملك أمره إلا حين كان يتحدث إلى الناس أو يسمع لهم أو يختلف إلى الدروس أو يصغي لما كان يقرأ عليه.

¹⁹ Passing that examination is very tough: besides Ṭāha two more Egyptian students were studying there on scholarship; one of them had dropped one

year but could not succeed next year too and went back after he became psychiatric due to the agony of failure and died prematurely in Egypt . The other student was Dr. Sabri al-Sorbonee who could pass only after several attempts. Vide : *al-Ayyām*, pp. 117-118.

²⁰ See: page 125, *al-Ayyām*, part iii.

²¹ Vide:*al- Ayyām*, part iii, p. 126.

²² *ibid*, p. 126.

²³ Vide *al- Ayyām* part III, p. 130.

²⁴ Vide *al-Ayyām*, part III, p. 131.

²⁵ *ibid*, pp. 134-35.

²⁶ *ibid*, p. 150.

²⁷ Fortunately Tāha had a pair of suit which was made at the time of his marriage in Paris.

²⁸ *Al-Ayyām*, part III, p. 152-153.

²⁹ ... the complete title is *Avec toi. Dula France al'Egypte: "un extraordinaire amour"*. That is why in its Arabic translation we get the title as : *Ma'aka, min Fransaila Misr, 'qissatuhubkharigah'*, *Suzanne wa Ṭāha Ḥyssein, (1915-1973)*.

³⁰ Badruddin Arudki was born in Damascus in 1942. He did his *Licenciate* in Law, then in Philosophy from Damascus University. Having completed teaching course in Sociology from Paris University he did higher diploma in Social Studies in 1976, and completed Ph.D under the supervision of Prof. Jacques Berque from Paris University in 1981. Soon he joined the UNESCO as a permanent delegate of Kuwait. Having served in various capacities in the Institute of Arab World he became the Asst. Director General of it from 2008 to 2012.

He was a prolific writer, known for cinematic journalism, literary criticism and as a remarkable translator of Arabic and French. He has about thirty books in his credit on Sociology; he has translated *Avec toi* of Suzanne in 1987 from French and *'The Last one Like Me'*, a novel by Jose Saramago into Arabic, on the other hand his *'Select Anthology of Contemporary Poetry of Yemen'* is a French translation from Arabic.

³¹ Which was reprinted in the *Uneffort* in January 1935, edited by George Hanin, the article: Ṭāha Hussein, *Ma compagne*, vide: marginal notes, No. 16, *Ma'aka*. p. 289.

³² See marginal note no.3 with reference of "Ṭāha Hussein, *Au-delà du Nil, textes choisis et présentés par Jacques Berque, Connaissance de l'Orient*, Gallimard/UNESCO, Paris, 1977.

³³ *Ma'aka*, Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture, 2015, p. 26.

³⁴ *ibid*, p. 31-32.

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 32.

³⁶ *ibid*, pp. 32-33.

³⁷ *ibid*, p. 34.

- ³⁸ *ibid*, p. 48.
- ³⁹ This villa is situated at Giza on the way to the Pyramids, about twenty miles away from Cairo.
- ⁴⁰ Senghor (1906-2001) was born in Senegal; taught African languages in various institutes of France; in 1960 he was elected President of the Republic of Senegal.
- ⁴¹ Dr. Zakir Hussain, an academician and President of India (from 10th May, 1967 to 3rd May, 1969).
- ⁴² Jacques Berque (1910-1995) was a scholar of Anthropology, Sociology, History, and Linguistics; this French scholar was born in Algeria; he worked there from 1936 to 1953; then became a professor in the College de France and taught the Contemporary Social History of Islam; besides the translation of the holy *Qur'an* he has several books in his credit; he played a great role in consolidating Arab-French relations
- ⁴³ *Ma'aka* pp. 191-93.
- ⁴⁴ A religious scholar from al-Azhar and grand Mufti of Cairo.
- ⁴⁵ *ibid*, pp. 52-53.
- ⁴⁶ Suzanne Bresseau (1894-1989), was born at Bligny-sur-Ouche of Cote-d'Or, France; was baptised at the hand of her maternal uncle Father Gustave Forniih; she was the first girl to pass twelve standard from Montpellier; again she did graduation from there and had studied Latin, English and French. She had a number of Christian as well as Muslim friends in Cairo; among them a few were: Jan Francis, the wife of Rimon Francis, (who was Ṭāha's student and was a professor of French in the Cairo University and had translated *Du'āul Karawān* into French); Father George Shahata Qanwati, the famous orientalist and specialist in medieval Arab philosophy; Mary with whom we frequently come across in *Ma'aka*; Lewis Majoril, the wife of Wasif Ghali Pasha; Emelene Victor, the wife of Mahmud Khalil; Loret Jabra, etc.
- ⁴⁷ *Ma'aka*, pp. 40-41
- ⁴⁸ *ibid*, pp. 90-91
- ⁴⁹ Who after his brother Taufiq Shahata, was Ṭāha's secretary; see for details, marginal notes, *Ma'aka*, p. 308.
- ⁵⁰ An ancient holy city in Egypt.
- ⁵¹ Isma'il Ṣidqi Pasha (1875-1950): the leader of the National Party; he was the chief minister from 20th June, 1930 to 22 September, 1933 and again he became the chief minister from 17th February to 9th 1946; it was he who forced Ṭāha Ḥusayn to resign on 29th March 1932 on the plea of publication of the book "*Fial- Shi'r al- Jāhili*" six years before; due to which Ṭāha had to quit the University quarter in Heliopolis.
- ⁵² Professor Louis Massignon (1883-1962), became a temporary member of the Institute of Eastern Monuments in Cairo in 1906; in 1912-13 he was invited by King Fuad for teaching in the newly built Cairo University where Ṭāha Ḥusayn was his student. Thereafter he was a professor of Sociology and Sociography of the Muslims in the College de France from 1926 to 1954. He

was one of the founder members for dialogues between the Catholics and Muslims; in 1934 he became one of the five European members of *Majma'ual-Lughatal-'Arabiah*. During his four years stay in Cairo he established Chasubles along with Mari Kahil which further developed as Sainte-Marie de la Paix in the Greek Catholic church in 1950 and in Cairo also. See for details: foot note No. 135, *Ma'aka*, pp. 310-11.

⁵³ Vide : *Ma'aka*, pp. 92-93.

⁵⁴ Aḥmad Lumfi al- Sayed (1872-1963), was the founder-editor of *Al-Jarida* and one of the founders of the Egyptian University and was its Rector till 1942; then he was the chief of the *Majma'ual-Lughatal-'Arabiah* and one of the greatest liberalists of Egypt.

⁵⁵ Names of some foreign teachers of Egyptian University who claimed that Ṭāha should be reinstated were : Birjistrasa, Waddell, Grant and Levu Della Vida; and one British professor also wrote letters to Ṭāha expressing his deep concern. Vide, *Ma'aka*, p. 99.

⁵⁶ *Ma'aka*, p. 102.

⁵⁷ *ibid*, p. 104.

⁵⁸ Vide: *Ma'aka*, p. 108.

⁵⁹ He used to go there twice a week from Cairo and worked more than six hours until he completed all necessary works; but after the fall of Nahhas lāha was removed from there as he was removed from the post of Director General of Culture; vide : *Ma'aka*, p. 122.

⁶⁰ Nallino (1872-1938) was a famous Italian orientalist who was a member of the Arabic Language Academy of Cairo. He studied contributions of the Arabs in Geography and Astronomy and published many Arabic and scientific works.

⁶¹ 158 شأنه شأن بطل دانتى يحمل المصباح معلقا إلى ظهره ليضيء طريق الذين يتبعونه. معك، ص

⁶² Vide:*Ma'aka*, P.162.

⁶³ 165 "تعالى إلى ذراعي، وضعي رأسك على كتفي، ودعي قلبك يصنني إلى قلبي". معك، ص

⁶⁴ Emilio Garcia Gomez (1905-1995) was a Spanish scholar of Arabic; after studying in the Complutense University, Madrid, he was sent to Cairo by the Spanish government where he became a student of Ṭāha; later he became a professor of Arabic in the University of Granada; afterwards he became the ambassador of Spain to many countries; and wrote : *Tarikho Isbānia al-Islāmiah* and translated *al-Ayyām* into Spanish, as "Los Dias", in 1954, Valencia. For further study see marginal notes No. 237, *Ma'aka*, p. 329.

⁶⁵ Al-Hamra (corrupted into Alhambra), the Red Palace or City, capable of holding within its circuit forty thousand men; it was built by Muḥammad ibn Yusuf, commonly known as ibn al-Aḥmar, a ruler in Spain. Granada's superb remnant of Muslim Spain, al-Hamra has been excellently described by Syed Ameer Ali; vide: *A Short History of the Saracens*, Macmillan, 1961, pp. 567-68.

⁶⁶ He translated *al-Ayyām*, part II, into English, entitled “*Stream of Days*”.

⁶⁷ It is: على قدر أهل العزم تأتي العزائم وتأتي على قدر الكرام المكارم.

i.e. To the degree of the determination of a person, he does spell (magic)
And to the degree of nobleness of a person, noble deeds are done.

⁶⁸ Edward Morgan Forster (1879-1970), a British scholar, novelist, story writer; travelled to various parts of Europe, went to Egypt, Germany and India in 1914 with the scholarship of humanity, G. L. Dickenson; he is credited for his books: *A Passage to India*, *Howards End*; his five novels have been cinematised.

⁶⁹ Better known as Makarios, (1913-1977), was the Bishop of the Orthodox Church, Cyprus; in December 1959 he was elected the President of Cyprus and for successive two terms he remained president till his death.

⁷⁰ Vide: *Ma'aka*, pp. 172-174.

⁷¹ Bertrand Russel (1872-1970) was a philosopher, logician, writer, social critic, and a British peace activist; he won the Nobel Prize in 1950 for literature.

⁷² Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was a great scientist and he is famous for his ‘Theory of Relativity’.

⁷³ Scheitzer (1875-1965) was a Protestant Christian, an organ player and a music teacher who established a hospital in Lambarene; he was recipient of Nobel Peace Prize in 1952.

⁷⁴ Beria (1899-1953), who was made the Chief of NKVD by Stalin and played a major role in the history of the Soviet Communist Party.

⁷⁵ In this connection H. E. Vincenzo Soro, the ambassador of Italy, along with a large group of delegates, reporters and photographers had come, handed over a gift to Ṭāha on his seventieth birthday and two Italian translations of *al-Ayyām*, part I and part II; vide: *Ma'aka*, p. 199

⁷⁶ For these awards H.E. Angel Sagaz, the ambassador of Spain and H. E. Villar Palasi, the minister of education, Spain, along with large number of Egyptian and Spanish dignitaries had gone to Ramatan; Ṭāha was bestowed upon with a golden ring, a medal (both on behalf of the Madrid University) and two certificates while he was in a green blanket and convocation cap as per the convention of the Madrid University.

⁷⁷ Ivo Andric, (1892-1975), was a Yugoslavian writer and diplomat who fully devoted to literature after the World War II; he received the Nobel Prize in 1961.

⁷⁸ Han Suyin, (adopted the name Elisabeth Comber) was born in China in 1917; was a medical practitioner, social researcher and writer of novels and autobiography.

⁷⁹ Regis Blachere (1900-1973), was a French orientalist who devoted his whole life in the research of Arabic language and literature; he was instrumental in the preparation of Arabic-French-English dictionary and credited for annotations on the holy *Qur'an* (in three volumes) .

⁸⁰ Dawlat Abyaz (1884-1978) was an Egyptian actress, famous for tragedy; and she was the wife of famous Lebanese actor George Abyaz.

⁸¹ Usuf al-Sibai (1917-1978) was a novelist, journalist; graduated from the Army College and ended his military service in 1952; he is credited for his thirty three volumes, containing novels, stories and dramas; he had established the Union of the Arab Writers along with Ehsan Abdul Quddus in 1977.

⁸² vide: *Ma'aka*, p. 208.

⁸³ She was the grand-daughter of Ṭāha and Suzanne.

Tagore in Persian World

M. Firoze

By the term 'Persian World', we generally mean those countries where Persian is spoken, and which, critically speaking, are mainly three — Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan.¹ The language, which we refer to as *Persian* in English, is called *Fārsi* in Iran, *Dari* in Afghanistan, and *Tojiki* in Tajikistan. *Fārsi* and *Dari* have a common script, which, though based on the Arabic script, is actually a Persianized version of the latter and which deserves to be called Persian Script². In contrast to them, *Tojiki* is written in Cyrillic script, which is quite alien to those who are accustomed to reading the Persian works written in Persian script, and as such, the Persian literature produced in Tajikistan is not popular in other countries. From this point of view, it is only Iran and Afghanistan that virtually count for the Persian World.

But if we look upon the term 'Persian World' from the cultural point of view — and, in that case, it will be more proper to use the term 'Persianate World' — India too may be included in it, because Persian had been the official language of the Indian subcontinent for about six hundred years and, though not spoken today, it is studied at different levels in the country, and its impact may be felt on a number of modern Indian languages, particularly on Bengali, Hindi and Urdu, which contain many Persian words and expressions. Moreover, India had produced in the past a vast literature in Persian language, known as the Indo-Persian literature.

As such, all the works that have been produced in Persian language, relating to Rabindranath Tagore, whether in Iran, Afghanistan or India, would come within the purview of my present paper.

¹Text of the paper presented in the programme, "Tagore in Perso-Arab World", organized by the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, on August 20, 2018.

1. Introduction

Since Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was not only the first Bengali and the first Indian, but rather the first Asian, to win the Nobel Prize in Literature for his immortal poetic collection, *Gitanjali*, in 1913, he had caught the attention of many countries in Asia in those days, particularly Iran, whose cultural relations with India go back to time immemorial.

But what made the Iranians all the more interested in Tagore and his works, was the poet's visit to Iran on an official invitation in April 1932 and his staying there as the State Guest for about a month, during which he was accorded warm reception by the officials as well as by the people at Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan and other cities and felicitated by the Iranians on the occasion of his 71st birthday, celebrated in Tehran, on the 6th May, 1932.

As Tagore's visit to Iran — a detailed account of which has been given by the poet himself in his article in Bengali, under the caption "*Pāraśye*"³ — was an event of great cultural significance not only for Iran but also for Afghanistan and India. It, on the one hand, prompted the scholars and writers in these countries to produce scholarly works on Tagore as well as to translate his novels, short stories, plays and poems in Persian, while, on the other, urged the poets to laud his achievements in their Persian compositions.

As a result, we today possess an extensive representation of Tagore in Persian literature, ranging from Persian books and articles on him and Persian translations of his novels, short stories, plays, poems and other works, including *Gitanjali*, to those Persian poems which are written in praise of Tagore. So I would like to first give an outline of all such works that have come to my knowledge, and then, from among these works, I will take for brief discussion those three recently published ones which I have been able to go through.

My present paper will, therefore, be in two parts. The first part will be under the caption, "Persian Works Relating to Tagore: A Brief Outline"; and the second part under the caption, "Persian Works Relating to Tagore: A Discussion on Three of Them".

2. Persian Works Relating to Tagore : A Brief Outline

The Persian works relating to Rabindranath Tagore comprise Persian books and articles written on his life and thought, Persian translations of his novels, short stories, plays, essays and speeches, as well as of his poetic collections, including *Gitanjali*, and under this purview also come those poems which are written in praise of Tagore in Persian language. A brief outline of these works is given below:

2.1: Persian Books on Tagore's Life and Thought

Rābindrānāt Tāgur: Shā'er o Filsuf-e Bozorgavār-e Hindi (Rabindranath Tagore: A Great Indian Poet and Philosopher) — by Mohammad Mohit Tabātabāyi: It is the earliest Persian work on the life and thought of Rabindranath Tagore. It was written by the well-known Iranian scholar Mohammad Mohit Tabātabāyi and published at Tehran in April, 1932, when Tagore was on his Iranian tour. It contains three articles which were previously published by Tabātabāyi in the Persian daily *Irān*. The captions of these three articles are: life and works of Tagore; thoughts of Tagore; and the teaching-methods of Tagore, with special reference to Shantiniketan.⁴

Tāgur va Maqām-e Ou (Tagore and his Greatness) — by Sa'id Nafisi published at Tehran in 1961. The book is a collection of those articles which were written by Nafisi and published in a series in the Persian daily *Iran* in 1932, when Tagore was on his visit to Iran.⁵

Ta'sir-e Erfān-e Islami bar Tāgur (Impact of Islamic Mysticism on Tagore) — by Dr. Parvindokht Mashhour. It was published by Jalil Publishers, Mashhad, Iran, in 2004, covering 216 pages. I will discuss the book in some details later on (in Section-3.1)

Shenākhtnāme-ye Rābindrānāt Tāgur (An Introduction of Rabindranath Tagore) — by Ali Dehbāshi. Published at Tehran in 2009.⁶

Andishehā-ye Rābindrānāt Tāgur (Thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore) — by Abolghāsem Rādfar, published at Tehran in 2010.⁷

2.2 : *Persian Articles on Tagore*

The number of articles written in Persian language on Tagore and published in different literary journals and periodicals in Iran and other countries from time to time is so huge that it is not possible to even mention the caption of each.⁸ We may, however, do so much as to take account of those articles which are included in the Tagore Numbers of certain periodicals.

Articles in the Tagore Number of *Dāneshkade-ye Adabiyāt* (Tehran University Journal), brought out on the occasion of the Tagore centenary in 1961. The subjects of some of the articles contributed by the Iranian scholars in it are as follows: 'Glimpses into the thoughts and ideas of Tagore' by Dr. Ali Akbar Siyāsi; 'Life of Rabindranath Tagore' by Ebrāhim Pour Dāvoud; 'Zoroaster in the eyes of Tagore' by Dr. Rezazāde Shafagh; 'The literary posture of Tagore' by Dr. Souratgar; and 'The plays of Tagore' by Mehdi Forough.

Articles in the Tagore Number of *Qand-e Pārsi* (Journal of Persian language and literature published by the Centre of Persian Research, Office of the Cultural Counsellor, Islamic Republic of Iran, New Delhi), brought out on the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore in 2011. The subjects of some of the articles contributed by the Iranian scholars in it are as follows: 'Rabindranath Tagore and the development of the idea of the unity of God in India' by Dr. Karim Najafi Barzegar; 'Tagore in Iran' by Reza Mostafavi Sabzwāri; 'Mowlavi and Tagore' by Parvindokht Mashhour; 'Ferdowsi and Tagore: Two World Philosophers', by Jalil Tajlil; 'Tagore and the Iranian Islamic Mysticism' by Abbās Kei Manesh; 'Tagore and Iran' by Mohammad Golbon; 'God, Reality and Love in Tagore's Poetry' by Asghar Āshnāgozar; 'Historic visit of Tagore to Iran' by Mohammad Sādegh Ziayi; 'A comparative study of the poetry of Sohrāb Sepehri and Tagore' by Effat Neghābi; 'Need of today's turbulent world is to understand the high ideals of Rabindranath Tagore' by Behram Tusi; 'Tagore's legacy: Indian National Anthem'

by Zahra Sharbafchizadeh; and 'Rabindranath Tagore: A Poet of adoration' by Leilā Hāshemiyān and Rezvān Safayi Sāber.

2.3: Persian Translations of Tagore's Novels, Short Stories and Plays

Citrā — translated under the same title by Fathollah Mojtabayi.⁹

Ghare Bāire — translated under the title *Khāne va Jahān* (Home and the World) by Mohammad Reza Tajaddod.¹⁰

Ghare Bāire — translated under the title *Khāne va Jahān* (Home and the World) by Bozorg Alavi.¹¹

Ghare Bāire — translated under the title *Khāne va Jahān* (Home and the World) by Zahra Khanlari.¹²

Bisarjan, Dāk Ghar, Sanyāsi, Mālīni and *Rāja o Rāni* — translated under the titles *Qorbāni* (Sacrifice), *Postkhāne* (Post Office), *Mortāz* (Ascetic), *Mālīni* (Malini), and *Pādshāh o Maleke* (King and the Queen) respectively by Faridoun Geragāni.¹³

Noukādubi — translated under the title *Kashti-ye Shekaste* (Shipwreck) by Abdolmohammad Āyati, published at Tehran in 2007, covering 255 pages.¹⁴

Kaṅkāl — translated under the title *Jomjome* (Skull) by Abdolmohammad Āyati, published in 2011, covering 6 pages.¹⁵

2.4: Persian Translations of Tagore's Essays and Lectures

Personality — translated under the title *Mard-e Jahāni* (The Man of the World) by Alāoddin Pāzārgādi. The book, which was compiled under the guidance of Lotfali Suratgar, and published by the University of Tehran in 1964, specifies that it contains the translations of Tagore's essays and lectures.¹⁶ Here it may be elaborated that the book entitled *Personality*, comprising six chapters, was written in English by Tagore — whose name is given on its title-page as "Sir Rabindranath Tagore, author of *Gitanjali*, *The Crescent Moon*, etc." — and published by The Macmillan Company, New York, in 1917.¹⁷

2.5: Persian Translations of Tagore's Poetic Collections (other than *Gitanjali*)

The Gardener — translated under the title *Bāghban-e Eshq* (Garden of Love) by F. G. Khatir. Published at Tehran in 1943, covering 55 pages.¹⁸

The Crescent Moon — translated under the title *Helāl-e Māh-e Now* by Mohammad Mehryār published at Isfahan, Iran, in 1963, covering 76 pages.¹⁹ *The Crescent Moon: Child Poems*, which was compiled by Rabindranath Tagore and published by The Macmillan Company, New York, in 1916, contains 40 poems which, as specified on its title-page, were “translated from the original Bengali by the author”.²⁰

Stray Birds — translated under the title *Parandehāye Sargardān*. It is included in the book *Do Panjare, Do Negāh* by Hasan Hāshemidārān, published by Abjad Publishers, Tehran, in 2001, and covers pp. 73-130 of the book.²¹

Naibedya — translated under the title *Qalb-e Khodā: Niyaesh-hā-ye Rābindrānāt Tāgur* by Māriye Qolikhāni. In the book, which was brought out by the Nowruz Honar publishers at Tehran in 2005, and covers 144 pages, it is specified that it is the Persian translation of the English rendering of the original. The English translation of *Naibedya*, referred to by Qolikhāni, is, I think, the book entitled *Naibedya, Dialogues with the Lord of the Heart*, wherein it is elaborated that this collection of 100 poems by Rabindranath Tagore is translated from Bengali into English by Shailesh Parekh and published by A Writers Workshop Saffronbird Book, 2002, Ahmedabad.²² Moreover, the translation of the expression “Lord of the Heart”, I think, should have been “*Khodā-ye Qalb*” and not “*Qalb-e Khodā*”, as the translator Qolikhāni has done in the title of his above-mentioned book.

Fireflies — translated under the title *Shabtābhā* by Alireza Behnām and published at Tehran in 2008, covering 107 pages.

2.6: Persian Translations of Tagore’s Poems (including some from *Gitanjali*)

Sad Band-e Tāgur (One Hundred Poems of Tagore) — by M. Ziauddin. It appears to be the earliest translation of Tagore’s poems into Persian, which was done by an Indian scholar and that too at Shantiniketan itself. Ziauddin, who hailed from Amritsar and knew Bengali well, had selected, from the different poetic collections of Tagore, one hundred poems, including eighteen

from *Gitanjali*, and translated them into Persian under the title *Sad Band-e Tāgur*, which was published at Santiniketan in 1935. Though the work has no Preface or Introduction, Ziauddin specifies that he has translated the poems with the help of the celebrated Iranian scholar Ebrahim Pour Davoud, who was then a Visiting Professor at the Visva-Bharati.²³ In this connection, it may be pointed out that when Tagore had gone to Iran on an official invitation from that country and stayed there as a state guest for a month, from April 13 to May 14, 1932, he had persuaded Pour Davoud to join his Visva-Bharati as a Visiting Professor, and consequently the latter taught Persian language and literature at the Visva-Bharati for several years. Ziauddin's *Sad Band-e Tāgur* thus appears to be the initial attempt to introduce *Gitanjali* into Persian. Ziauddin's book was republished with an introduction by Mostafa Tabātabāyi and brought out by Atayi publishers at Tehran in 1968.²⁴

Sorud-hāye Jāvedāni (Eternal Songs) — by Girdhari Lal Tikku. Like Ziauddin, Girdhari Lal Tikku was also an Indian scholar, who selected a number of poems from the different collections of Tagore, including three from *Gitanjali*, and translated them into Persian under the title *Sorud-hāye Jāvedāni*, which was published at Tehran in 1961, with a Foreword, written by Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee.²⁵

2.7: Persian Translations of *Gitanjali*

Nilufar-e Eshq (Nenuphar of Love) — by A. Pashayi. It was for the first time that the Iranian scholar, A. Pashayi, rendered more than half of *Gitanjali* into Persian under the title *Nilufar-e Eshq*, which was published at Tehran in 1965. The work presents the Persian translation of fifty-seven poems from *Gitanjali*, with an Introduction containing a detailed account of Tagore's life and works. The book was republished at Tehran in 1976.²⁶

Niyāyesh: Gitānjali (Benediction: *Gitanjali*) — by Mohammad Taqi Moqtaderi. Moqtaderi was the earliest Iranian scholar to translate the whole of *Gitanjali*, from its English version, into Persian prose, under the title *Niyāyesh: Gitānjali*. Moqtaderi had done his

doctorate in India and had been the Cultural Advisor of Iran in Afghanistan. His translation was published by the Information Department of the Indian Embassy at Tehran in 1963. The book opens with an Introduction, comprising 52 pages, in which Moqtaderi gives a detailed biography of Rabindranath Tagore, with special reference to the latter's visit to Iran in 1932, and reminisces how the author, who in those days was a student in a school at Shiraz, had gone to catch a glimpse of Tagore's landing at Bushahr, near Shiraz. At the end of his Introduction, Moqtaderi says that, in course of his diplomatic assignment, he had the opportunity to attend several functions on the occasion of the birth centenary of Rabindranath Tagore in 1961 and it was in one such celebration that it was proposed to him that he should take up the translation of *Gitanjali*, and accordingly he laboured for over a year to compile his above-mentioned book.²⁷

Sorud-e Niyāyesh: Git-ānjali (Song of Praise: *Gitanjali*) — by Dr. Abdol Ghafur Ravān Farhadi. He appears to be the earliest scholar from Afghanistan to present the complete translation of *Gitanjali* in Persian, under the title *Sorud-e Niyāyesh: Git-ānjali*, which was first published at Kabul in 1975 and reprinted by the Afghan Embassy, New Delhi, in 1998. I will discuss the book in some details later on (in Section-3.2)

Sorud-hā-ye Sufiyāne-ye Gitānjali va Moruri dar Zendegāni-nāme-ye Rābindrānāt Tāgur (The Mystical Songs of *Gitanjali* and a Study in the Biography of Rabindranath Tagore) — by Hasan Shahbaz. Running into 252 pages, it was published at Tehran in 1985. I will discuss the book in some details later on (in Section-3.3)

Naghmehā-ye Jāvid-e Eshq: Gitanjali (Eternal Songs of Love) — by Farāmorz Javāhari Niā. Published at Tehran in 2009, covering 192 pages. Nia clarifies that "the present book is a Persian translation of a work entitled '*Gitanjali*, Song Offerings: A Collection of Prose Translations made by the author [Rabindranath Tagore] from the original Bengali manuscript'."²⁸

2.8: Persian Poems on Tagore

Ei Tāgur (O Tagore!) — by the celebrated Iranian poet, Mohammad Taqi Bahār (1886-1951).²⁹ The poem was specially written for the 70th birthday of Rabindranath Tagore, which was celebrated at Calcutta in May 1931.

Bedin Qaside Ferastam Torā Dorud o Salām (Through this Poem, I send my Good Wishes to you) — by the noted Iranian poet, Gholāmrezā Rashid Yāsemi (1896-1951).³⁰ The poem was sent to Tagore on the occasion of his 70th birthday celebration at Calcutta in May 1931.

Naghme-ye Del-e Tāgur yā Navā-ye Nei-ye Azali (Song of the Heart of Tagore or the Voice of the Eternal Flute) — by Mohammad Kāmgār Pārsi. This poem, consisting of twenty stanzas of four lines each, is appended to the article that the Iranian scholar and poet, Kāmgār Pārsi, had written on Rabindranath Tagore under the caption "*Shā'er-e Āsmāni o Āref-e Rabbāni-ye Hind dar Irān*" (The Heavenly Poet and Mystic of India in Iran), wherein Pārsi's designation is given as the Head of the Iran Culture House in Calcutta (*Rayis-e Khāne-ye Farhang-e Irān dar Kalkatte*). The poem, as noted therein, was recited by Pārsi on the occasion of the [98th] birth-anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, which was organized by the Nikhil Bango Sahitya Sammelan at Calcutta in May 1959.³¹ *Hamchun Ghazali bar Lab-e Tāgur Gozashti* (You Walked Past Just Like a Ghazal on the Lips of Tagore) — by a contemporary Iranian scholar and poet, Mohammad Behrāmi Asl from Tabriz. The poem, as noted therein, was composed by Asl after he had read two books of Rabindranath Tagore in the year 1993.³²

3. Persian Works Relating to Tagore : A Discussion on Three of Them

From among the works relating to Tagore that I have mentioned above (under Sections 2.1 and 2.7), I would like to present a discussion on three of them that I have been able to go through. It is as follows:

3.1: *Ta'sir-e Erfān-e Islami bar Tāgur* (Impact of Islamic Mysticism on Tagore) — by Parvindokht Mashhour, published by Jalil Publishers,

Mashhad (Iran), 2004. Total pages: 216. Size: Medium Octavo. ISBN: 964-8102-08-02. Number of copies printed 3000. Price 2000 Tumans (Iranian Currency).

The book under discussion is, authored by a woman writer of contemporary Iran, Dr. Parvindokht Mashhour. The design of its cover-page is artistic and in colour. The title of the book, running in an ascending line, divides the cover into two halves, so that in the right corner of the upper half is a fine sketch of Rabindranath Tagore, while in the lower half is given the name of the author as Dr. Parvindokht Mashhour, and below it lies the picture of the Taj Mahal in full view.

The book opens with "*Chekide*" (Abstract), which is just a single paragraph, consisting of seven lines in Persian. The translation of "*Chekide*" into English is also given on the last page of the book. It runs thus:

This research entitled "The Impact of Islamic Mysticism on Tagore", the great Indian poet and the contemporary prophet of peace and friendship. The most important points discussed in it are: A brief introduction of mysticism, historical background of Iran and India relationship; the origin of Islamic mysticism in India and its relationship with Buddhism school; a brief biography of some of the most important sufis whose teachings have caused to improve Islamic thought and Islamic mysticism in India; Tagore's family and their mystic trends; a short introduction about Shantiniketan, Visva Bharati and Bauls; and a long discussion about Maulana [Rumi] and Tagore and about Hafez and Tagore as well.³³

Though it is not possible to discuss all the chapters of the book, I may pick some interesting points from the different chapters. For example, in the fourth chapter, the author, while discussing the contributions of Sufis in the Indian subcontinent, speaks of Dara Shekuh in the following words:

Dara Shekuh had made frantic efforts for establishing love and cordiality between the followers of Hinduism and Islam and tried to achieve this object by bringing out the similarities between the two religions in his book *Majma'ul-Bahrain*.³⁴

Dr. Mashhour points out that Dara Shekuh's translation of *Upanishads* into Persian under the title *Serr-e Akbar* was "his further attempt to bring the Hindus and the Muslims closer to each other."³⁵

In the fifth and sixth chapters, which deal with Tagore and his family, Dr. Mashhour speaks particularly of Tagore's father Debendranath Tagore, about whom she writes that Debendranath was such a great lover of the Iranian poet Hafez that every morning he used to recite a ghazal of Hafez along with his reading from a page of *Upanishads*, and when he was on the verge of death, he had instructed his attendants to sing a ghazal from Hafez so that he felt peace.³⁶

The seventh chapter of the book is on Shantiniketan and Visva-Bharati, which Dr. Mashhour calls *Dāneshgāh-e Tāgur* (University of Tagore). This is a very interesting chapter, because in it the author Mashhour narrates her visit to Shantiniketan and expresses her impression about it in a language which is full of the sentiments of love and adoration that she has for Rabindranath Tagore.

Her arrival in Santiniketan takes her to the memory lane, she writes:

My visit to Shantiniketan made me think of Professor Pour Davoud, who years back and in the lifetime of Tagore had come as a [Visiting] Professor of Persian [from Tehran] to the Visva Bharati University at Shantiniketan.³⁷

Mashhour speaks of her going to the Subarnarekha Bookshop and purchasing from there two books — *Bauls of Bengal* and *The Religion of Man*. From the bookshop, she moves towards the old building of Visva-Bharati, about which she writes as follows:

I walk towards the earliest building of the *madrasa* of Tagore, which is constructed on the model of the *āshrams* of ancient India (*ashrāmhā-ye qadīm-e Hind*). Whatever I had read earlier in books, was in front of me. I visualize that Tagore, with his tall stature, penetrating eyes and a loving face, and wearing a nice traditional robe, is standing there and invoking the god of humanity (*khodā-ye ensāniyat*).³⁸

Mashhour then speaks of her meeting with the head of the institution and says that when she told him that "it is my love and

devotion for Tagore (*be showq-e Tāgur*) that has brought me to this place”, he was immensely pleased and took me to the classroom and desired from me that I should say something to the students, and I talked to them in English for sometime.

Mashhour writes how she expressed her feelings about Tagore to the students. She said to them:

I wish that I sit in place of you in the classroom in this place of peace and cordiality; the fragrance of humanity makes me overwhelmed and I wish to sit here as a disciple of Tagore (*be shāgerdi-ye Tāgur be neshinam*).³⁹

Mashhour then narrates her visit to the Tagore Museum and describes the items displayed therein and at the end she speaks of her going to the market in the town and says:

The only thing that I purchased was a photograph of Tagore which was carved from the wood in a very artistic design.⁴⁰

The eighth chapter of the book has the caption: *Bā'ulhā (Darvishān-e Hind)*, which means: Bauls (The Dervishes of India). Regarding them, the author, Mashhour, writes:

The Baul dervishes are the result of the assimilation of the teachings of Muslim Sufis, the *Upanishads* and Buddhist thoughts. These dervishes, most of whom are Hindus and a few Muslims, are free from all bindings and obligations.⁴¹

And, in order to illustrate their way of life, Mashhour quotes a few verses in Persian translation from Narahari, who, she says, is “one of the Bauls”.

In this connection, it is quite interesting to note how Mashhour narrates her experiences with the Bauls in the train when she was going from Calcutta to Santiniketan. She writes:

A few moments before the departure of the train, I was conversing with one of my fellow-passengers about the Bauls, and he told me that they are generally seen in the coaches. The very next moment, I saw a Baul enter the coach, laughing and singing. He was wearing an orange-colour turban and a plain, white robe. He was playing a local musical instrument, having a bowl attached to its end,

while his associate was singing a song in Bengali, which my co-passenger kindly translated into English for me.⁴²

The song, referred to above, was re-translated from English into Persian by Mashhour and it is presented by her after the above extract to show how the Bauls express their love for human beings through their songs.

Mashhour says that there are plenty of Baul songs in Bengal and how she used to enjoy them is evident from her following words:

The cassettes [of Baul songs] that I have purchased from Calcutta and Shantiketan — despite the fact that they are in Bengali language and I haven't found anyone to get them translated into Persian — are full of emotions and ecstasy (*shur o hāl*), which cannot be described [in words].⁴³

The book under discussion is certainly a research work done on the thought and philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore by Dr. Parvindokht Mashhour. It is well documented and its bibliography contains the titles of 95 books in Persian and 11 in English. All the references are given as footnotes on each page.

3.2: *Sorud-e Niyāyesh: Git-ānjali* (Song of Praise: *Gitanjali*) — by Dr. Abdul Ghafur Ravān Farhādi. First published at Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1975. Republished by the Afghan embassy, New Delhi, in 1998. Size: Royal Octavo. Pages: 195 (Persian) + 8 (English) = 203. Number of copies printed:1000. [On the title-page it is specified that the book has been brought out in connection with the 20th Conference of the All India Persian Teachers' Association, which was held on November 1-3, 1998, at Shantiniketan, West Bengal].

The book contains not only the versified translation of the whole *Gitanjali* into Persian (Dari) by the celebrated Afghan scholar and poet, Dr. Abdul Ghafur Ravan Farhadi but also a detailed discussion on the life and thought of Rabindranath Tagore.

There is a four-page Foreword in English, datelined Kabul, September 1975, by Professor O. P. Bhatnagar, whose designation is given there as Visiting Professor, Kabul University, Kbul, Afghanistan. In his Foreword, Bhatnagar writes about Farhadi thus:

“I have had the pleasure of knowing the author for quite some time, and I hold him in high esteem. Dr. Farhadi was born in 1929 in Kabul. His father was a teacher. After completing his education in Kabul, he went to Paris in 1949 and joined Paris University for further studies. He studied Law, Political Science and Linguistics at Sorbonne, the famous seat of learning, and had the privilege of learning at the feet of Late Professor Louis Renou, the great Indianist. He took his Ph.D. degree from Paris University (Sorbonne) in 1955. In spite of his varied interests, he continued to maintain his interest in the writings of Tagore, with which he had become familiar in his days of boyhood. During his official career, after return from Paris to Kabul, he had the opportunity of visiting India several times and going to Shantiniketan, the abode of the poet and a seat of learning.”⁴⁴

Bhatnagar, who speaks of his meeting with Rabindranath Tagore at Shantiniketan in 1940, further writes:

Dr. Farhadi has done yeomen service not only to his own countrymen but to peoples in all Persian speaking countries, reminding them that the poet’s message to humanity still holds true. The poet, through his writings, reminds every one that irrespective of race, colour, creed or nationality, one should not lose sight of universality in man.⁴⁵

Farhādi, in his exhaustive Introduction (*moqaddame*), in Persian, gives a detailed biography of Rabindranath Tagore, with a discussion on the different aspects of Indian culture and civilization, particularly the teachings of the Vedas and the Upanishads, the Bhakti and the Vaishnavite cults, the Sufistic ideas and the songs of Baul faqirs that, he says, had their impact on Tagore’s thought. The author then discusses the contents of *Gitanjali* (*Matāleb-e Ash’ār-e Git-ānjali*), with an analysis of the themes contained in different poems forming the collection. Since Farhadi, as he himself writes, had studied Sanskrit as well as the modern Indian languages, including Bengali, at the University of Paris, and read the text of certain poems of Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali script,⁴⁶ he, while translating the *Gitanjali* from its English version, took care to compare each poem with its original

Bengali version too, and that is why he points out that the beauty of the Bengali text is not contained in its English version.⁴⁷

The Introduction is followed by the translation of 103 poems of *Gitanjali* in Persian (Dari), each poem numbered serially.

Farhādi's translation is, however, unique in three respects:

Firstly, it appears to be the first, and the only, versified Persian translation of the whole of *Gitanjali* and the translator has used different verse-forms in Persian to match the style of Tagore's presentation.

Secondly, unlike other translators, Farhadi has not only relied on the English translation of *Gitanjali*, but also consulted the original Bengali version of the collection, and he even points out how at certain places the English version varies from the Bengali original. Thirdly, the translation of each poem is accompanied by its commentary (*sharh*) in Persian, in which the translator brings out the inner meaning of the concerned poem by explaining the imageries and metaphors used therein and often compares Tagore's thought contained in the poem with that of the great Iranian Sufi poet, Jalaloddin Rumi, by quoting the verses of the latter at those places where the lines of Tagore contain such thoughts as appearing to be similar to those of Rumi.

The book is well documented and the bibliography contains the titles of 35 books in English, five in French, one in Urdu and four in Bengali.⁴⁸

3.3: *Sorud-hā-ye Sufiyāne-ye Gitānjali va Moruri dar Zendegāni-nāme-ye Rābindrānāt Tāgur* (The Mystical Songs of *Gitanjali* and a Study in the Biography of Rabindranath Tagore) —by Hasan Shahbaz. Brought out by Elmi Publishers at Tehran in 1984. Size: Demi Octavo. Pages: 252. Number of copies printed: 5000. Price: Not mentioned.

The book is a research work done by the noted Iranian scholar Hasan Shahbaz. It contains not merely a translation of the whole *Gitanjali* in Persian, but rather a detailed discussion on the life and thought of Tagore, whose name is written on the title-page with a one-line introduction of him within parenthesis as *nokhostin barande-*

ye jayeze-ye Nobel dar adabiyat az mashreq-zamin (the first recipient of Nobel prize in literature from the eastern world).

The book, which opens with a two-page Introduction by the author himself, is divided into two parts — the first part dealing with the life and works as well as the thought of Tagore and the second part comprising the translation of the whole *Gitanjali* in Persian prose⁴⁹ — with an appendix giving an account of the languages prevalent in the Indian sub-continent, along with a brief survey of Bengali literature.

Before presenting his translation, Shahbaz brings forth a thorough discussion on the philosophy of Tagore as revealed in *Gitanjali*. He makes it clear that the philosophical contents of *Gitanjali* have their origin in the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads* and in the thoughts of the Bauls and the Vaishnavites.

Shahbaz clarifies that his translation is made from the English version of *Gitanjali* that Tagore himself had prepared from his Bengali original. He reproduces the English text of *Gitanjali* along with its Persian translation in a way that every two facing pages of the book show the English text of each poem on the left page and its translation on the right page.

The book under discussion has three remarkable features:

Firstly, it is a well documented work with exhaustive footnotes and references, which numbering 250 in all are given on each page.

Secondly, the Bengali words and epithets and the titles of the Bengali books are transliterated in Persian within the text and in English in the footnotes to help the Iranian readers pronounce them almost correctly, and along with them are also given their Persian equivalents to make the meanings of Bengali expressions clear. Thus Debendranath's epithet *Maharishi* is *Hakim-e Kabir* (Great Sage); *Gitanjali* is *armaghān-e she'ri* (poetic gift); *Nayobiddiya* is *pishkashihā* (offerings); *prabhat sangeet* is *sorud-e sobh-gāhi* (morning song); *nouka-dubi* is *kashti-ye shekeste* (shipwreck); and *sadhana* is *shenākht-e zendagi* (realization of life).

Thirdly, the book contains 17 photographs from the life of Tagore and each photograph is elaborately described in Persian on the

reverse page. They include two facsimiles of Tagore's own handwritings — one in Bengali and the other in English — besides the reproduction of one of the paintings of Tagore preserved in the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi; the caption of the painting is given by Shahbaz as *sar-e yek zan* (Face of a Woman).

In this way, the work by Shahbaz, as discussed above, seems to be the only attempt of its kind ever made in Iran to present a thorough appreciation of Tagore in Persian *on the basis of his works*, including *Gitanjali*. But, after all, the author very judiciously remarks that a true assessment of Tagore's position among the world litterateurs can be made only by those scholars who go through his writings *in original Bengali language*.

4. Conclusion

Though, in the foregoing pages, I have tried to take account of those works that have been produced in Persian language relating to Rabindranath Tagore, I must admit that there are many which could not have come to my knowledge and a thorough research on the subject may be done only by those who visit Iran and other countries to explore the field of Tagore studies being pursued there.

Notes

¹ See, Mukesh Kumar Sinha, *The Persian World: Understanding People, Polity and Life in Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan*, Hope India Publication, Delhi, 2005.

² The Iranians had Persianized the Arabic script to suit their linguistic needs by adding four letters to the 28-letter Arabic alphabet. These four letters were invented by the Iranians by modifying the existing four letters in the Arabic alphabet. Thus *pe* was invented by adding two more dots to *be*; *che* by adding two more dots to *jim*; *zhe* by adding two more dots to *ze*; and *gāf* by adding one more stroke to *kāf*. In this way Persian alphabet consists of 32 letters in all.

³ *Robindro Rachnāboli* (Collected works of Rabindranath Tagore), Visva-Bharati publication, Santiniketan, West Bengal, 1996, Vol. XI, pp. 625-668.

⁴ Mohammad Mohit Tabatabai, *Rabindrānāt Tāgūr: Shā'er o Filsuf-e Bozorgavār-e Hindi* (Tehran, 1932), pp. 10-23, 24-50, 51-67 respectively.

⁵ Sa'ide Hoseinjāni Miāndehi, "Ketābnāme-ye Tāgūr be Fārsi dar Bāzār-e Ketāb-e Iran", *Qand-e Pārsi* (Journal of Persian language and literature published by the Centre of Persian Research, Office of the Cultural Counsellor, Islamic Republic of Iran, New Delhi), Tagore's 150th Birth Annivesary Number, 2011, p. 617.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 619.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 616.

⁸ For a select bibliography, compiled by the celebrated Iranian scholar, Mohammad Reza Ghazveh, of such articles which were published about

- Rabindranath Tagore in various journals and periodicals in Iran, see *Qand-e Pārsi*, Tagore Number, *op. cit.*, pp. 627-634. (The number of articles, which are entered in the list and arranged alphabetically, is, as per my calculation, 80).
- ⁹ *Lughatnāme-ye Dehkhodā*, Tehran, 1956, Vol. XIV, p. 222. The complete text of the play has been reproduced in *Qand-e Pārsi* (Journal of Persian language and literature published by the Centre of Persian Research, Office of the Cultural Counsellor, Islamic Republic of Iran, New Delhi), Tagore Number, 2011, pp. 28-34.
- ¹⁰ *Hind-e Now* (Tagore Number), Tehran, 1961, p. 129.
- ¹¹ *Idem*.
- ¹² Miāndehi, *op. cit.*, p. 618.
- ¹³ These five plays were brought out together in one volume, under the title *Qorbāni va Chāhār Nemāyeshnāme-ye Digar*, at Tehran, in 1961.
- ¹⁴ Miāndehi, *op. cit.*, p. 620.
- ¹⁵ The story is available in *Qand-e Pārsi*, Tagore Number, *op. cit.*, pp. 588-594.
- ¹⁶ Miāndehi, *op. cit.*, p. 620.
- ¹⁷ <https://archive.org/details/crescentmoonchil00tagoiala>
- ¹⁸ Miāndehi, *op. cit.*, p. 620.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 621.
- ²⁰ <https://archive.org/details/crescentmoonchil00tagoiala>
- ²¹ Miāndehi, *op. cit.*, p. 618.
- ²² <https://discoveredanta.wordpress.com/2009/06/27/facing-death-two-poems-from-naibedya-rabindranath-tagore/>.
- ²³ M. Ziauddin, *Sad Band-e Tāgur*, Shantiniketan, 1935, p. ii.
- ²⁴ Miāndehi, *op. cit.* p. 620.
- ²⁵ Girdhari Lal Tikku, *Sorud-hāye Jāvedāni*, Tehran, 1961, pp. i-vii.
- ²⁶ Miāndehi, *op. cit.* p. 621.
- ²⁷ For details, see Farhadi, *Sorud-e Niyāyesh: Gitānjali*, Published by Afghan Embassy, New Delhi, 1998, Introduction pp. 43-44.
- ²⁸ Miāndehi, *op. cit.* p. 620.
- ²⁹ *Indo-Iranica* (journal of the Iran Society, Kolkata), Vol. XIV, No. 2 (Tagore Centenary Number), June 1961, Persian Section, pp. 16-17. Reproduced in *Qand-e Pārsi* (Tagore's 150th Birth Annivesary Number), 2011, pp. 610-611.
- ³⁰ *Indo-Iranica* (Tagore Centenary Number), *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19. Reproduced in *Qand-e Pārsi* (Tagore's 150th Birth Annivesary Number), *op. cit.*, pp. 612-613.
- ³¹ *Indo-Iranica* (Tagore Centenary Number), *op. cit.*, Persian Section, pp. 1-15. Reproduced in *Qand-e Pārsi* (Tagore's 150th Birth Annivesary Number), *op. cit.*, pp. 562-573.
- ³² *Qand-e Pārsi* (Tagore's 150th Birth Annivesary Number), *op. cit.*, p. 614.
- ³³ Parvindokht Mashhour, *Tā'sir-e Erfān-e Islami bar Tāgur*, Mashhad, 2004, p. 216.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57-58.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 89.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 98.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 103.
- ⁴⁴ Farhadi, *Sorud-e Niyāyesh: Gitānjali*, second edition, New Delhi, 1998, English Section, Foreword by O. P. Bhatnagar, p.1.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Introduction by Farhadi, pp. 27-28.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, English Section, pp. 5-8.
- ⁴⁹ Hasan Shahbaz, *Sorud-hā-ye Sufiyāne-ye Gitānjali*, Tehran, 1985, pp. 15-120, 121-226 respectively.

*Importance of Archaeological Evidences for Constructing
History with Particular Reference to the Contribution of
Professor Sudhir Ranjan Das*

Annapurna Chatterjee

The present treatise in brief primarily deals with the importance of the excavations in undivided Bengal giving emphasis on archaeological evidences from the excavations at Rājbadidāngā for constructing history. In this scenario, contributions of an eminent archaeologist cum historian will be reflected as enlightened by Professor Sudhir Ranjan Das. Accordingly in this sphere, at first it is to be mentioned the name of the national institution like the Asiatic Society which was founded in Calcutta by the utmost efforts of Sir William Jones on 15th January 1784. He became an oriental scholar. He was assisted by his friends like Sir John Shore, Jonathan Duncan, Charles Wilkins, Francis Cladwin and others. The purpose of this institution was to inculcate and promote oriental studies, analytical methodology for historical investigations. The Society became an institution for the study of antiquities. Jones was interested in the study of Sanskrit literature. He edited Society's journal, *Asiatic Researches* where his discourses were published which contained the basic source of ideas about ancient India¹. By the early 1830s James Prinsep, Assay-master of the East India Company's mint in Calcutta became the Secretary of the Asiatic Society and played a major role in the initiation of Indological research². He is a legendary name for deciphering the two most important historical scripts of India — Brāhmī and Kharoshthī^{2a}. Till 1830 archeological discoveries were scanty though Francis Buchanan submitted three Volume Report on his Mysore survey in 1807 and his survey of Bengal Presidency in

1816^{2b}. Before mentioning the works of Rajendralal Mitra the names of Alexandar Burnes, Charles Messon, Markham Kittoe, Captain Meadows Taylor (who published his excavation results with sections), Colin Mackenzie began the study of antiquities based on inscriptions & manuscripts in South India, Francis Buchanan's (whose three volume report on his Mysore survey in 1807), survey of Bengal Presidency submitted in 1816. General Alexander Cunningham who was deeply inspired by Princep by the 1840's formulated his methodology and in 1848 offered a scheme of archaeological investigations. His aim was successful and he was assisted by J. D. Beglar, A.C.I. Carlleyle and H.W. Garrick. However, he did much for Indian archaeology. Later on far reaching academic results were the *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* and *Epigraphia Indica*^{2c}. The one may find major field archaeological discoveries of his excavations at Kankali Tila in Mathura, explorations in the Nepalese Terai and the mark at Pataliputra^{2d}. Then he spent on tours in Rajputana, Bundelkhand, Mathura, BodhGaya, Gaur, Panjab, Central Provinces, Bundelkhand, Malwa, Magnificent Stupa at Bharut, Bihar and Bengal. The excavations brought to light numerous specimens of ancient pottery. The epoch-making discovery of Cunningham was a pictographic seal along with many specimens of Harappan Pottery which in 1873 he unearthed^{2e}. He was one of the first to stress the importance of field work. Above all, he was prompt in publishing his results which is proved by 23 volume, of his survey reports. Lord Curzon in his picturesque words expressed: "His volumes constitute a noble mine of information"^{2f}. Then James Burgess started his operations in 1874. With Burgess ended an era of what he himself used the term 'architectural archaeology'^{2g}. Then a new era was ushered by Sir John Marshall which was followed by H. Hargreaves, Daya Ram Sahani, K.N. Dikshit, N.G. Majumdar and M.S. Vats. Their activities have been discussed later on. However, the name of Raja Rajendralal Mitra should be honoured as one of the pioneer Indologists. Rajendralal Mitra was born in 16th February of the year 1822. The year 1846 was a landmark in the life of Rajendralal when he was associated with the Asiatic Society. He was appointed the Assistant Secretary

and Librarian of the Asiatic Society. The learned institution with its rich treasure of books, manuscripts and antiquities and inspiring devoted scholars provided the young Rajendralal what he wanted. Rajendralal wrote voluminous works in Sanskrit³.

Rajendralal's contribution to the field of historical research was very significant. The centenary volume of the Asiatic Society (1884) contains a list of as many as 114 articles on a variety of topics – archaeology, literature, philosophy and so on to the credit of Rajendralal Mitra. It is worth mentioning that more than half of them belong to the category of history, political as well as cultural based on epigraphic sources of the time. A selection of these essays was compiled and published in 1881 in two volumes under the title *The Indo-Aryan*⁴.

Rajendralal edited an inscription found at Vijaya Mandir, Udaypur throwing light on the dynasty of Mahodaya (Kanauj) ruling between the 8th and 10th century A.D. He edited many inscriptions belonging to the Gahadavalas of Kanauj, Chandellas of Bundelkhand, Kacchapaghatas of Gowalior, etc. The discovery of Bhagalpur inscription of Nārāyaṇapāla and the history of the Sena dynasty etc, are very important in the history of archaeological sources like inscriptions, epigraphy, and numismatics⁵.

He wrote a number of papers dealing with different types of coins of ancient India. He was a believer in the theory of reconstruction of history from the bottom up. He wrote essays dealing with controversial social problems like '*Beef in Ancient India*' and '*Spirituos drinks in Ancient India*' and the like.⁶

Besides, in the field of art and architecture Rajendralal's contributions are of immeasurable value. Mention may be made of Graeco Bactrian relics from Rawalpindi, Greek sculpture in Mathura, Ajanta frescos, etc. But his *magnum opus* in this branch of cultural history was *Antiquities of Orissa* published in two volumes in 1875 and in 1888. Here in lies his intensive study of the archaeological remains of India, particularly the temples and sculptures of Orissa. Moreover he personally conducted exploratory operations during 1868-1869.⁷ Rabindranath Tagore highly appreciated and praised the inner qualities

of Rajendralal Mitra. He said he was genius inborn. At last in 1891 one of the greatest intelligentsias of the awakening of Bengal of the 19th century Rajendralal Mitra's life extinguished.

Thus the name of Rajendralal Mitra as an archaeologist and archaeological evidences for constructing rational history based on scientific investigations is memorable. After Rajendra Mitra the name of Haraprasad Sastri, a direct disciple of him should be mentioned. He helped him in the preparation of systematic catalogue of old manuscripts. He translated a number of inscriptions, collected original *puthis*, etc. In this connection the memorable names of Varendra Research Society, D. R. Bhandarkar, N. G. Majumdar, N. K. Bhattasali, R.P. Chanda and *Rāybhādur* Sarat Chandra Roy will be remembered forever in the History of archaeology and archaeologists. Here is no space for elaborating their contributions.

In this context I like to pass over my discussion on the importance of the archaeological evidences for constructing history. Archaeology is closely related with history. In this context at first sight obviously the name of Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyay comes to our mind. He was primarily an archaeologist and his fame rests chiefly on his epoch-making discovery of Mohenjodaro (mound of the dead) in Larkana district, Sind in 1922-23. Appreciating the value of the discovery of Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyay, Sir John Hubert Marshall undertook excavations at the very site. Sir John Marshall, Aureil Stein though in different areas, i.e., in Baluchistan, John Macay, Stuart Piggott, M.S. Vats, James Burges, T. Bloch, Hargreaves, Mortimer Wheeler, presently Shireen Ratnagar and many other archaeologists are associated with the excavation of this site Mohenjodaro. Another important excavation was carried out by Dayaram Sahnii at Harappa in Montgomery district, Panjab, earlier than Mohenjodaro in 1921. Marshall's assessment of the Indus Valley civilization has been revealed in his monumental work *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization*. Marshall was closely confined to the excavations of the three cities of Taxila. He introduced publication series of *Annual Reports* incorporating Survey's work from 1902 onwards⁸. Marshall was closely associated with the excavations

at Rajagriha/Rajgir (1905-06), and Bhiṭa (1911-12)^{8a}. Sāñcī stupa was discovered by General Taitor in 1818⁹. But Marshall's own major work was at the religious site of Sāñcī which still remains a work of grandeur. The post-Marshall years till 1944 saw some good works done at Mohenjodaro, Chanhudaro, Harappa and the early historic site of Ahichhatra. After Marshall there were four Director-Generals—H.Hargreaves(1928-31), D. R. Sahni(1931-35), J.F.Blackiston(1935-37) and K. N. Dikshit (1937-44)¹⁰.

Then a new chapter opened in archaeological excavation with the introduction of Mortimer Wheeler's scientific method of excavation. He was appointed Director General for the period 1944-48. A training school for teaching scientific method of excavation was set up at Taxila by the Archaeological Survey of India. He followed this method at Taxila (at present Pakistan), Arikamedu (South India) and Brahmagiri, etc. Wheeler discovered an Indo-Roman trading station in Arikamedu, near Pondicherry. Here he found Indian materials of import such as sherds of the celebrated Italian red glazed pottery bearing the stamps of the Vibii family of Arrezzo.¹¹ Then Wheeler carried on his excavation at the megalithic site in Brahmagiri. At the lowest level he found chalcolithic culture.¹² However, Wheeler paved the path to modernity in Indian archaeology. It is to be remembered that George Nathaniel Curzon's name is significant in the history of establishing archaeology in India. He introduced centralized government direction for archaeology in different branches like conservation, exploration, excavation and epigraphy¹³. In this way excavations were carried on by H. Sastri, J. A. Page and others at Nalanda where the reputed University of Nalanda as a centre of learning described by Hiuen Tsang was brought to light¹⁴. Gradually in Orissa (presently Odisha) Udayagiri, Khandagiri, Kalinganagar i.e., Sisupalgarh were unearthed. Ratnagiri was excavated by Devala Mitra, the former Director General of Archeological Survey of India. Moreover she explored and excavated several Buddhist sites at Odisha^{14a}. The most significant of this *Ratnagiri Vihāra* is the terracotta sealings with the legend '*Śri Ratnagiri-Mahāvihāriyārya bhikshu-Saṅghasya*' which gives the name of this *Ratnagiri vihāra* as it persists¹⁵.

Ratnagiri like Nalanda and Taxila was a renowned centre of learning attracting students and scholars from far and near^{15a}. Thus archaeology became an academic discipline among the general educated class of India.

As regards to archaeological evidences and the Aryans as far as I know archaeology has failed to establish the physical existence of the Aryans in India.

Following this, regional areas especially in this connection undivided Bengal has been taken obviously for archaeological evidences in a nutshell. Here also the name of Rakhal Das Bandyopadhyay has been brightened in the forefront. In 1925-26 his discovery of the mound at Pāhārpur in the Rajshahi district in North Bengal where the famous Somapura Mahāvihāra was found is memorable. The name of the place is still preserved in the neighbouring village called Ompur¹⁶. According to the short inscriptions on some clay seals found at Pāhārpur it is known that Somapura-vihāra was founded by Dharmapāla. The excavation was carried out by the eminent archaeologists Rakhal Das Bandyopadhyay and K.N. Dikshit¹⁷. As regards to North Bengal, Mahāsthāngarh in the district of Bagura in North Bengal (at present in Bangladesh) was first described by Buchanan Hamilton in 1808 A.D. and subsequently by O. Donell, Beveridge, A. Cunningham and others¹⁸. *Mahānagarī Puṇḍravardhana* as described by Hiuen Tsnag has been explored by Kashinath Dikshit, Nanigopal Majumdar and T.N. Ramachandran in 1931 A.D. The local find of an inscription in Mauryan Brāhmī of the 3rd century B.C which referred to Puṇḍaranagara has been identified with the ruins at modern Mahāsthān in Bogura district of North Bengal¹⁹.

Another important site of excavation in North Bengal was Koṭivarṣa (a place mentioned in literary sources and epigraphic records) which has been identified with modern Bāngaḍ (West Dinajpur in North Bengal)²⁰. The site is situated on the bank of the river Punarbhavā. In this connection it to be noted that an important excavation has been continuing since the last decade of the 20th century at Jagjibanpur village under P. S. Habibpur in Maldah district, North Bengal²¹. In

this area at Tulābhiṭā the ruins of *Bauddha Vihāra* named *Naddighik Udranga Vihāra* has been excavated²². At present Bangladesh at Mainamati in Comilla district Paṭṭikera mahāvihāra has been unearthed²³.

The Lālmāi-Maināmatī range is situated in the Comilla district of Bangladesh. The northern part of this range is called Maināmatī and the southern is called Lālmāi. In ancient times this region was within the *janapada* of Samatata as mentioned in the 4th century A.D. epigraph i.e., the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta²⁴. The Lālmāi-Maināmatī area has been known as a centre of Buddhist religion in the 6th century A.D. The source is a copper-plate of Mahārājā Sri Vainayagupta dated 188, i.e., Gupta era 507 A.D.²⁵

As regards to West Bengal some important sites are to be noted. The choleolithic site has been discovered at Pāṇḍurājārdhibi in the valley of the river Ajay, Burdwan district. This site was excavated by A. Ghosh, Dilip Chakrabarti (1968), P.C.Dasgupta (1965)²⁶. Mangolkot on the river Ajay valley^{26a}, Kurmitha^{26b}, Mahisdal^{26c}, Haraipur^{26d} on the river Kopai valley in the Birbhum district, Bharatpur^{26e} on the Damodar valley in the district of Burdwan and in 1952 and 1957, a typical microlithic site has been brought to light at Birbhanpur^{26f} in the district of Burdwan (West Bengal). Some important sites are also to be noted here. These are at Tamluk excavated under the direction of T.N.Ramachandran (1940) and M.N.Deshpande (1955), at Moghalmāri within Danton subdivision in the district of West Midnapur²⁷. At Moghalmari excavations have been carried out under the direction of the department of Archaeology of the Calcutta University. As a result at Moghalmāri a Buddhist vihara has been unearthed. Besides seal with post Gupta Brahmi script, stucco figure found from the North-western side of the site, Bronze Buddha figure, coins and locket of Samacharadeva, etc., have been also unearthed from the excavation site at Moghalmāri.²⁸

It is to be noted that an extensive site at Chandraketurarh in 24 parganas on the bank of the river Vidyādhari excavations were carried out under the direction of D.P.Ghosh (1956-57), Kunjagovinda Goswami

(1961-62) and Chittaranjan Raychaudhuri²⁹ (1962-63 & 1967-68). The city Chandraketugarh may be identified with Gaṅge, a place mentioned both by the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* and Ptolemy³⁰. Moreover an excavation site in South 24 parganas on the bank of the river Piyāli (a branch of the Vidyādhari river) named Tilpi is to be mentioned. In this site a submerged temple should be highlighted. It was a port as well as a city³¹. Under this panoramic view important excavated sites in north, east and western side of undivided Bengal mention may be made of another important site at Karnasuvarṇa in the district of Murshidabad in West Bengal. In 1928-29 *Rākṣasīdāṅgā* at Karnasuvarṇa was excavated by K. N. Dikshit³². However, the excavation at *Rākṣasīdāṅgā*, which was started with a view to finding out archaeological records in support of the identification of Karnasuvarṇa and its monastery *Raktamṛttikā-vihāra* failed to produce any tangible evidence for the same, excepting the discovery of the remains of the Buddhist establishments belonging to the 6th to 7th century A.D. Thus the problem of the identification of Karnasuvarṇa and *Raktamṛttikā-vihāra* remained unsolved. Then from 1962-67 *Raktamṛttikā*, the Buddhist *mahāvihāra* as mentioned by the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang was excavated at Rajbāḍidāṅgā by Sudhir Ranjan Das who at first followed scientific method of excavation which he learnt from Mortimer Wheeler³³.

Here to introduce Sudhir Ranjan Das better known as S. R. Das, fellow of the Asiatic Society, the Head of the Faculty of Archaeology in the Calcutta University. It is to be mentioned that he was born in September 1916 in a village of Madaripur subdivision in the district of Faridpur at present Bangladesh. His parents were Late Aswini Kumar Das and Late Sarojini Das. Due to acute financial condition he was bound to struggle during his educational life. He however overcame all the difficulties and obstacles. At last after obtaining M.A. Degree with First class in Ancient Indian History and Culture from the Calcutta University he was trained in field archaeology under the supervision of the renowned archaeologist Sir Montimer Wheeler at Taxila School during 1943-44. He learnt scientific method of field

archaeology and worked hard under Mortimer Wheeler at several archaeological sites of excavations at Taxila (in Pakistan), Arikamendu (in South India) and Brahmagiri, etc. Besides he obtained Degree in Anthropology, learnt social Anthropology under eminent Anthropologist Prof Nirmal Chandra Bose, etc. As regards his service life details has been discussed elsewhere^{33a}. In this scenario I like to depict his activities as an archaeologist and archaeological evidences for constructing history.

In this context, a few examples of archaeological evidences belonging to the period of pre-historic or proto-historic as well as early historical times are to be briefly narrated. In 1978 at Sijuya in the district of Paschim Midnapur a fragmentary human jaw fossil has been discovered at the depth of 40ft. below surface. The specimen appears to have been studied by the Paleontologists and Geologists who are of opinion that its age could be of the early Holocene Period (i.e., about 10,000 years BCE)³⁴. In 1982 on the Northern bank of the river Narmada near the village Hathnora, a fossilized fragment of a skull cap of cranium of head of a human being has been discovered. This skull fragment seems to have belonged to a woman of 30 years old³⁵. It is noticeable that skeletal of human being remains of different types of burials were discovered from the chalcolithic site at Pāṇḍurājārdhibi in the Ajay valley in the district of Burdwan which have been comparatively studied with those from Nevasa and Chandoli³⁶. Human remains discovered from Pāṇḍurājārdhibi are no doubt meager but very important. If more complete skeletal remains would have been discovered from Pāṇḍurājārdhibi, the picture of the Chalcolithic man in Bengal would have been more clear and positive. It may be however, contended that the Chalcolithic people of Bengal were perhaps of Australoid affiliation possessing Austro-Asiatic cultural complexes. Thus this archaeological evidences from Pāṇḍurājārdhibi are essential and significant not only for constructing early history of Bengal but also for ethnic composition of the ancient people of Bengal.

Second, in course of excavation at Rājibāḍidāṅgā (Jadupur, Murshidabad district, West Bengal) by S.R.Das during 1963-65, a few

fragmentary human skulls were discovered in the foundation trenches of the building complexes of the early centuries of the Christian era, perhaps relics of foundation human sacrifice³⁷. Anthropometric study of those human skulls has been made by S.S.Sarkar the renowned anthropologist and it shows that they belong to the brachycephalic stock³⁸. Excavations at Haraipur (Birbhum district, West Bengal) by the Eastern Circle of the Archaeological survey of India during 1964-65 yielded extended burials of children³⁹. Besides, skeleton remains of an individual in fragmentary condition from the site Kurmitha (Birbhum district, West Bengal) have been unearthed by the renowned archaeologist Dilip Kumar Chakravarti, former student of S.R.Das, presently Professor emeritus of Cambridge University. The remains date back to about 1000 BCE and are affiliated to Chalcolithic culture⁴⁰. As regards to the excavation at Rājibāḍidāṅgā a brief statement has been given before. It is known that many previous explorations were carried on at Rājibāḍidāṅgā for finding out the exact location of Raktamṛttikā Mahāvihāra. Then in 1928-29 one of the mounds at Rājibāḍidāṅgā was excavated by K.N. Dikshit who found Buddhist relics there. Many years after from 1962 onwards S.R. Das by excavating Raktamṛttikā Mahāvihāra at Rājibāḍidāṅgā as mentioned by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang in the 7th century A.D. has identified the illustrious Buddhist monastery situated near Karnasuvarna the capital of king Sasanka.

This excavation from Rājibāḍidāṅgā 1962 onwards brought to light structural remains, largely disturbed by brick-robbing, divisible into three periods. Period I: c. 2nd-3rd century to 4th-5th century; Period II: c. 5th-6th to 9th-10th century overlying a deposit of silt; Period III: c. 9th-10th to 12th-13th century. Of these, Period II is rich in cultural equipment and is distinguished by a large number of sealings. This excavation thus revealed prolific building activities, terracotta seals, sealings, figurines, pottery objects, ornamented stucco mouldings including human heads, copper, bronze, iron objects like nails, knives, nut cracker, and a chisel and shell objects, bangles and rings of copper bronze. A solid deposit of burnt wheat and rice in a granary is

noteworthy. Besides, the find of a fragmentary human skull with cut marks below the foundation of a wall of Pd. 11 shows the occasional magico religious practice of human sacrifice⁴¹. At this excavation the most remarkable finding of sealing is the *Dharmachakra*-deer symbol above and two lines of inscription below. It is noteworthy to quote the inscription. It has been possible to locate the *Raktamṛttikā mahāvihāra* as seen by Hiuen-Tsang, the Chinese traveller. It is noteworthy to quote the inscription which runs thus:

*Śrī-Raktamṛttikā Ma(hā)vaihā-
rik-ārya bhikshu-[saṅga]s[y]*⁴²

In the 7th century A.D. the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang visited the illustrious Lo-to-mo-chi or Lo-to-wei-chi rendered as *Raktamṛttikā-Saṅghārāma*. There is detailed record of the monastery in the accounts of the Chinese pilgrim. Further, the Chinese pilgrim has clearly stated in his accounts that *Raktamṛttikā* monastery stood in the neighbourhood of *Karṇasuvarṇa*, the capital city of the *Gaudāḍhipati* Sasanka, the independent sovereign of *Gaudaḍeśa* in the 7th century A.D.⁴³ With the identification of *Raktamṛttikā Mahāvihāra* at *Rājabāḍidāṅga* as mentioned by Hiuen-Tsang, *Karṇasuvarṇa*, the capital city of *Gauda* kingdom has to be sought for not far away from the said *mahāvihāra*. Thus the *Raktamṛttikā Mahāvihāra* has been identified for the first time on the basis of unimpeachable archaeological records. Here in lies the importance of the archaeologists and archaeological evidences for constructing history. The excavation report on *Rājabāḍidāṅgā* stated by Prof. Das is quoted below: 'On the strength of the seal inscriptions and other records, it may be affirmed that the famous capital city of *Karṇasuvarṇa* stood in the neighborhood of the excavated site of *Rājabāḍidāṅgā*. Thus on circumstantial evidences the present location of *Karṇasuvarṇa* stands confirmed'.⁴⁴

Lastly, Professor Das has remarked that the identification of *Raktamṛttikā* and *Karṇasuvarṇa* which has been a matter of dispute since the middle of the nineteenth century is now firmly established on solid facts of history.⁴⁵ This excavation was a great achievement

not only of the life of Professor S. R. Das but it is also very remarkable in the field of archaeology. In this context his expectations have been brought to light by his own words: 'More and more diggings at this remarkable site of Rājibāḍidāṅgā will certainly remove thick fog that envelope the early history of Bengal, and thereby opens a new chapter of Bengal's nay of India's glorious past'.⁴⁶

Besides this successful excavation during the tenure of his service, Professor Das conducted field investigations and excavations at Nannur (West Bengal). Moreover, archaeological survey operations were continued by him from village to village in the district of Bankura, Birbhum, Burdwan, 24 Parganas and especially in the district of Murshidabad in West Bengal. Side by side with archaeological field work, Professor Das led anthropological field work amongst the primitive tribes of Chhotanagpur and the Santals of Murshidabad, West Bengal and amongst the Himalayan hill tribes (especially Kinnaras), Simla hills and neighboring regions. Extensive field work amongst several tribes like the Tipras, the Halams, etc. of the State Tripura was carried on under his supervision.⁴⁷

Thus Professor Das played an important role as an eminent archaeologist. Besides he was a renowned historian as he wrote numerous articles and valuable books in English and Bengali language which were in varied dimensions. The dimensions of his researches were undoubtedly broad and varied. Professor Das worked in the periphery of folk art, religion, folk rituals called vrata and ritualistic floor painting, drawing, i.e., *ālpanā*, etc. There books and articles are pioneering works. Secondly he concentrated his attention on writing books on archaeology in English and Bengali. These are *An approach to Indian Archaeology vol.1 (in English)* and *Report on Archaeological Excavation at Rājibāḍidāṅgā*, 1968; *Archaeological Discoveries from Murshidabad District (West Bengal) pt.I; Utkhanan Viñān* (in Bengali). *Utkhanan Viñān*, the science of excavation is an encyclopedia of this science in Bengal. He wrote this book for the benefit for the student as well as for the common people. English language is a great barrier to understand a subject like archeology. Thirdly, he selected the theme

of writing the early history of a city. He wrote *Karṇasuoarṇa mahānagarī* which was the capital city of *Mahārājādhirāja Śaśāṅka*, the independent sovereign of the kingdom Gauḍa.

His outlook in writing history was impartial, critical, analytical, objective, scientific and secular. According to him, ideal history should be as it is. Like Leopold Von Ranke and Barthold George Niebuhr, the western historians as well as Kalhaṇa, the renowned historian of Kashmir of the 12th century A. D. and all famous historians of India, Professor Das believed that the strict presentation of facts is the supreme law of historical writing.⁴⁸ The facts must not be exaggerated. He has followed the above mentioned principles of history specially in his book *Karṇasuoarṇa mahānagarī*. In this book written in Bengali his attempt is to write true history. The book is unique. The book elaborately deals with the history of Bengal since the period of *Gauḍādhīpati* Sasanka and his capital city *Karṇasuoarṇa mahānagarī* till the decline of his capital city. It seems that the book is an encyclopedia of the above mentioned period with full of original sources and analytical discussions. In this book *Gauḍādhīpati* Sasanka was not glorified by exaggerations and at the same time Harshavardhana was not humiliated. His aim in writing history was to reveal the truth with insight on the basis of appropriate sources. So long Sasanka was depicted as an oppressor of Buddhism and so on, he was blamed and discredited. This black spot on the life and activities of Sasanka was brushed aside by unveiling the false curtain. The real character of an independent sovereign of Bengal was revealed by the finds of archaeological excavations at *Rājibāḍidāṅgā*. The illustrious Buddhist monastery *Raktamṛttikā Maḥāvihāra* near *Karṇasuoarṇa*, the capital of Sasanka reveals the truth that he was tolerant and showed honour to all religions what *Gauḍādhīpati* Sasanka tried to establish. Here in lies the momentous achievement of Professor Das at *Rājibāḍidāṅgā* excavation due to the importance of archaeological evidences for constructing real history. In this context it is to be mentioned the name of an article entitled *The History of the City of Kanauj and of king Yaśovarman* which was contributed by the eminent historian Vincent

Arthur Smith⁴⁹. In the Pala period the history of the capital city of Ramapāla named Rāmāvati was nicely depicted by Sandhyākaranandī in his famous book *Ramacharitam*⁵⁰.

He wrote many valuable books in English and Bengali to his credit. He had published a good number of articles in National and International journals as a testimony of his research inclination. He presented numerous papers in the monthly meetings of the Asiatic Society. His books named *Rājibāḍidāṅgā* and *Archaeological Discovery from Murshidabad* were published from the Asiatic Society. Thus he introduced new trends in Archaeology and History. Before his demise at the age of 80/81 he undertook another new theme : *Stucco Art Creations in Eastern India*. Here too new light was flooded by him.⁵¹

In this scenario the legendary name of one front rank archeologists Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyay, who is memorable for his discovery of Mohenjodaro and Somapura Mahāvihāra at Pāhārpur should also be ever remembered as an eminent historian for his unparalleled works in history and articles particularly *Age of the Imperial Guptas*, *History of Orissa* in two volumes, *Eastern Indian Schools of Medieval Sculpture*, *Vāṅglār Itihās (Prāchīn Yug and Madhya Yug)* (in Bengali), *Prāchīn Mudrā* (in Bengali), *The Palas of Bengal*, *Pri-historic and Ancient & Hindu India*, *Junior History of India*, etc. As regards to Professor Sudhir Ranjan Das it can be said that judge by any standard of scholarship he is one of the front ranked archeologists. Though he is remembered chiefly for his epoch making discovery of the illustrious *Raktamṛttikā Mahāvihāra*, probably near Karṇasuvārṇa, the capital of *mahārājādhirāja Śaśāṅka*, he should be judged as well-known historian with wide ranging interests and specialization in varied subjects and areas which are reflected in his books and articles. Above all, throughout his life he worshipped truth; he searched and tried his best to reflect on his works 'History reveals truth'. In this context it will be appropriate to quote Rabindranath Tagore.

*'Morā satyer pare mon kariva samarpan
Morā bujhiva satya pūjiva satya khūjiva satya dhan'*⁵²

Notes

- ¹ Dilip K. Chakrabarti, *India – An Archaeological History*, Oxford, 2013, p. 5.
- ² Ibid, p. 5.
- ^{2a} Dilip K. Chakrabarti, *op.cit.*, p. 6.
- ^{2b} Ibid, p. 8.
- ^{2c} Ibid, p. 8.
- ^{2d} Ibid, p. 9.
- ^{2e} Ibid, p. 9.
- ^{2f} Sourindranath Roy, *The Story of Indian Archaeology (1784-1947)*, Published by the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi 1996., p. 59.
- ^{2g} Ibid, p. 60.
- ³ S. P. Sen, (ed)., *Historians and Historiography in Modern India*, Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta, 1973, Sisir Kumar Mitra, *Rājā Rajendralal Mitra*. pp .6-7.
- ⁴ Ibid. pp. 7-8.
- ⁵ Ibid, p. 8.
- ⁶ Ibid, p. 8.
- ⁷ Ibid, p. 9.
- ⁸ Dilp K. Chakrabarti, *India-An Archaeological History*, p. 15.
- ^{8a} Ibid, p. 14.
- ⁹ Ibid, p. 14.
- ¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 14-15
- ¹¹ Sourindranath Roy, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-128, R.E.M. Wheeler, A. Ghosh and A.K. Debala, *Arikamendu, An Indo-Roman trading station on the East coast of India*, Ancient India, New Delhi, 1946, Khand-2.
- ¹² Ibid, p. 128.
- ¹³ D.K. Chakravarti, *India-An Archaeological History*, p.13.
- ¹⁴ A. Ghosh, (ed)., *An Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology*, pp. 304-305.
- ^{14a} R. P. Chanda, 1930, *Explorations in Orissa, Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India*, 44; Debala Mitra, 1971, *Buddhist monuments*, Calcutta, pp. 225-231.
- ¹⁵ A. Ghosh, (ed)., *EIA*, pp. 373-374: *ASI*, 1957-58, p. 39; 1958-59, p. 33; 1959-60, p. 38; 1960-61, p. 21.
- ^{15a} Ibid, p.374.
- ¹⁶ R.C.Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal*, Calcutta, 1971, pp.110-111, 122, 178, 340, 349, 439, 513, 630; R. C. Majumdar, (ed), *History of Bengal*, Vol. I. (Dacca, 1943) pp. 489, 504, 525; *Archaeological Survey of India*, 1922-23, p. 108, 116-123; 1925-26, pp. 107-113; 1927-28, p. 107, 38-39; K. N. Dikshit, *Paharpur; Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 55.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Dilip K. Chakrabarti, *The Archaeology of Ancient Indian Cities*, Oxford, 1995, *Mahāsthāngarh*, pp. 216-217; Nazimuddin Ahmed, *Mahāsthān (A Preliminary Report of the recent Archaeological Excavation at Mahāsthāngarh)*, Dept. of Archaeology and Museum, Bangladesh, reprint, 1981.

- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Ibid. p. 217; K.G. Goswami, 1938. Dist. Dinajpur, Bangarh, Rājbari Dhibi.
- ²¹ *Purāvṛttva*, Pratnatattva-O-Samgrahalaya, Paschimvanga Sarkar, 1407 BS./2000, pp. 64-65.
- ²² Ibid. p. 64.
- ²³ Abul Kasem, *Kumillār Itihās, Ādi parva*, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2008, p. 83; *Maināmatī – Devaparvata*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1997; S. R. Das, *Karṇasuvarṇa mahānagarī*, Kolkata, 1992, p. 224, 186, 177, 43, 34, 19, 4.
- ²⁴ Abul Kasem, *Kumillār Itihās, Ādi parva*, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2008, p. 83; *Maināmatī – Devaparvata*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1997, pp. 2, 77; D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Calcutta University 1965, p. 262; *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, p. 6.
- ²⁵ *Maināmatī – Devaparvata*, pp. 17-18, 78; D. C. Sircar, *op.cit.*, p. 340; *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Calcutta, VI, p. 53
- ²⁶ The results of the excavations at Pāṇḍurājārdhibi have been vividly written in *Exploring Bengal's Past* edited by P.C.Dasgupta, 1966 and R.C.Majumdar's *History of Ancient Bengal* (pp.22-24). 'Pāṇḍurājār Dhibi', Dilip K. Chakrabarti, *The Archaeology of Ancient Indian Cities*, p. 218, oxford 1995, p. 158; Paresh Chandra Dasgupta, 1962-65, *Excavations at Pāṇḍurājārdhibi*, Calcutta 1964, IAR-1962-63,p.43; 1963-64, p.61; 1964-65, p. 48; A. Ghosh, *An Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology*, New Delhi, 1989, Vol. II. pp. 330-331.
- ^{26a} Maṅgalkoṭ :- Amita Roy & Samir K. Mukherjee, *Excavation at Maṅgalkoṭ* (*Pratnasamikshā*, Vol.I.1992), pp. 107-134; A. Roy & S.K.Mukherjee, *Purāvṛttva*, *Maṅgalkoṭ Utkhanan: ekti prativedan*, pp.133-144.
- ^{26b} Kurmiṭhā:- A.Ghosh, *EIA*, Vol. II, p. 245; *IAR* 1967-68.
- ^{26c} Mahishdal:- A.Ghosh, *EIA* p. 331; D.K.Chakrabarti, *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 1967-68(Patiala session, I.), pp. 48-49.
- ^{26d} Harāipur :- *EIA* Vol.II, pp. 161-162; *Indian Archaeology – A Review*, 1964-65, p. 46.
- ^{26e} Bharatpur:- *EIA*, pp.66-67; S.K.Mukherjee, *Purāvṛttva*, pp. 22-23.
- ^{26f} Bīrbhānpur:- A.Ghosh, *EIA*, Vol.II, pp.78-79, B.B.Lal, pp.78-79; *Ancient India*, 14, pp. 4-48 (1958); *Purāvṛttva* pp. 20-21.
- ²⁷ Tamluk:- (ed.) A. Ghosh, *EIA*, Vol-II, pp. 430-431; *Purāvṛttva*, pp. 57-60.
- ²⁸ Moghalmāri:- Asok Datta, *Excavations at Moghalmāri* (Calcutta Asiatic Society, 2008).
- ²⁹ Chandraketugarh:- (ed.), A. Ghosh., *EIA*, Vol. II, pp. 95-96; *Purāvṛttva*, pp. 60-61; D. K. Chakrabarti, *The Archaeology of Ancient Indian Cities* *IAR*, 1956-57:29-30, 1957-58:51-52, 1958-59:55-56, 1959-60:39-40, 1960-61:50-52, 1961-62:62-63, 62-63:46-47, 1963-64:63-65, 64-65:52-53, 1965-66:59-60, 1965-67:48; Kunja Govinda Goswami, *Chandraketugarh and its Archaeological Importance* (in *Indian Museum Bulletin*, No.1.,1966); Niranjan Goswami, *Archaeological Activities in West Bengal*, *Pratnasamikshā*, Nos. 2&3, 1993-94; Gouri Sankar De & Subhradeep De, *Prasaṅga; Pratna-Prāntar Chandraketugarh* (Scholar, Kolkata, 2013); Doyel Bandyopadhyay, *Dakshin Vaṅger vānījyik vikāse Chandraketugarh; Ekṭi*

- Pratnasamikashā* (ed. Aniruddha Roy, *Itihās Anusandhān*, No. 23, Paschim Vaṅga Itihās Samsad, 2009), pp. 171-175; D.B. Gogate, *The Chandraketurgarh Tamruk Region of Bengal; Source of the early historic Rouletted Ware from India and South East Asia* (Man and Environment, Deccan College, Poona, 1997, khanda-22, No. 1), pp. 134-150.
- ³⁰ D. K. Chakrabarti, *op.cit.*, p. 218; "The Periplus & Ptolemy's Geography", R. C. Majumdar, *The Classical Accounts of India*, Calcutta, 1960, pp. 308, 375; *Indian Archaeology- A Review*, 1956-57, p. 22; Annapurna Chattopadhyaya, *The People and Culture of Bengal: A Study in Origins*, Vol. I. pt. 2, p. 439.
- ³¹ Kallol Dasgupta, *Prācīn Pāścīm Sundarvāner Nāgarāyan (Ādi Aitihāsik-o-Ādi Madhyayugīya)*, *Itihās Anusandhān*, Khanda-23, *op.cit.*, 2009), pp. 176-183; Amal Roy, *Early Historic Settlement in Piyāli Basin*; Baruipur, 2004, pp. 1-6.
- ³² (ed.), A.Ghosh., *EIA*, p.360; *Archaeological Report*, 1929, p. 143
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 360; S. R. Das, *Rājāḍidāṅga*, Calcutta 1968, pp. 33-43. (details of excavations are discussed).
- ^{33a} Annapurna Chattopadhyaya, 'on Sudhirranjan', *Purāvṛttva* (Pratnatattva-o-Samgrahalaya Adhikar-tathya-o-Sanskriti vibhag, Paschimvanga Sarkar in Bengali. 1407 BS/2000, pp. 461-465; Annapurna Chattopadhyaya, 'Studying the History of Professor S.R. Das as an Archaeologist and Historian in Perspectives of Ancient Indian History, pp. 31-49. *Proceedings of the Indian Association for Asian Pacific studies*, Kolkata, 2008.
- ³⁴ P.C.Dasgupta, *Prāgaitihāsik Vāṅglā* (in Bengali, Calcutta, 1981,1388BS, pp. 63-67.
- ³⁵ Upender Singh, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India from the Stone Age to the 12 century*, Pearson Longman, Delhi, 2009, p. 64.
- ³⁶ P. C. Dasgupta, *The Excavation at Pāṇḍurājārdhibi*, Calcutta, 1964, pp.30-34; R.C.Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal*, p. 24; A.Ghosh, (ed.), *EIA*, Vol.II, pp. 330-333. D. K. Chakrabarti, *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 29th Session (Patiala), 1967, pub. 1968. (*Disposal of the Dead in Ancient Bengal*), pp. 47-59; *Excavation at Pāṇḍurājārdhibi*, pp. 47-50; A.Ghosh, (ed.), *op.cit.*, Vol. II., pp. 94-95; *Indian Archaeology – A Review*, 1957-58, p. 67. (Chalcolithic Site Chandoli, Dist. Pune); *EIA*, Vol.II. pp.315-316; *Indian Archaeology – A Review* 1959-60, pp. 19-21; 1960-61, pp. 25-28. (Chalcolithic Site at Nevasa).
- ³⁷ S. R. Das, *An Archaeological Discoveries from Murshidabad District, West Bengal*, Calcutta, 1971, pp. 31-32; S. R. Das, *Rājāḍidāṅga*, p.25
- ³⁸ S.S.Sarkar, *Result of Anthropological Experiment*. S.S.Sarkar, *The Aboriginal Races of India*, Calcutta, 1954; Annapurna Chattopadhyay, *Diverse Ethno-Cultural Trends Into Ancient Bengal: A Study of Processes of Acculturation*, Presidential Address, Section I, pp. 6, 36; *Proceedings of Indian History Congress* (65th session Bareilly, 2004, Delhi, 2005-06), p.36; *Indian Archaeology- A Review*, 1964-65, p. 46; S.R.Das, *Archaeological Discoveries From Mursidabad*, Calcutta, 1971, pp. 31-32.
- ³⁹ *Indian Archaeology – A Review*, 1964-65.p.46; A. Ghosh, (ed.), *EIA*, Vol.II, pp.161-164.(for Excavation at Haraipur);D.K.Chakrabarti, *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 1968, *op.cit.*, p. 50

- ⁴⁰ A. R. Sankhyan, *Ancient Human Skeletal Remains from Kurmiṭhā in Birbhum District, West Bengal, 1993, A Preliminary Report, Journal of the Anthropological survey of India*. 42, pp. 139-142; (ed.), *EIA*. Vol.II., p. 245; (ed.), B. B. Lal, *Indian Archaeology – A Review, 1963-64; 1967-68*.
- ⁴¹ A. Ghosh, (ed.), *EIA*, Vol. II. p. 360; S.R.Das, *Rājbaḍidāṅga*, pp.33-43 (details of excavations are discussed).
- ⁴² S.R.Das, *Rājbaḍidāṅga*, pp. 56-57.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.; T. Watters (trans) *On Yuan Chuang's Travels in India* (Vol. I & II., London, 1905, Delhi, 1961) Vol. II., p. 191; S. R. Das, *Rājbaḍidāṅga*, p. 43; *Karṇasuarṇa mahānagarī*, (in Bengali, Kolkata, 1992), pp. 77-83; *Kie (ka)-lo-nasu-fa-la-na or Karṇasuarṇa* (Watters), *op. cit.* p. 191, A magnificent and famous establishment, the resort of illustrious brethren, *Lo-to-vi-chi*. according to Si-u-ki- and *Lo-to-mi-chih.*, according to (Watters) Yuan Chauang. The meaning of these words are *Raktavitti* or *Raktamṛttikā (Rāṅgāmāṭi)*; S. R. Das, *Karṇasuarṇa mahānagarī*, p.80.
- ⁴⁴ S. R. Das, *Rājbaḍidāṅga*, p. 58.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.43,58.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- ⁴⁷ *Purāvṛttva*, *op.cit.*, Annapurna Chattopadhyay, “Sudhir Ranjan Das”, pp. 461-465.
- ⁴⁸ R.C. Majumdar, *Historiography in Modern India*, pp.39-40; G.F.Gooch, *History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1954, Chapter II., pp.14-23 about Neiburh, p. 19; regarding Ranke, pp. 72-97.
- ⁴⁹ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*,1908; S. P. Sen, (ed.), *Historians and Historiography in Modern India*, Calcutta, 1973, *Institute of Historical Studies*, p. 451.
- ⁵⁰ Majumdar, Basak and Banerjee (pub. by VRS, 1939; ed. by R. G. Basak pub. by Asiatic Society, 1969) Sandhayākaranandī's *Ramacharitam* chap. III, pp. 103, 108, 204; Annapurna Chattopadhyaya, *The People and Culture of Bengal: A Study in Origins* Vol.-I, pt1., Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., pub., 2002, pp. 170-171.
- ⁵¹ S.R. Das, *Karṇasuarṇa mahānagarī*, *op.cit.*; (ed.), M. A. Konishi, S. R. Das, *Stucco Art-Creations in Eastern India*, Centre for Asian Area Studies, Rikkyo University, Tokyo, 2000, pp. ii-iv. Professor Das pays attention to the general aspect of stucco art, such as descriptions of stucco art in Indian subcontinent, and then turns to note concrete description on stucco art in Bengal mainly based on the examples from his own excavation at *Rājbaḍidāṅga*. In the descriptions of stucco art discovered from various places in India, he attempts to give the stucco art in Bengal in a proper place in Indian Art. This book is an essential source book of stucco art in Bengal.
- ⁵² Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitavitān (dvoitīya khaṇḍa, Kalikātā, 1385 śakābda)*, p. 561.

Emperor vs Aurobindo: Revisiting a Controversial Trial of Revolutionary India

Shakti Mukherji

*The earliest formula of wisdom promises to be its last, - God, light,
freedom, immortality.*

— *The Life Divine, Sri Aurobindo Ghose*

Introduction

While reconstructing the history of struggle for independence, it was widely contemplated that the stepping of M K Gandhi in April 1919, with a programme of passive and non-violent resistance, marked the beginning of the movement for India's independence. But before Gandhi succeeded in animating the vast social movement, there have been the great intellectual movements in Maharashtra, led by B G Tilak and in Bengal, by Aurobindo Ghose, and all those who strove by their side at times up to death, enabling India to become aware of herself.

'Emperor vs Aurobindo Ghose and others', colloquially referred to as the Alipore Bomb case, the Muraripukur conspiracy, or the Manicktolla Bomb conspiracy, was a criminal case held in India in 1908, as an outcome of the overnight police raid in which fourteen boys were arrested, including Barindra Kr. Ghose, Aurobindo's brother, along with many members of his organisation and of course, Aurobindo himself, who was arrested from his Grey Street residence at midnight.

Aurobindo Ghose denied all his connections with the 'garden house at Manicktolla' (as the case came to be popularly called), though he,

along with his brother Barindra (henceforth Barin) jointly owned this ancestral property. But why this garden became the central theme of the trial and how Aurobindo Ghose was related to it and how it became a leading part of the secret revolutionary society of the early 20th century, are worth revisiting.

Brief Sketch of Early Days of His Life

Aurobindo was the grandson of the famous Rajnarayan Bose, a scholar, and one of the pioneer thinkers of 19th century Bengal, often remembered as the 'grandfather of Indian nationalism'. Aurobindo was the third son of civil medical officer Krishnadhan Ghose (MD from Aberdeen University, Britain) and Swarnalata Debi, daughter of Rajnarayan Bose. Dr. Ghose, practicing in Rangpur, now Bangladesh, sent her wife to stay with his friend Manomohun Ghose, a prominent barrister residing in the fashionable Chowringhee section of town. Here Swarnalata gave birth to her third son, in the morning of 15th August 1872. Dr. Ghose called the boy Aurobindo, Sanskrit word for 'lotus', also gave him an English style middle name, Akroyd, after his friend Annetee Akroyd, a lady who founded the Hindu Mahila Bidyalaya. At the age of five, Aurobindo, along with his two brothers, Binaybhusan and Manmohan was sent to Darjeeling, and was enrolled in the Loreto Convent School.¹

Only at the age of seven, A Akroyd Ghose found himself in Manchester, in the house and under the care of reverend William H Drewett. Dr. Ghose asked the congregational minister² not to allow the three boys 'to make the acquaintance of any Indian or undergo any Indian influence'³ and Aurobindo had his formative years totally cut off from the culture of his roots.

It is told that even in school days, Aurobindo's proficiency in Latin and Greek impressed the then English headmaster so much that he awarded him a foundation scholarship and placed him directly in the upper fifth form.⁴

Eventually, he entered Cambridge, distinguished himself as a student of European classics and passed the Indian Civil Service

examination with great credit but as he eventually planned to be absent at the required test of horse riding, he was not allowed to enter the service of the Indian government.

Returning to Motherland and Seeking Career in the Native State of Baroda

Aurobindo Ghose stepped in Bombay on 6th February, 1893. While in England, he had an interview with Maharaja of Baroda, Sayajirao Gaekowar, who incidentally was passing through London. Impressed by the young Aurobindo's educational background, the Maharaja offered him a post for a monthly salary of Rs. 200 in his estate.⁵

Ghose's life in Baroda started in the settlement department, not as an officer, but to learn the work, then in the stamps and revenue department and then sometime in the secretariat. Finally, he gravitated towards the college and entered it at first as a part time lecturer in French and then later as a regular professor of English and was finally appointed as the Vice Principal.⁶

Beginning of a Political Life

Soon after his return to India in 1893, Aurobindo contributed a series of unsigned article to the *Induprakash*, a Marathi-English daily of Bombay, at the request of its editor, K G Deshpande, his Cambridge friend. Seven articles under the caption 'New Lamps for Old' vehemently denounced the then Congress Policy of pray, petition and protest.⁷

At the age of 34, Aurobindo left a high paying job at Baroda to join the National College, (now Jadavpur University)⁸ with the intention of reformation in the framework of the education system. It was also during this period that he was increasingly interested in yoga and meditation as powerful instruments to spirituality, which to him was a corner stone of internal transformation, and would continue to play a pivotal role in his later life. While working in Calcutta, he could not ignore the inactivity and discrepancies in the then political agitation and unrest in India under the British rule, and sought to transform it by being a part of the system. Aurobindo was present at

the Congress in 1904 and again in 1906 at Barisal Conference and took a part in the counsels of the extremists party and in the formation of its fourfold programme — ‘Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education’ which the moderate leaders after a severe tussle behind the scenes were obliged to incorporate in the resolutions of 1906.⁹ He joined the Congress seeking political reforms legally and emerged as the first leader to call for the full independence of India, transforming the Indian National Congress from a passive to an active body. Even when he was in England, Ghose became the Secretary of the ‘Indian Majlis’, an association of Indian students at Cambridge, delivered many revolutionary speeches, cast off his English first time and joined a secret society called ‘Lotus and Dagger’.¹⁰

He had to establish and generalise the idea of independence in the minds of Indian people and simultaneously push first a party and then the whole nation, into an intense and organised political activity. He wanted “to capture the Congress and to make it an instrument for revolutionary action instead of a centre of a timid constitutional agitation which would only talk and pass resolutions and recommendations to the foreign government ...”.¹¹

Secret Society

Aurobindo visualised the possibility of humanity fulfilling its evolutionary destiny through a process of transformation. With brimming capacity for revolution, there was much more wisdom and planning to his vision of India, with transformation being an active part of his mission, be it the transformation of regimes, of mode of protest against the British rule, of the human kind, or even his own eventual transformation from a radical revolutionary to a spiritual leader.

‘Anushilan Samiti’ was founded by Satish Chandra Bose in 1901 and the management of the Samiti started from 24th March 1902, with Pramathanath Mitra as President and Aurobindo Ghose and Chittaranjan Das as Vice Presidents.¹² In the initial years it was not a secret society though it had a patriotic and social service agenda. In

the beginning of the 20th century, several other societies with identical programmes cropped up but only a few survived. At the time there was at Bombay a secret society headed by a Ruling Chief, a noble of the Udaipur state with the title of Thakur. Thakur was not a member of the Council in Bombay; he stood above it as the leader of the whole movement while the Council helped him to organise Maharashtra and the Maratha states. He himself worked principally upon the Indian army of which he had already won over two or three regiments. Aurobindo took a special journey to central India to meet and speak with Indian sub-officers and men of one of these regiments.¹³ Inspired by the secret societies, in Western India, Aurobindo sent Jantindranath Banerjee, an ex-soldier in Baroda State Army, to set up one such society in Calcutta with the object of imparting physical and military training to the Bengali youths as a part of the programme of resurgence of Bengal. This man who was exceedingly energetic and capable, formed the first group in Calcutta which grew rapidly (afterwards many branches were established).¹⁴

Accordingly, Jatindra set up a Samiti, camouflaged as a riding club at 106, Circular Road, in 1902 to impart military training along with horse riding. Young people and some members of the Anushilan Samiti also joined the club. But within two years, the mission was abandoned owing to prolonged ideological conflicts between Jatindra and Barindra, the two most prominent leaders of the society. Jatindra had to leave the Samiti despite Aurobindo's effort to bring about reconciliation between the two. Eventually, Barindra became the leader of Aurobindo's society.

The revolutionary activities of the secret societies started in Bengal after a decision taken in a secret meeting presided over by Aurobindo. According to Hemchandra Kanungo, "It was towards the beginning of 1906 that Aurobindo returned to Calcutta. He was followed by Charuchanda Dutta, an ICS officer, serving in western India, but with deep sympathy for revolutionary terrorist movement. The two, together with a few others, convened in Calcutta, a meeting of the secret society,

where it was decided among other things to commence 'action', to establish temples of Bhawani at suitable places and to publish an organ of the revolutionary party".¹⁵ The meeting was held at the house of Subodh Mullick at 12, Wellington Square, attended by Barindra's group and also some members of the Medinipore secret society. In spite of Barindra's earnest effort, the dream of establishing 'Bhawani Mandir', did not come to reality. But with Aurobindo's approval Barindra launched a vernacular paper called *Yugantar*.¹⁶

Beginning as a weekly, in May 1906, *Yugantar* became a daily, acting as a powerful instrument of militant nationalism, advocating complete independence and propagating the ideas of revolutionary struggle against the British. *Vande Matram*, started by Bipin Pal, in August 1906, had the same mission. Bipin Pal was the editor for some time, but due to some differences with editorial staff, Pal resigned and Aurobindo came to be the editor without being formally assigned the position.

In the meantime, Barindra had a scheme to shift the society to their ancestral garden situated at 32, Murari Pukur Road and persuaded his two elder brothers and one sister to give up their shares in favour of Aurobindo and Barindra. By mid 1907, activities started in the garden under the leadership of Barindra. Aurobindo however, wanted to sell the property to repay his father's debt.

However, by the end of 1907, about 20 boys were living and training in the garden. The activities were two-fold: religious activities included rising before sunrise, reading the *Gita* and Hindu religious books, reciting Sanskrit verses etc. and revolutionary aspects included procuring arms and preparation of resurgence.

According to Rowlatt Committee report, "the anarchist society founded by Aurobindo and Barindra Ghose in the Maniktala garden, in Calcutta, was semi religious in character; it was called as *ashrama*, word usually applied to place where *sanyasis* live, and the persons who frequented the garden combined the study of the *Bhagavad Gita* with the preparation of bombs, explosives and revolver practice ...".

Even when preparations were in full bloom, the society was lacking in knowledge of technical know-how in arms making. It was decided to send Hemchandra Kanungo abroad to learn sophisticated techniques in bomb making and in July 1906, Hemchandra departed for France.

On the other hand, Ullaskar Dutta, a bright student of Chemistry, joined the garden. He had to leave the Presidency College for thrashing Russell, a professor of logic and philosophy, with a slipper, for racist comments.¹⁷ Prafulla Chakraborty and Nalini Gupta also left Presidency College to join the garden.

Ullaskar, after joining the society in the later half of 1907 involved himself with all his thoughts and energy to the making of bombs. Eventually, he succeeded in manufacturing bombs with dynamite and picric acid fuse and the bombs he made, were tested thrice—first near Mankundu Station, second, near Chandannagar and finally between Kharagpur and Naraingarh Station, but they failed in all the trials.

After some time, Ullaskar assisted by Prafulla Chakraborty, Nalini Gupta was successful in manufacturing a more powerful bomb. On 29th January, 1908, Barin, Ullaskar, Prafulla, Bibhuti Sarkar and Nalini Gupta, went to Deoghar Hillock to test the bomb and it burst prematurely causing instant death to Prafulla and injury to Ullaskar, thus, the secret society ironically witnessed the first accidental death of its own members.¹⁸

Within a month of this sad incident, Hemchandra returned to Calcutta¹⁹ from abroad with training in the techniques of the secret society organisations and in bomb making. But here in Calcutta he faced a different situation. Two close friends of Aurobindo and top leaders of the Society as well²⁰ advised him not to see Barindra apprehending that soon he would be found in the clutches of the police. Rather Charu Dutta advised him to start a new secret society. The proposed new secret society did not materialise as the assured fund was not available. With great enthusiasm, Hemchandra approached 'Barakarta', Aurobindo, for advice, but he, in a dismissive tone asked him to see Barindra.²¹

Hemchandra had to work under the leadership of Barindra. Two other leaders of the Society, Charuchandra Dutta and Subodh Mullick had already started distancing themselves due to Barindra's impulsive conduct. The first explosive device made by Hemchandra was a 'book bomb' made for Chief Presidency Magistrate Douglas Kingsford who gained notoriety for his unjust, biased and harsh judgements. According to Naren Gossain's statement, "Barindra, Ullaskar, Hem Das, P. M. Bapat and I were among those who were decided upon ... that Aurobindo, Subodh Mallick, Charu Dutta selected the target."²² But Kingsford was saved as he did not open the parcel deeming it to be a book lent back to him.

Again, Magistrate Kingsford became the target. This ICS officer had presided over a number of press prosecutions and other Swadeshi related trials. Hearing rumour of planning revenge, the authorities had transferred him to the remote district of Muzaffarpur. Sushil Sen who was sentenced with 15 lashes for having participated in picketing against the British Judiciary and Prafulla Chaki were sent to Muzaffarpur for bringing information in the first week of April 1908. At the time of final action, Hemchandra requested Barindra not to send Sushil. Barindra agreed but asked Hemchandra to replace him. Hemchandra brought Khudiram Bose from Mednipore as a substitute for Sushil.

In the third week of April 1908, Khudiram accompanied Prafulla Chaki²³ to Muzaffarpur, with the mission of assassination of Kingsford. They were supplied with a bomb manufactured by Hemchandra and pistols he had brought from France.

This time the bomb burst without fail, but in darkness, the targeted carriage was mistaken. Instead of Kingsford, two innocent European women, Barrister Pringle Kennedy's wife & daughter, died or rather, were killed.

The incident took place at 8:35 pm on 30th April. On 29th April 1908, Aurobindo wrote in *Vande Matram*: "The disappearance of the *old* Congress announces the end of the preparatory stage of the

movement, the beginning of a clash of forces whose first shock will produce chaos. The fair hopes of an orderly and peaceful evolution of a self- government, which the first energies of the new movement had fostered are gone for ever. Revolution, bare and green, is preparing her battlefield, mowing down the centres of order which were evolving a new cosmos and building up the materials of a gigantic downfall and a mighty new creation. We could have wished it otherwise, but God's will be done." [*Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. I, p. 891].

Aurobindo had never been to the Muraripukur garden, still the above lines lead us to believe that he had prior knowledge that two young men set off for Muzaffarpur to assassinate Kingsford. Aurobindo admitted in his *Tales from the Prison* that on May 1908, he received a telegram from Muzaffarpur by Shyamsundar Chakraborty and learnt about the bomb outrage and killing of two European women. The very same day's issue of the *Empire* had the news that the Police Commissioner had said that he knew the people involved in the murder and that they would soon put them under arrest.²⁴ Aurobindo must have warned Barindra to move out of the garden. Other sources also informed him about the police raid but adamant and overconfident Barindra could not manage to leave the place in time. In the night of 1-2 May, 1908, eight premises were raided in all, and 25 people were arrested, including 14 from the garden. Aurobindo was arrested from 48, Grey Street, simultaneously.

Nalinikanta Gupta who was residing over the garden, remembered, "We were all arrested in a body. The police made us stand in a line under the strict watch of an armed guard. They kept us standing the whole day with hardly anything to eat... in the evening, the order came, "follow us". But follow where? ... we were taken to the lock-up at the Lalbazar Police Station". (Reminiscences. pp. 22-23, 25).

There they remained for two days and two nights "herded together like beasts and shut up in a cell" with no food, then they were taken to Alipore Jail.

The arrest of an intellectual national leader like Arabindo led to a major political upheaval and conflict in the then Bengal. This was

reason enough to put the government in an uncomfortable situation which is why the Chief Secretary of Bengal Mr E A Gait affirmed in his report to the Home Secretary of the Govt. of India on 16th May 1908, "The Lieutenant-Governor (of Bengal) has no doubt that his is the mastermind at the back of the whole extremist campaign in Bengal... In the interest of peace and good government, it is absolutely necessary that this man should be removed from the political arena."²⁵

Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki had separated after the farce of an operation. Prafulla shot himself, and Khudiram, even without the counsel of a defence lawyer, confessed. Trial ended in no time, and on 11th August, Khudiram was sent to the gallows at 6 am.

These were not the only tragic deaths. Barindra's confession in the police custody helped them to arrest Naren Gossain, who later became an approver, and when the news came out, as the facts suggest, two of his co-convicts, Satyendra Nath Bose and Kanailal Dutta procured firearms into the jail and killed him. Naren's statement was recorded, but could not be produced in front of the court because of his death, had he survived this would go directly against Aurobindo.

Naren Gossain's assassination happened on 1st September, 1908; an immediate judiciary enquiry was held the day after. On 7th September, 1908 the case was tried before Mr. Roe with a jury of three Indians, two Europeans, and with Babu Ashutosh Biswas, representing the Crown. On 9th September 1908 the jury returned a unanimous verdict of guilty against Kanai Lal Dutta, and in the case of Satyendra, three jurymen were for not guilty and two for guilty. The judge disagreed with the verdict of the majority in favour of the acquittal of Satyendra and referred the case to the High Court. On 21st October 1908, the sentence on Kanai was confirmed and Satyendra Nath Basu was found guilty and sentenced to death. Kanai Lal Dutta was executed on 10th November 1908 while Satyendra was hanged the next day.²⁶

The Trial

The police seized huge quantity of printed and manuscript materials like books, journals, booklets, pamphlets etc. One rifle, three guns,

nine revolvers and huge quantity of ammunitions, empty bomb shells and some bomb making materials were recovered from the 'Garden' and from 134 Harrison Road a live spike bomb and several half-finished bombs, dynamites, detonators, fuses etc in three boxes and one bag were seized.²⁷

Defence lawyer Chittaranjan Das stated "... in this case 206 witnesses were examined, 4000 documents were filed, and the exhibits, consisting of bombs, revolvers, ammunition, detonators, fuses, poisonous acids and other explosive materials numbered 5000".²⁸

This was the first and arguably the biggest trial for waging war against the King Emperor in colonial India. Aurobindo and Hemchandra did not make any statement either before the Police or the Magistrate. Aurobindo never made a public statement in the court. When asked by the court he said he would leave the case to his lawyers, they would speak for him, he himself did not wish to make any statement or answer the court's questions. The charges framed against them included "waging war against the King" the British equivalent of high treason. The penalty for conviction was death by hanging.²⁹ Alipore bomb trial, was "the first state trial of any magnitude in India" and the first in a long line of revolutionary conspiracy cases. Barrister Eardley Norton, then at the height of his powers and reputation, was brought from Madras to head the prosecution.

It was therefore necessary to provide the defence of Aurobindo on an adequate enough basis. Smt Sarojini, his sister appealed to the 'countrymen' through *Vande Mataratn* (June 13, 1908) 'for help to defend a brother' and within two months Rs. 23000 were collected. Among the documents found in his house was a letter from Barin to Aurobindo saying 'we must have sweets all over India readymade for imergencies (sic)'. Norton maintained that 'sweets' was a code word for bombs, citing other documents where the word was used in this sense. Years later Barin admitted that the letter was just what Norton claimed it was. But at the time of the trial the defence was able to throw sufficient doubt on its authenticity.³⁰ We may quote a few lines

from his article "The Morality of Boycott" which was intended for the *Bande Mataram* but could not be published as it was seized by the Police and made an exhibit in the Alipore Conspiracy Case :

"Justice and righteousness are the atmosphere of political morality, but the justice and righteousness of a fighter, not of the priest. Aggression is unjust only when unprovoked; violence, unrighteous when used wantonly or for unrighteous ends ... The sword of the warrior is as necessary to the fulfilment of justice and righteousness as the holiness of the saint. Ramdas is not complete without Shivaji. To maintain justice and prevent the strong from despoiling, and the weak from being oppressed, is the function for which Kshatriya was created. "Therefore", says Sri Krishna in the *Mahabharata*, "God created battle and armour, the sword, the bow and the dagger."

(*Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. I)

After a trial that lasted a year in the Sessions Court, C P Beachcroft, ICS, who coincidentally had been in Cambridge with Aurobindo, delivered judgement on May 06, 1909. The judge convicted 19 out of 36 people. Barindra and Ullaskar were sentenced to death, Hemchandra and Upendranath, along with 8 others were sentenced to transportation for life and 7 were subjected to various terms of imprisonment. Aurobindo, along with 16 others, was acquitted. However, after the Sessions Court verdict, an appeal was made to the High Court as a result of which various sentences given by the Sessions Court were remitted, including the death sentences of Barindra and Ullaskar. Subsequently, they were sentenced to transportation for life.

In the cold early morning of 11th December, 1909, seven convicts including Barindra, Ullaskar, Hemchandra, dressed in a half sleeved kurta, a cloth that barely covered their knees and 'fetters on the legs and a wooden ticket dangling from an iron ring round the neck' marched out of the Alipore Jail, after which they were taken towards the harbour on the way to Andaman.³¹ They were the first political prisoners after the Wahabis to be transported to the island prison from where very few returned.

Apparently, this might not seem absolutely fair and Aurobindo has been criticised for his silence and equivocal attitude to the question of violence and responsibility as a leader. But, in a conversation with his associates in 1940, Aurobindo stated about his connection with the Manicktala (now Maniktala) Society, "I had nothing to do with them. It was all Barin's work. It is true that Barin used to consult me or Mallik for my advice. But the whole movement was in his hand. I had no time for it. I was more busy with Congress politics and *Vande Mataram*. My part has been undramatic."³²

Aurobindo had never admitted to his contact with the secret society. Probably as a member of a secret revolutionary society, he was bound by the oath of secrecy. But long after when the disclosure was not expected to bring harm, he confessed in a conversation in 1934, "I have done politics and the most violent kind of politics, *ghoram karma*, and I have supported war and sent men to it. Even though politics is not always or often a very clean occupation nor can war be called a spiritual line of action."

Karan Singh confirmed in his book that he had a meeting with Barindra few months before his death in 1959 in Calcutta. In a note he handed the author, Barindra writes, "Sri Aurobindo not only made organized efforts on constitutional lines to win Swaraj through Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods and practice of passive resistance including non-payment of taxes if necessary, but he organized also secret societies all over Bengal to violently oust the imperial power through armed resistance and murder of British officers and judiciary. No way for achievement of the main object was abhorrent or unwelcome to him. Except the CID department, none in the country knew Sri Aurobindo was the inspirer or leader of the secret party of violence too."³³

Aurobindo, after release, found the whole political aspect of the country altered; most of the Nationalist leaders were in jail or in self-imposed exile, there prevailed a discouragement and depression. He was determined to continue the struggle and held weekly meetings in Calcutta, but the attendance which had numbered formerly in

thousands full of enthusiasm, was now only of hundreds and no longer had the same force or life. He also went to places in the districts to speak and at one of these gatherings at Uttarpara, where for the first time he publicly spoke of his yoga and his spiritual experiences.³⁴ After his acquittal, Arabindo launched an English weekly, *Karmayogin*, followed by a Bengali weekly, *Dharma. Vande Mataram* had ceased publication after his arrest. He even attended and spoke at the Provincial Conference at Barisal in 1909. The activities of Aurobindo after acquittal created anxiety and displeasure among highest level of administration. While the chief of the intelligence wrote, "The article on *Karmojoga* shows Aurobindo would seek to convert Hinduism generally into a militant creed", the Home Secretary of the Govt. of India felt, "Aurobindo's influence was even greater than it was before he was arrested and it will probably grow." [Home Dept. Notes No. 230-248, Oct. 1909, pg 2; cited by Amiyo K. Samanta]

Thus, Aurobindo was not likely to remain free for long. In the middle of February 1910, when Aurobindo was in *Karmayogin* office, busy with his work, Ram Majumdar, one of his associates came abruptly and informed him that he was going to be arrested. Aurobindo is said to have come out the office, walked towards the *ganga ghat* and left Calcutta for Chandannagar and later sailed off to Pondicherry, where he arrived in April, 1910.

Even then, Lord Minto, the Viceroy and Governor General of India, unaware of Aurobindo's whereabouts, wrote to Morley, the Secretary of State for India (26 May, 1910), "As to the celebrated Aurobindo, ... I can only repeat what I said to you in my letter of April 14th, that he is the most dangerous man we now have to reckon with ... and has an unfortunate influence on the student class and Indians who know him quite well, have told me, he is quite beyond redemption".³⁵ But, by then for Aurobindo, the issue had transformed, the experience of trial and jail had given him time to gravitate to the next level of spiritual capacity, it was time for another transformation. The bigger issue in sight now, was the redemption of humanity from its present

ignorant state and at Pondicherry, he plunged into an exploration of the reign of consciousness, determined to unravel the destiny of man.

“Long after this controversy is hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation ceases; long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India, but across distances and lands. Therefore, I say, that the man in this position is not only standing before the bar of this court, but before the bar of the high court of history.” This was said, not by a disciple, but Aurobindo’s defence lawyer, Chittaranjan Das, who threw himself heart and soul into Aurobindo’s defence, and there is no doubt about the fact that this meant much more to him than just defending a client.

Conclusion

Sri Aurobindo’s first preoccupation was to declare openly for complete and absolute independence as the aim of political action in India. He made no secret of his view that force and violence may be justified in the struggle for national emancipation. He said clearly “It is the nature of the pressure which determines the nature of the resistance. Where, as in Russia, the denial of liberty is enforced by legalized murder and outrage, or as in Ireland formerly, by brutal coercion, the answer of violence to violence is justified and inevitable”. (*The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, pp. 29-31).

After his acquittal he expressed clearly his support and admiration for the youths, labelled terrorist by the oppressor. In *Karmayogin*, 22nd January, 1910, he wrote, “The secret conspirator rejoices in silence, the terrorist finds his opportunity in darkness. Is not the liberty of free speech and free writing denied to the Russian people by more rigorous penalties, a more effective espionage, a far more absolute police rule than any that can be attempted in India? Yet where do the bomb and the revolver, the Terrorist and the secret conspirator flourish more than in Russia?”

The undeniable influence this man had on the people around him speaks of a profound, yet, unfathomable character that can be seen

neither in white nor in black light. One of the most real leaders of India, perhaps the greatest visionary, who was so invested in bringing about a spiritual reform in the human kind that he did not hesitate even if his revolutionary image went for a toss after the Alipore bomb case. Perhaps, a death sentence was not destined to be the abrupt end of his potential for *karma*. Instead of escaping from it, he took the opportunity to invest on *karma*, and continued to do so in Pondicherry, long after he had ceased to be a radical nationalist, he was still quite the patriot.

It is unfortunate that a man of such powerful insight, intelligence and wisdom is so readily labelled to have manipulated judgements in his favour, while we choose to ignore the sheer knowledge that he has shared with the human kind till the very last day of his life, through his enlightening works like the *Life Divine*, or *Savitri*, which continue to guide human beings across cultures, in a spiritually enriched way of life. His concept of a resurgent Asia and finally world union will continue to inspire generations of Indians.

Notes

¹ Peter Heehs, *Sri Aurobindo : A Brief Biography*, p. 7. Also K R S Iyengar, pp. 19-26.

² Ibid, p. 9.

³ Sri Aurobindo, *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and the Mother*, p. 9.

⁴ Peter Heehs.

⁵ Ibid, p. 19.

⁶ Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself*, pp. 20-21.

⁷ Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself*, pp. 44-45.

⁸ A B Purani, *Addresses on his life*, p. 5.

⁹ Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself*, p. 71.

¹⁰ Satprem, *Sri Aurobindo on the Adventure*, p. 11; Also, *On Himself*, pp. 13-14.

¹¹ Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself*, pp. 47-48.

¹² Amiya K Samanta, *Alipore Bomb Trial*, Vol. 1, p. 58.

¹³ Sri Aurobindo, *Autobiographical Notes*, p. 70.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Accounts of the Revolutionary Movement in Bengal*, by Hemachandra Kanungo, cited by Amiya K Samanta.

¹⁶ Sri Aurobindo admitted that the book *Bhawani Mandir* was 'written by him but it was more *Barin's* idea than his. It was not meant to train people for assassination but for revolutionary preparation of the country ... something

of the kind was attempted by Barin in the Manicktala Garden. (On *Himself*, p. 85).

¹⁷ Hemchandra Kanungo, p. 236.

¹⁸ Perhaps CID was not aware of this incident. Later it is found in the Police File "Prafulla Chakrabarti was named as an accused in the Maniktala conspiracy, but was shown as absconding when the case was sent up for trial. Information received since then shows that this man was blown up at Madhupur when engaged in testing some bombs which were made there by Barin Ghosh." (Police Report, Cited in *Terrorism in Bengal*, Vol. III, p. 69).

¹⁹ Hemachandra landed in Bombay in the beginning of January 1908. Spent a few days in visiting the secret societies of Bombay, Nasik and Nagpur before arriving at Mednapore first. [Hemachandra, pp. 209-227].

²⁰ Kanungo, p. 229. Also Samama, *Alipore Bomb Trial*, p. 101.

²¹ Kanungo wrote. "Tini-e (Aurobindo Ghose) chilen sesh ashar sthol, durbhaggyo ei je, otikoste du-chaartimatro kothar uttor diye bidaay dilen; dekhe takhon abaak hoe gelam. 'Abinaashbhayake' arale jiggesh kore jenechilam, tini dhyandharona niyei naki sarbada magno thaken, karor songe baroekta katha bolenna. Jai hok, ami ki korbo, jiggesh korte bolechilen - Bariner kache jete." (p. 234).

²² Amiya K Samanta, *Alipore Bomb Trial*, p. 101 f.n.; *Life and Times of C R Das*, p. 59, cited by K R S Iyengar.

²³ Amiya K Samanta, *Alipore Bomb Trial*.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Cited in S. R. Bakshi, *Struggle for Independence*, pp. 72-73.

²⁶ Amiya K Samanta, *Alipore Bomb Trial*.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *Life and Times of C R Das*, p. 59, cited by K R S Iyengar.

²⁹ Peter Heehs, pp. 56-57

³⁰ Ibid, p. 58.

³¹ Barindra Kr. Ghosh, *The Tale of My Exile*.

³² *Talks with Sri Aurobindo* by Nirodbaran, cited in *Alipore Bomb Trial* by Amiya K Samanta.

³³ Karan Singh, *Prophet of Indian Nationalism*, p. 112.

³⁴ Manoj Das *The hours of God*, p. viii.

³⁵ See *Terrorism in Bengal*, Vol. iii. P. 69.

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Occurrence of Wild Pineapple in the Garo Hills

Pratibha Mandal

Internet searches regarding the native place of pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) made till mid-December, 2021 generated the name of one of the two “worlds” of the globe, viz., the New World and the name of one continuous area of the same, that is, tropical and subtropical America.¹ The concerned websites provide also the information that the plant has been introduced elsewhere.² The website of Britannica on the plant contains the information that the Portuguese were apparently responsible for early dissemination of the pineapple. They introduced it to Saint Helena shortly after they had discovered that island in 1502. Soon after, they carried it to Africa and, by about 1550, to India. Before the end of the 16th century, cultivation of the species had spread over most of the tropical areas of the world, including some of the islands of the South Pacific.³

Now, from the above-mentioned information, it may be assumed that the Botanical Survey of India (henceforth, BSI) also shares them because the BSI exploration map for five states of North-east India, accessed in December 2021, shows the South Garo Hills district of Meghalaya (See ‘Map-1’)⁴ as “well explored” (i.e., “> 80%” according to the BSI’s estimate).⁵ But, surprisingly, a fieldwork relating to a research on Garo medicine that I, the present author, conducted through 2010-2013 among the Garos – a matrilineal and originally shifting cultivator tribe⁶ majority of which live in the Garo Hills (in the state of Meghalaya, India) – revealed that some parts of a wild variety of the plant are used as ingredients in that medicine. The particular subtribe⁷ from which I obtained the information was Ruga,

the territory of which, called Rugapara, is situated in the South Garo Hills district. The local name obtained from the concerned informant-healer for the variety is *burungi anaros*⁸, in which the Garo term *burungi* means wild and the Indo-Aryan term *anaros* means pineapple. Moreover, while I had obtained the Ruga information about the wild variety of the plant in October, 2010, I happened to see the variety (See 'photograph-1') in March 2012 in the Emangri Forest which falls within the territory of the Gara-Gangching subtribe and is situated in the same South Garo Hills district. Besides, the jungles situated in and surrounding Rugapara, as I have been reported by the concerned Ruga informant-healer, also contain the wild variety.

Map-1. Status of Survey by BSI



Courtesy: BSI Website for Exploration Maps of Five States:
Accessed on 2 Dec., 2021

However, since I am not a botanist, I did not realise the significance of the occurrence of the wild variety of pineapple in the Garo Hills immediately after my two above-mentioned field-findings. I became aware of the significance of the occurrence only when, in December, 2021, I considered the two following points together: i) the internet information of the nativity of the plant, and ii) the Garo indigenous name of the wild variety of the same that I found in the dictionary entitled *Kubidik: A Garo-English-Assamese Dictionary* by H. W. Marak published



Photograph-1. Wild Variety of Pineapple
(Emangri Forests, South Garo Hills district, March 2012.
Photo : Author.

in 1975. Like all Garo-English dictionaries this dictionary also has an entry for the term *anaros*. But while the others give only its English meaning, viz., 'pineapple', this dictionary gives also a two-word Garo term, i.e., *cha-gipa sakal* (Marak 1975: 24) as its Garo meaning. The first word of the Garo term itself again consists of two different Garo words: *cha* (spelt also as *chaa*, *cha-a*) and *gipa*. Of several meanings of the first word, that is, *cha/chaa/cha-a*, those which are applicable to the present context are: "to grow", "to be ready for use" and "to eat" (Ibid: 79). Of the two meanings of *gipa* the one which is used as 'adjectival suffix' (H. W. Marak 1975: 173) is "good". Thus, the Garo compound word *cha-gipa* may mean "cultivated" or "good to eat". The word *sakal*, according to the same dictionary, means in Garo *anaros buring* in which *buring* is an alternative spelling of *burung*, and means "forest" (Ibid: 79). Thus, *cha-gipa sakal* means "it is the *sakal* which is 'cultivated' or 'eatable'". This coinage (i.e., *cha-gipa sakal*) of an indigenous equivalent for the

Indo-Aryan equivalent *anaros* for pineapple, therefore, indicates that the Garos at first perceived the cultivated variety of the plant, which was introduced among them, in reference to their native variety (*sakal*) that grows in their forests naturally. An additional support for this inference may be obtained from P. R. Marak's (2010) Garo-English dictionary which registers the term *sakal* and gives its meaning as 'a century plant' and 'a pineapple', and not as *anaros* or simply 'pineapple' which denotes the cultivated variety of the species *Ananas comosus*.

However, on the basis of my field-experiences, I dare say that the term *sakal* was never a pan-Garo term for the wild variety of pineapple. Rather, it is likely that there were several different subtribal names for the plant, and both the Rugas and the Gara-Gangchings – in whose territories I was reported and found the natural occurrence of the wild variety – had their respective local names other than *sakal*. But both of the above-mentioned subtribes seem now to have forgotten them as a result of gradual modernization of the tribe as a whole, which, in its turn, has been an inevitable outcome of the political history of the Hills since the colonial period. Indeed, the smaller subtribes including the Rugas⁹ have either entirely or almost lost their dialects due to intensive culture contacts with the technologically more advanced societies, especially since the Independence of the country. The present day pan-Garo language is, as they say, a mixture of dialects of the Ambeng and the Awe who – as may be learnt from the description and map of the territories occupied by the hill subtribes given by Playfair (1909: 59-61) – respectively constitute the largest and second largest subtribes. The term *sakal*, therefore, is likely to be either an Ambeng or an Awe one to which the compiler of the Garo-English-Assamese dictionary (i.e., H. W. Marak), presumably, belonged. This means that the wild pineapple does not only occur in the South Garo Hills district but also in some other districts of the Garo Hills.

Therefore, though the term *sakal* seems now to have been entirely replaced by *anaros burung* or *memang anaros*, its recording in H. W. Marak's Garo-English-Assamese dictionary published in 1975 and the

occurrence of the plant in the jungles of the Garo Hills clearly show that the wild variety of pineapple is a natural and not a 'naturalized' plant in the Garo Hills. This entitles the Garo Hills – presumably, a single place in the whole of the Old World being reported only now in this communication – to be recognized as another native place of the species *Ananas comosus* or pineapple. The geo-botanical significance of the occurrence is obvious.

Finally, since I am neither a botanist nor a geologist, I think, I should add that giving any geo-botanical explanations for this natural occurrence of the wild variety of pineapple in the Garo Hills is beyond my capacity.

Acknowledgement

The significant finding reported in this brief communication is a product of my research project on Garo medicine that was funded by the 'History of Science' wing of Indian National Science Academy (New Delhi) for a tenure spreading from June, 2010 to August 2013. The Asiatic Society (Kolkata) kindly played the role of a host institute for the project. I convey my sincere thanks to both the institutions.

Notes

¹ The followings are the websites giving these information:

- i) <<https://www.britannica.com/plant/pineapple>>, Accessed: 4 Dec. and 16 Dec., 2021.
- ii) <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/agricultural-and-biological-sciences/pineapples>>; Accessed: 14 Dec., 2021.
- iii) <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pineapple#History>>, Accessed: 24 Aug., 2020.
(The same site was again accessed on 4 and 16 Dec., 2021 which contained the same major information, though in a revised style of writing.)
- iv) <<https://www.lovebigisland.com/quick-and-remarkable-facts-about-hawaii/pineapple/>>, Accessed: 16 Dec., 2021

² See the websites given against numbers 'i' and 'iii' in Note '1'.

³ See the website given against number 'i' in Note '1'.

⁴ <<https://bsi.gov.in/rc-page/en?rcu=130,60>>; Accessed: Dec. 2, 2021 and 15 Dec., 2021.

⁵ I think, I should mention here the information available in the India Biodiversity Portal website for pineapple, that is, <<https://>

indiabiodiversity.org/species/show/228755>; accessed on 14 Dec., 2021. The website contains a single contribution by Chandra Barooah and Iftikher Ahmed (of the Assam Science Technology and Environment Council) that was uploaded in 2014. The contribution leaves the space for “Natural History” of the site as blank while gives “India, Assam” in the space allotted for “Global Distribution” and “Assam” in the space for “Indian Distribution”.

⁶ As is recognized by the Constitution of India and according to its list of Scheduled Tribes.

⁷ According to various ethnographers of the twentieth century, the Garos living in the Garo Hills are divided into some ten to twelve subtribes (Playfair 1909: 59-62; Nakane 1967: 20; M. S. Sangma 191: 134-136; etc).

⁸ Some other subtribes of the Garos call the same *memang anaros*, the word *memang* meaning ghost, spirit, etc.

⁹ I have been reported of almost total extinction of the Ruga dialect by the Rugas themselves.

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54. *A Short Historical Note on Medical Societies and Medical Journals in Calcutta.*—By LEONARD ROGERS, I.M.S.

Now that a Medical Society has once more been come to life in Calcutta in shape of a section of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the occasion of its first meeting appears to be an appropriate one for recalling former efforts in the same direction, in this, the premier seat of medical learning in India. Recently, while engaged in an examination of the older literature on fevers in India for another purpose, I was struck by the number of attempts to found medical journals in Bengal during the nineteenth century, some of which had but a short existence on account of their being dependent on the energies of one or two men, on whose removal to other spheres their offsprings came to an untimely end. The following account deals with such of these journals and societies as I have been able to find records of in the library of the Medical College, which is especially richly endowed with ancient medical literature, and I have brought a volume of each different series for exhibition to-night.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL SOCIETY OF
CALCUTTA, 1825-1845.

As early as March 1823 The "Medical and Physical Society" was founded in Calcutta, and in March 1825 the first volume of its transactions were published by Messrs. Thacker and Co., St. Andrew's Library, being printed for them by the Baptist Mission Press, by whom the proceedings of the Asiatic Society are still printed. It is curious to read in the preface to this volume the statement that, "It must not therefore be imagined that we are in an unexplored region, or are likely to discover new morbid conditions or indications of cure," but it was hoped that new and useful medicines might be found. At the time this volume was published 213 members had been enrolled, including most of the Bombay service as well as almost all those of Bengal and some of the Madras Presidency, so that the publications of the transactions, which included contributions from all parts of India, was rightly considered the most important work of the Society. The first President was James Hare, and the Secretary, John Adam, while the members of the Medical Board of Bengal were patrons, and the Government of Bengal allowed the Society the privilege of sending the proceedings of the meetings to its members post free during the first year of its existence. Another important feature of the Society was that both a library and a museum were started by it, the donations to which are recorded in the yearly transactions, and as at a later date Allan Webb was one of the officers, it appears to be highly probable that this collection of specimens formed the starting point of the series described in Webb's "Pathologica Indica," and consequently of the present museum of the

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Medical College, in which many of Webb's original specimens are still preserved.

The rules of the Society are printed at the end of the first volume of the transactions, from which it appears that the meetings were held on the first Saturday of every month at 8 P.M. in the rooms of the Asiatic Society where we are now gathered, and the following was the procedure: "Such communications to be laid before it by the Secretary, as had been received in the intervals. Papers to be read; and calm and temperate discussion encouraged on the subjects of which they treat. The Members will afterwards converse on professional topics in general; or communicate to the Society accounts of cases, and any interesting medical intelligence they may be possessed of." The Society was open to all medical men and veterinary officers. The subscriptions from resident members, including those at Dum Dum and Barrackpore, was Rs. 12 a quarter, and the same sum half-yearly for non-residents. The subjects for discussion included Meteorology and Medical Topography, Botany and Zoology, these subjects being well represented in the transactions, so that the functions of the Society were closely analogous to the present Natural History section of the Asiatic Society with the addition of purely medical subjects. The more important papers were circulated to the resident members before the meeting so as to encourage discussion. Medical men were admitted as visitors to one meeting only, and distinguished members of the profession were elected Honorary members, some eminent foreigners appearing among them. From a special resolution adopted on the retirement of Dr. James Hare from India, it is clear that he was the real founder of this, the first Medical Society of India.

This Society published yearly volumes of transactions from 1825 to 1827, and then bi-annual ones up to 1835. In 1837-8 six quarterly journals were distributed among the members, but in 1842 a large volume was published containing reprints of many of the papers of the last few years, and a ninth volume was issued in 1845, which is the last to be found in the Medical College library. The volumes each contained 500 or more pages, and included some coloured plates of rare diseases, while many of the papers in them are referred to in Norman Chevers' comprehensive "Commentary on Indian Diseases," published in 1886, so it is clear the Society had a successful career and its publications must have been of great utility in its early days when no other medical periodical appeared in India, and personal intercommunication between different parts of the country was very difficult and slow.

INDIA JOURNAL OF MEDICAL SCIENCE (CORBYN'S JOURNAL),
1834-1838.

In the meanwhile a monthly medical journal had made its appearance in 1834, edited by Messrs J. Grant and J. T. Pearson, and two years later by F. Corbyn, and it is referred to in some later

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writings as "Corbyn's Journal," although its original title is "India Journal of Medical Science." It appeared regularly up to 1838, but I have not been able to find any later volumes. The first volume contains monthly Hospital Reports by W. Raleigh, in which the prevailing diseases and interesting cases met with at the Presidency General Hospital are described, and it is interesting to be able to trace the seasonal variations of different fevers in these descriptions of a very similar kind to those prevailing at the present day, although true malarial ones were more common in that early period than they are now. The annual volume of this journal amounted to about 500 closely printed large octavo pages, and contain some coloured illustrations of rare diseases. The journal paid its way during the first year of its existence, without any official patronage, so it evidently fulfilled a want. It is worthy of note that in 1838 the "Transactions of the Medical and Physical Society of Bombay" first made its appearance, while in the following year the "Madras Quarterly Journal of Medical Science" sprang into life. as these events may partly account for the premature decease of the pioneer Calcutta medical journal.

THE INDIA REGISTER OF MEDICAL SCIENCE.

Edited by EDWARD EDLIN, M.D., 1848.

Another attempt to found a monthly medical journal in Bengal was made in 1848, and twelve parts duly appeared during that year. Unfortunately the first four numbers are missing in the Medical College copy of this work, so I have not been able to discover the origin of this effort, although the cause of its premature decease after a single year's existence is recorded in a pathetic note to the following effect: "The uncertainty of the duration of the campaign in the Punjab and other circumstances, induce the Proprietor and Editor very reluctantly to place the 'India Register of Medical Science' in abeyance for one or two months, pending the inquiry, if any member of the profession will undertake for the profession that office of Chronicler for 1849, which it has been our pleasure to be able, however indifferently, to perform in 1848. The remoteness of the Chenab renders either literary responsibility, or literary proprietorship on the banks of the Hooghly, unadvisable." He appears, however, to have appealed in vain, and one more medical journal came to an untimely end. The volume which was published, however, contained some valuable papers, including an account of Dempster's classical inquiry into the connection of canals with malarial fevers, and his origination of the spleen test.

THE INDIAN ANNALS OF MEDICAL SCIENCE. 1853 TO 1877.

It was not long before another and more successful medical periodical was commenced in the form of a "Half-yearly Journal of

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Practical Medicine and Surgery," the first number of which appeared in October 1853. Part of the plan of this journal was to publish yearly "An original report upon one of the more important and prevalent of the diseases of Tropical climates; the papers contributed by observers in various parts of India to be placed in the hands of one or more gentlemen who had made the subject under consideration their particular study, and who will arrange the materials which they contain into the form of a systematic report of the disease." Dysentery was the first subject selected for treatment in this novel manner, but although the editors appealed for material in several successive numbers, they never succeeded in carrying the idea into execution. The 37 volumes of the "Indian Annals" are two well known to require any lengthy notice here, many classical papers having appeared in them, from the first descriptions of typhoid fever in India in Europeans and natives respectively by Scriven and Ewart in 1854 and 1856, to the excellently illustrated account of Madura foot by Lewis and Cunningham in 1876.

THE INDIAN MEDICAL GAZETTE, 1866.

The premier Indian medical journal of the present day needs but little notice here, so it will be sufficient to recall its birth in 1866 in the form which is happily still familiar to us all. That it has amply fulfilled the hopes of its founders is evident from its continued and increasing success under its present able Editor. May its weight never grow less!

RECENT CALCUTTA MEDICAL SOCIETIES.

It only remains for me to briefly recall the medical societies which have existed in Calcutta during recent years, the most flourishing of which was the Calcutta Medical Society founded in 1880. Before this Society was successfully started, an attempt was made to found a Bengal Branch of the British Medical Association, a notice of which appears in the journal of November 15th, 1879; but that particular number is missing from the Medical College library, so I have not been able to examine it, the only record to be found in the journal of about that date. In one of the presidential addresses delivered before the Calcutta Medical Society, it is stated that this last institution arose from the defunct Bengal Branch of the British Medical Association. Dr. D. B. Smith was the first president of the Calcutta Medical Society, while the Secretaries were Robert Harvey and Kenneth McLeod, the last named having been most intimately associated with it during nearly the whole of its existence, the latter part of which is within the memory of many of our members. The last meeting of which I can find any record in the pages of the "Indian Medical Gazette" was recorded in the February number of 1898. The meetings were held in the afternoons at the Medical College, and much valuable work was done by it. After its decease there was no medical

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society in Calcutta for some years, although in the sister presidency towns of Bombay and Madras, flourishing ones exist, each of which publishes a journal of its proceedings, although the number of medical men in those cities is less than in Calcutta. Some four years ago a medical club was opened by the native practitioners in Harrison Road, where papers were occasionally read; and during the present year it has been developed into a medical society with regular meetings and a publication of its own, the first number of which has very recently appeared.

Such is briefly the history of former medical journals and societies in Calcutta as far as I have been able to ascertain. Doubtless there are omissions, which I hope some of our senior members may be able to supply. It has been a subject of just reproach that the capital city of India should have been without a medical society at the beginning of the twentieth century, but I deem it of happy augury that we meet to-night in the same room where the first medical society of India met 83 years ago; and I trust we shall long continue to carry out the duty we owe to our profession, by recording, for the benefit of others less favourably placed than ourselves, the lessons learnt day by day from the extensive experience derived from practice in the great hospitals of this city.

*A Few More Medical Societies and Medical Journals in
19th Century Calcutta*

Sankar Kumar Nath

Dr. Leonard Rogers wrote a unique article on 'A Short Historical Note on Medical Societies and Medical Journals in Calcutta' in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in November, 1906. It is a brief write-up on that subject in 19th century Calcutta. Dr. Leonard Rogers was born on 18 January, 1868 at Hartley House, Plymouth. He qualified M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., in 1891 and got F.R.C.S. (London) in 1892. Later on he passed Indian Medical Service (I.M.S.) in 1893. Dr. Rogers came to Calcutta in 1895 and started working on Kala-azar. In 1897 he passed M.D. and M.R.C.P. He was posted in Calcutta Medical College as Professor of Pathology. He had at least 70 publications including some important books to his credit. His brain-child, the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene was opened in 1920.¹

Dr. Rogers discussed on some Societies like Medical and Physical Society of Calcutta, which was established in Calcutta in March 1823. It is the first Medical Society in India. A circular regarding this Society was published in the *Asiatic Journal* in January, 1824, which goes as below :

"Sir : The President and Members of the Managing Committee of the Medical Society, recently established here, have directed me to transmit to you a copy of the resolutions, adopted at their meeting on the 1st instant; and should you feel disposed to join the association, they will have great pleasure in adding your name to the list already formed."²

The Society's Journal 'Transactions of the Medical and Physical society of Calcutta' was first published in March, 1825. In the preface of the first volume, the purpose of publishing this journal is clearly written, a portion of which is worth-mentionable here :

"The history of medicine is of more interest than utility. Disease may be alleviated or subdued without a knowledge of those stages, by which the skill that has been successfully exerted, is brought within the reach of its possessor. Neither can it be expected, that the imperfect science of the *Baids* or *Hakeems* of India, shall offer any instructive lessons of their better educated brethren of Europe: still, to liberal and cultivated minds, the progress and condition of science in all ages, and

in all climes, must be objects of interest; and they will gladly welcome the light that may be thrown upon the past or present existence of Oriental medicine, by information gathered from authentic sources, or derived from actual observation...³

Besides the Medical Societies and Medical Journals, discussed beautifully by Dr. Rogers in his Note here, a few more Medical Societies and Medical Journals were also in existence in 19th Century Calcutta. Let us take a bird's eye view.

'A Society for Medical Education' was formed by Dr. W.B. O'Shaughnessy with pupils of Calcutta Medical College, in 1836.⁴

British Medical Association, Bengal branch was established in 1863 and a Journal was also published in 1865-66 thereof. Dr. Francis, Dr. Soorjakumar Goodeve Chuckerbutty and others were the Committee-members.⁵

The Medical Association of India was established in 1894. The Medical Reporter writes:

"The inaugural meeting of the Medical Association of India was held at No. 62, Ripon Street on Wednesday, the 21st Feb. there being a large number of the local members of the medical profession present, several of whom held proxies for non-resident medical men."

Dr. A.L. Sandel, Dr. U. Banerjee and others were present.⁶

The Calcutta Journal of Medicine began to be published from 1868 by Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar as Founder-Editor.

The Calcutta Medical News was published in 1880. *The Catalogue of Imperial Library* (1904) at Calcutta writes :

"A monthly abstract of the medical sciences, under the patronage of Surgeon Major D.B. Smith... and Surgeon Major J. M. Coates"⁷

The Indian Medical Record, a unique medical journal, was published on 1 January, 1890 from Calcutta and was edited by Dr. James R. Wallace.

The Medical Reporter : A Record of Medicine, Surgery, Public Health, and of General Medical Intelligencer was first published in 1892 from 35, Wellington Street, Calcutta. The editor was Dr. Lawrence Fernandez. From 1 November 1895, name of this journal was changed to '*The Indian Lancet*'.⁸

Notes

¹ *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, by Royal Society (Great Britain), 1963, pp. 261-285.

² *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register*, Vol. XVII, January-June, 1824, London 1824, p. 51.

³ *Transactions of the Medical and Physical Society of Calcutta*, Volume the first, 1825, March 31, p.iv.

⁴ Normal School (in the *Friend of India*, 25 Nov., 1841); [mentioned in the Book '*Chikitsabijnaner Itihas*' in Bengali – by Benoy Bhusan Roy, 2005, p.321].

⁵ The Bengal Branch of the British Medical Association, in the *Indian Medical Gazette*, 1 July, 1866, pp. 192-193.

⁶ *The Medical Reporter : A Record of Medicine, Surgery, Public Health and of General Medical Intelligencer*. 1 March 1894, p. 135.

⁷ *Imperial Library, Catalogue*, Part I, Vol.I, Calcutta, 1904, p. 250.

⁸ *The Medical Reporter* etc. 1895, Nov. 1, pp. 282, 283.

BOOK REVIEW

Sukta Das, *Perception of Food and Nutrition in Health and Disease : Focus on Some Classical Indian Medical Texts*, DN & S Publications, LLC. California, USA, 2018. In India, the book is only available through Amazon.

Today Novel Coronavirus pandemic has made people more concerned about their health compared to previous years. How to become immune to pathogens like viruses, bacteria and fungi is the talk of the town nowadays. *Perception of Food and Nutrition in Health and Disease - Focus on some Classical Indian Medical Texts* written by Sukta Das may provide some information available in ancient Indian medical texts to remain immune to pathogens and fight different diseases, and to become healthy. Health is wealth - was the maxim adopted in ancient India. The history of the art of keeping human body healthy is found in the practice of medicine from Vedic times in India. The author has selected five important medical treatises of ancient India to decipher the perception of food and nutrition in health and disease. These five Sanskrit texts, written between 1st century AD and 15th century AD to elaborate the perception of food and nutrition in health and disease are relevant till date. The introduction highlights the history of *Ayurveda* which is an *upanga* of *Atharvaveda* and has been written in an explicit manner. Though *Atharvaveda* contains numerous hymns addressed to God for relief from a variety of ailments such as fever, leprosy, jaundice, urinary obstruction, diarrhea, etc. it is also accompanied with the administration of herbal extracts that acted as medicine. The herbal formulary was large and impressive and included many which continued to be in popular use such as arjuna, arka, masaparni, guggulu, pippa I, bilva and darbha, etc. Over many hundreds of years, the propitiatory hymns and rituals of *Atharvaveda* lost importance especially with the advent of Buddhism. What did defy the ravages of time was the knowledge of anatomy and herbal wealth; however during the Samhita period the knowledge of herbs reappeared

triumphantly almost fifteen centuries later. The Samhita phase flagged by *Caraka* (1st century) and ended with *Vagbhata* (8th century) is generally regarded as the golden age of *Ayurveda*. The works of these three masters *Caraka Samhita*, *Susruta Samhita* and *Vagbhata* are known as *Brihadtrayi*. *Caraka* declared in the colophon repeatedly that he was no more than redacting the ancient texts. The redaction must have been so highly creative that the new text came to be acclaimed as *Caraka Samhita*. Here, *Ayurveda* got its name for the first time and moved from faith-based to a reason-based platform. *Caraka Samhita* was encyclopaedic in the coverage of medicine and won recognition as the last word in internal medicine or *Kayacikitsa*. It spread its influence as far as Central Asia where the Bower manuscript of 400 AD with numerous quotes from *Caraka* was discovered in 1890. *Susruta Samhita* had a different history. A legendary figure, *Susruta*'s name is forever associated with rhinoplasty - the only surgical procedure from India to have won global recognition in three millennia. *Susruta* was earlier to *Buddha*'s time as the trephining of the skull performed by *Iivoko*, *Buddha*'s physician is not mentioned by *Susruta* because the procedure had not then been invented. The surgical treatises that bear the name of *Susruta* and embodied surgical concepts and practice of *Dhanvantari* school was lost long ago and what we have today as *Susruta Samhita* is the redaction of the surgical tantra by *Nagarjuna* who lived few centuries after *Caraka*. *Susruta Samhita* is a comprehensive medical treatise with heavy surgical orientation. It deals with surgical procedures, instruments, care of trauma medication for local application and food and nutrition for patients after surgery. *Susruta Samhita* is notable in comparison to *Caraka Samhita* for its simpler language, more lucid treatment of topics and lower emphasis on philosophical dimensions of medical practice. *Vagbhata* composed two authoritative texts on science of medicine known as *Astanga Samgraha* and *Astanga Hridaya*. However, the identity of *Vagbhata* is uncertain and there is a debate that *Astanga Samgraha* has been written

by Vagbhata I and *Astanga Hridaya*, a condensed version of *Astanga Samgraha* by Vagbhata II. Vagbhat's works are essentially based on *Caraka* and *Susruta Samhitas*, conceptually as well as in the treatment procedures and formulations. The vast knowledge of *Ayurveda* was passed on from ancient periods through traditional practice and the last and perhaps the best work of the medieval period was *Bhavaprakash* by Bhabamisa, who resumed the tradition of writing after reviewing the developments of the intervening period. *Bhavaprakash* compiled in late 15th century, a comprehensive work written in simple language, devoid of exaggerations and overstatements and presented clearly with excellent arrangement and systematic classification of drugs and diseases. It appears to be influenced by European medical tradition and was the first to mention in detail the origin, pathology, sign, symptoms and treatment of *phiranga roga* or syphilis.

In each medical text the author has intelligently highlighted the followings - Digestive system and food metabolism, Food for nourishment and promotion of health, Classification of food and drinks, Diet in pregnancy and foetal development, Food and diet in relation to etiology and treatment of disease. In *Ayurveda* all diseases were considered to be the results of the three inherent basic life forces of the body, viz., *vayu*, *pitta* and *kapha* known as *dosas*. The disturbance in the equilibrium of *dosas* was the cause of disease and food was considered to play an important role in the maintenance of the balanced state of the body. *Aharatattva* or dietetics considered an integral part of ayurvedic texts and a properly balanced diet that would provide nourishment to the body at all stages of life, received much significance. The author of the book has beautifully presented a vivid description of the human digestive system written in these ayurvedic texts to understand how the body gets nourishment from edible food and drinks. The Sanskrit texts mentioned in this stated that life span, strength, health, immunity, energy and body heat, all depend on body

fire or Dehagni and digestion of food is the source of this body heat or agni. If the process of digestion is hampered food fails to produce energy and nourishment to the body. While the modern medicine interprets disease in terms of pathophysiology of the body, Ayurveda considers all diseases to be the result of an imbalance or derangement of three inherent basic life forces of the body viz. *vayu*, *pitta* and *kapha*. Disease manifests when the *dosas* are provoked causing a disturbance in the equilibrium (*dhatuvaisamya*). An exhaustive compendium of therapeutic, the objective of *Caraka Samhita* is to achieve *dhatu-samya* and thus protect the body from *dhatuvaisamya* and it considered food, dietetics and nutrition to play a decisive role in the maintenance of this balanced state. Das has given the reader an opportunity to know Caraka's familiarity with different food items and drinks available at that time. It was perceived that the body needs to be nurtured from birth even earlier to nourish the building blocks of the body (*dhatu*s) and vital energy (*ojas*) as the life process is dependent on them and nourishment is derived from food. An exhaustive description of edible and potable articles with their nutritive and medicinal values, digestibility, taste and property related to physiological action has been discussed in detail in all the texts mentioned in this book. The most important work of Caraka is that the food has been classified as wholesome and unwholesome for consumption. Wholesome food if consumed properly endows the entire body with development, strength, luster and hence a happy life. An exhaustive list of articles obtainable from a wide range of sources is presented in the texts which are suitable for human consumption. The adverse effects of unwholesome food items are explicitly discussed with the examples. The list and categorization of a diverse group of plant and animal products is exhaustive in *Susruta Samhita* and is found to be similar as has been presented in *Caraka Samhita*. Vagbhata's perception of food and nutrition and their relation to health and disease reflected in *Astanga Samgraha* and *Astanga Hridaya*

can be traced in the earlier works of Caraka and Susruta but the presentation is much concise and precise. An interesting feature of *Astanga Hridaya* is that it has mentioned the influence of *dosas* on the digestive system in context to the role of food derived agni. *Dosas* are factors which sustain and destroy the body when they are normal or abnormal respectively. The *dosas* are acquired from the commencement of life with the formation of embryo. Diseases are produced by the *dosas* residing in the *dhatu*s or tissues. The *dosas* are therefore, interpreted as genetic factors present in the cells which are inherited from parents to determine the constitution of a person. Both the *Astanga Samgraha* and *Astanga Hridaya* held genetic factors responsible for the state of health and manifestation of diseases. Food has been grouped as *dosa* reducing, *dose* increasing and suitable for good health. It is believed that when all the *dosas* are in equilibrium, digestion will be normal and in the case of their aggravation food digestion will be imperfect, giving rise to many diseases. For a healthy and normal life Vagbhata sets rules for food intake which says that food should be taken in a pleasant state of mind without haste and hurry and this daily regimen should be followed by the community for a positive result. According to *Bhavaprakas* total health is attained by following a proper daily and seasonal regimen viz. *dinacarya*, *nisacarya* and *ritukarya*. Disease is the result of improper regimen and lack of healthy lifestyle.

The ancient Indian medical texts paid to edible and potable items and grouped them as *sukhadhanya* (awned grains), *samidhanya* (legumes), *saka* (vegetables), *phala* (fruits), *harita* (greens), *mamsa* (meat), *madya* (alcoholic drinks), *jala* (drinking water), *gorasa* (milk and milk products), *iksu* (sugarcane and its products), *kratanna* (prepared or cooked food) and *aharayogi* (condiments) in terms of their properties and metabolism. All these texts mentioned innumerable varieties of rice which are stated to be easily digestible and recommended for daily use to remain healthy. *Bhavaprakas* mentions that most grains

when stored for at least a year become light and easy to digest. *Rakta* or Red Sali rice is considered the most wholesome among awned grains as it can mitigate *dosas*. Sastika rice alleviates all *dosas* and also easily digested. *Susruta Samhita* mentions Red Sali-rice (*Lohita Sali*) the best among rice because it is wholesome, alleviates *tridosas*, beneficial for wound healing and so on. Regular use of *swastika* or Sali varieties of rice, *mudga* (pulses), *saindhava* (rock salt), *amalaka*, barley, fruits, rain water, milk, ghee and honey is suggested. Food and diet were deemed as an important component of the early Indian holistic medical system. It is interesting that the surgical text paid attention to every detail in the preparation of food to ensure maximum benefit of nutritional support for an individual in specific pathophysiological condition and convalescences. It has been advised to have proper knowledge of wholesomeness and unwholesomeness of different types of food and drinks because they are the fuel for internal fire that provides energy, constitutional *dhatu*s and clarity of sense organs. According to these Samhitas, apart from treatment of diseases, health promoting measures were also one form of therapeutics which facilitated improvement in strength and immunity which are essential to prevent diseases and aid treatment. The importance of *lavana* or salt in our diet has been found to be important as a source of metals as micronutrients are required for our body. *Jwara* or fever was considered as the king of all diseases that caused by the derangement of *dosas* of the body and manifested as excessive heat in the body. Different light diet made of vegetable, lentil or meat soup, gruel, etc were advised for fever. Many dietary preparations have been described in these medical texts for different medical conditions. *Pathya* or diet for sick was considered necessary for the body during treatment and recovery to provide nourishment and strength to the body. Having food before the digestion of the previous meal and consumption of incompatible food items resulted in the disturbance of *dosas* causing various ailments.

The relationship between diet and etiology of diseases has been explained in *Caraka Samhita*. Several food items like ghee, honey and milk formed important component of all drugs' formulations. Leprosy and other skin diseases were thought to be associated with habitual intake of incompatible food items and liquids. *Grahani* or disorders of digestive tracts were believed to occur when food derived digestive fire was disturbed. Eating a mixture of wholesome and unwholesome food items together and having food at irregular intervals caused severe or fatal disorders. Nowadays, obesity and overweight is a growing threat to health issues and it would be interesting to note that obesity attracted attention of *Caraka* and was considered to be a result of excessive intake of heavy, sweet and fatty diet, defective metabolism and lack of exercise. It was also pointed out that both the obese and lean persons were incapable of different physical activities and likely to be affected by different diseases. Therefore, importance of maintaining correct body weight by having a regular food habit of wholesome and balanced diet was emphasized in *Caraka Samhita*. Das in her book has highlighted the role of food and diet in the etiology and treatment of cancer, heart disease, tuberculosis (*Rajayakshma*), Udara, etc. Besides being an exhaustive work on surgical knowledge and surgical procedures *Susruta Samhita* also emphasized on the importance of food and diet in health and disease. For example, treatment in conditions of excessive haemorrhage was advised to be supported by a diet containing milk, vegetable and meat soup. Surgical patients were advised not to have new cereals and sour, salty and pungent food items, products of jaggery, wine, etc as these have a damaging effect on wounds. Patients with bone dislocations and fractures were advised not to have rough food items and recommended muscle and weight promoting food and drinks particularly cow milk. Amlaka and Pomegranate were taken as these were thought to be rich in iron, vitamin C and other phytochemicals which have disease prevention properties. A wholesome diet with juice of amlaka fruit,

sugarcane and honey were recommended for Panduroga and anemia. *Raktapitta* or internal haemorrhage in stomach, intestine, liver and spleen was etiologically associated with incompatible and unwholesome food and diet. *Vagbhata's* works have focused primarily on internal medicine or *kayacikitsa*. The texts have emphasized that the desire for life and longevity would only be obtained through a healthy lifestyle or *dinacarya* that focused on correct eating habits. For daily requirement food items should include all six tastes in various combinations. Modern diet planning emphasizes on the importance of a proper combination of food items so as to meet the macro and micro nutrients requirement of the body. According to *Vagbhat* the causes of most diseases were thought to be aggravation of *dosas* due to indulgence in unwholesome food and drinks. *Astanga Samagra* and *Astanga Hridaya* mentioned diseases like diarrhea, *grahani roga*, *prameha* or diabetes, etc. Having food immediately after physical fatigue was held responsible for abdominal distress and tumor formation. A healthy eating habit, keeping in mind the quality and quantity of food, the nature of the food materials and methods of preparation, was considered very important for the maintenance of a healthy disease free body. An ideal quantity of food is defined as one that does not cause any discomfort and undergoes easy breakdown of the food materials. The physical, physiological and emotional factors were also thought to be of great importance for the processing of food and to derive the benefit of a good diet. *Bhavaprakash* by Bhavamisra is one of the three important texts known as *Laghutrayi* based on the basic principles of *Ayurveda* but enriched by new observations and new understanding of Indian medical system. *Bhavaprakash* is a collection of all important and available new information with more effective remedies compared to earlier ayurvedic texts. The plants used were described morphologically and pharmacologically in the lexicon (Nighantus) quoting their properties and uses. The *Nighantu* of *Bhavaprakash* is considered the best of all as it has resolved many

controversies by wide knowledge and clarity of thought and lucid expression. Bhavaprakash defined health as a disease free state where *dosas* are in equilibrium and disease is a state where there is an altered equilibrium of *dosas*. He elaborately described the metabolism of food and circulation of essential nutrients for nourishment of body. It appears that he understood the role of liver and spleen in the metabolic process as well as the important role played by blood in the life process. Six types of food preparations have been described. Dry solid food was found to be more difficult to digest compared to soft and liquid food items. It is interesting to note that Bhavaprakash advised chewing of salt and ginger before meals that would serve as appetizer and enhance taste of food items. Person with low digestive power should not have large amounts and avoid items which are difficult to digest. Inappropriate eating with respect to quantity and timing was associated with delayed digestion, heaviness, distension, emaciation and loss of strength. It has been recommended that two parts of stomach be filled with solid food, one part with liquid and one part be left for movement of air. Drinking water at intervals is also advised. Fasting has been in practice in many societies of the world and it has been observed that regimental fasting do play an effective role in the maintenance of body weight, blood sugar and physiological functions as well as the toxins produced in the body from undigested food. The importance of fasting in early Indian health care as part of *panchakarma* (five treatment procedures) and *rasayana* (rejuvenating methods) has also been recorded in these classical medical texts. Prevention of many diseases is possible by occasional or recommended fasting which stimulates autophagy. In 2016, Dr. Yoshinori Ohsumi won Nobel Prize for his work on autophagy or "eating self", an intracellular recycling system.

The author has provided a picture of the practice of rational, well designed diet based strategy for maintenance of good health, protection from ailments, and prevention of diseases and their treatment. A

scrutiny of the medical texts reveals that food and drinks were considered to possess as much therapeutic importance as medication in the treatment protocol. In the Endnote the author has cited some of the findings by medical men and scientists of the recent times that justify the ancient knowledge of food and nutrition present in Indian medical texts. However, the book needs some charts or tables on wholesome and unwholesome food items and drinks so as to give the readers easy access to the food articles that are important to remain healthy; and a table on the name of diseases that are caused due to lack of certain food items, etc. The book will be an important addition to the understanding of the harmony between man and ecosystem where diet and nutrition occupy a crucial role. The book may provide some important information to researchers working on the relationships of food and nutrition with diseases.

Srabani Sen

BOOK REVIEW

Mamata Desai, *Darjeeling - The Queen of the Hills: Geo-Environmental Perception*. K. P. Bagchi & Company. First Published, 2014, Kolkata 700012. ISBN: 978-81-7074-347-7. Price: Rs. 695.

The book is divided into ten chapters. The author Mamata Desai has given a very brief overview of the content of the book. She has mentioned that the book is written with a view to forwarding information about 'Darjeeling - Queen of the Hills' for the benefit of the scientists, scholars, planners, researchers and other stakeholders from both Government and non-Government sectors.

In Introduction chapter the author has given a general overview of the district since the inception of visit of the colonial officials of the British regime in the area. Second chapter deals with the history of development of Darjeeling hill area. As far as known the area belonged to Raja of Sikkim and it was given over to the East India Company in 1835 in order to build sanatoriums. Gradually under British law it became not only a favourite spot for the British but also attracted people from Nepal and Sikkim to settle and build the region into a touristic destination and earned title as 'The Queen of the Hills'. After independence a separate district in the name of Darjeeling was formed, which included towns of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and parts of Terai. The chapter presents full history up to 2011. Geo-ecological set up of Darjeeling is described in second chapter. Details of the geomorphologic features as well as characteristic geological formations are given with illustrations in maps, graphs and tables. Drainage pattern is described starting with its change of courses, evolution and erosional activities. Landforms in the background of climate and land use patterns and possibilities are described. The fourth chapter is on natural

resources, its management and impact on land use pattern. Natural resources in the hills are largely influenced by soil type and climate. The author has explained characteristic features of the soil with depth and texture, parent materials from which the soil is formed, factors responsible for erosion, soil conservation and management of the same. These are all supplemented with detailed charts. Forests feature largely in the realm of natural resources in Darjeeling hills and are part of a natural land use pattern. The author has substantiated this with detailed information in the form of tables. Economy of the people is largely connected with land use pattern of the area. The fifth chapter is dedicated to the economy of Darjeeling hill area. Environmental features of Darjeeling played a major role in shaping the economy of the people inhabiting the regions. Because of the topography agricultural practices are diverse. In rural areas economy is not much developed. Agriculture is not good. Although livestock are kept in the rural areas, animal husbandry is not much of support to the economy in villages. Constant population thrust is eroding vegetation and natural resources. Tourism is the main supportive economy in Darjeeling at present. Plantation of tea and cinchona are discussed in great detail. Starting from the history of tea plantation in Darjeeling to the recent development of 'tea tourism' is discussed. Cinchona is native to South America. History of its cultivation and importance in present economy of Darjeeling is described. Although agriculture does not feature extensively in the economy of Darjeeling but author has given adequate emphasis on the capability of land of the area and has made suitable recommendation for its development. These are discussed in minute details with block wise tables. Importance of communication for economic development is emphasised in the book. Various roads connecting the district to

other areas are discussed together with their present condition and hazards due to frequent landslide, leading to disruption of communications. Altitude wise Darjeeling falls in temperate zone and is hugely affected by glacial and paraglacial phenomena leading to land slide. NH 55 which is the arterial route for Darjeeling and its connection to rest of the country is specially discussed with recommendation for remedial measures and suggestion for alternative routes. Land carrying capacity of the existing roads is pointed out with tables and pie charts. Chapter six is devoted to the history of evolution of land use pattern in Darjeeling. Chapter seven gives information on the infrastructure and human development in the hill area. It started with educational facilities, which has a strong foundation. Health facility is well developed in Darjeeling district. However, it is also mentioned that human activities are responsible for loss of medicinal plants in the region. Darjeeling district is rich in flora and fauna and conservation of biodiversity is also observed. In chapter eight people and culture are described. Darjeeling hill area has got diverse population composition. Lepchas are the original inhabitants of the area and are in majority. There are also Tibetans, Bhutias, Bengalis, Biharis and Marwaris. History of peopling of the district is given in this chapter. Diverse festivities are observed in the area an account of those are given in order to emphasise cultural diversity in Darjeeling. It is said that ultimately the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, formed in 1988 is looking after the development of the people and the region. Chapter nine is important because in it the author has made an assessment of the vulnerability conditions of the district and suggestions are forwarded for sustainable development of the land and people of the hills. Chapter ten is the concluding chapter. In it

some suggestions are made, especially for betterment of tea gardens and for measure to be taken for prevention of land slide. The book is well written with tables, figures, graphs and photographs to substantiate the findings, propositions, recommendations and final conclusion. There are a few typographic errors, which I hope shall be taken care of with copy editing of the future editions. The book is a valuable contribution on the land, people, culture and economy of Darjeeling, the 'Queen of the Hills'.

Ranjana Ray

BOOK REVIEW

Ranjan Gupta, *Rarh Banger Jibanjapan: Samaj Arthaniti O Ganabidroha, Birbhum 1740-1871*, New Radical Publication, Kolkata, Hardcover, 2017, pp. xxxi + 585, Rs. 600.

The volume under discussion is the revised and enlarged version of Ranjan Gupta's (1932-2015) earlier Bengali monograph *Rarher Samaj Arthaniti O Ganabidroha: Birbhum 1740-1871* (Kolkata: Subarnarekha, 2001). It focuses on Rarh (western Bengal), especially the district of Birbhum in the late pre-colonial and colonial period. It has a long preface, fifteen chapters, a conclusion, and five appendices, some of which were earlier published in Bengali periodicals. It traces the history of Birbhum since the 1740s when a large part of the region was devastated by the Maratha 'Bargi' incursion and continues up to 1871 when the second Santhal Hool (rebellion) rocked the district. Between these two landmark events, the great famine of 1769-70 and the subsequent colonial rule changed the socio-economic life of the district. Apart from official and non-official archival materials, including family papers and private letters, the author has also used oral sources and published tracts and combined them with field surveys and interviews. The present volume can be situated in the backdrop of vernacular local histories written in the wake of nationalism. However, the author has been aware of the limitations of some of the earlier studies that did not go beyond the narrow local or regional perspectives. Here lies, perhaps, Ranjan Gupta's greatest achievement. While this is not the first narrative on the history of the district — there are others like *Birbhum Bibaran* of Mahima Niranjana Chakraborty — Gupta chooses to paint the socio-economic life of Birbhum — with its changing geographical boundaries — in the larger context of national and international events.

The account opens with the description of 'Desh O Deshbasi' (the country and its inhabitants) that reminds us of Niharranjan Ray's *Bangalir Itihas : Adi Parva*. The opening chapter resembles any colonial gazetteer and highlights the nomenclature, history, geography, systems

of transport, ethnography, prevalent religions, and social groups of Birbhum. The author, thus, gives the reader a fair idea about the formation of the district and sets the tone of his work. While the historical origin of the district lay in the pre-Christian era, Hindu and Muslim rulers successively ruled over the region in the historical era. The region came under the Mughal subah administration in the late sixteenth century. The rule of the Pathan zamindars, who migrated from upper India and based at Rajnagar, came to an end after English East India obtained *Diwani* in 1765. Between 1770 and 1856 the geographical boundaries of the district changed several times. As a major administrative reshuffle following the Santhal Hool of 1855-56, almost two-thirds of the district was reorganized as the Santhal Parganas in the north-western part of the region. Birbhum predominantly comprised rural areas and thrived on an agrarian economy, save Rajnagar which saw some urbanization, and a few small entrepots which traded in cotton and silk. In the pre-colonial period, the district also saw a confluence of Hindu, Islamic, and *Adivasi* worlds. Of these social groups, the Santhals had a conspicuous presence. It also explains why the district was a storm centre during the Hool.

In the early 1740s Birbhum was trapped in the cross-currents of Maratha politics as rival Maratha groups established control, albeit temporarily, over certain areas of southern and western Bengal, taking the advantage of the weakness of the Bengal nawab. The mayhem caused by the invading Maratha armies, depicted in *Maharashtra Purana* by Gangaram, contributed to the decline of the silk industry in Birbhum. However, the author also highlights three instances social alliances of the lower orders to resist the Bargi invasion. The famine of 1769-70, resulted from crop failures, as well as the unholy combination of a weak ruler, corrupt revenue officials, and the English Company further destroyed the socioeconomic structure of the district. The cotton, silk, and iron-producing units were badly hit. No less than 1500 villages perished in the aftermath of the famine while the

Company imposed *najai* (rent on the uncultivated land) on the surviving hapless souls to secure revenue at the pre-famine level. Gupta shows that in 1769 the amount of total rent was Rs. 7,25,000 which was increased to Rs. 11,14,820 in 1776 even when no less than twenty-five percent of the district population perished in the famine. The high demand for rent led to large-scale peasant desertions. The author challenges the assumption of the likes of WW Hunter that peasants were relatively better off in the post-famine period since they enjoyed a better bargaining capacity. Gupta argues that zamindars imposed cesses and thus passed on the burden of revenue to the lowest strata who were already doubly oppressed by zamindars and the colonial state on the one hand and village headmen and moneylenders on the other. Also, disbanded retainues of the Birbhum *raj* caused tensions in the rural society and thereby caused a general deterioration of law and order.

Against this general picture of decline, there were signs of improvement in the decade following the famine. To ease the situation, the zamindars of Birbhum distributed rent-free waste land (*'baje zamin'*) among a host of beneficiaries and introduced migrant (*paikashth*) ryots, often rich, from the eastern districts of Burdwan, Murshidabad, and Rajshahi to the land structure of Birbhum. This, in turn, further intensified the clash between resident and migrant ryots which later culminated in an uprising. The author has deftly shown how agriculture earned a new lease of life in the post-famine period.

The mass uprisings of 1785-93 indicated peasant consciousness against the coercive colonial revenue administration as seen in various other peasant uprisings. Peasants, 'thousands in number', assisted by weavers, disbanded soldiers, and *Adivasis* targeted landlords and the colonial state, as well as a few *ijaradars*. While the rebellion was suppressed by the state, it paved the way for the district being permanently settled.

The Permanent Settlement resulted in the rise of a new class of landlords after the breakdown of the old zamindari estate of Rajnagar.

The author has made an important observation about the redistribution of landed wealth post-1793. Between 1800 and 1856 the number of landlords in Birbhum increased from 233 to 1884, an eight-fold increase. Many of them were former employees of the zamindari estates, while some were 'outsiders' like traders and government employees. These elements generally allied with the colonial state, especially during the Santhal Hool and the great revolt of 1857. The foremost among these was the Brahmin zamindari estate of Hetampur, which "rose on the ruins of the Birbhum raj". (p. 103) Unlike some other 'absentee landlords', the landlords of Hetampur were not disconnected from their roots. What Gupta underlines is the collusion between new landlords and a section of the colonial bureaucracy in bringing down the old structure by using the law courts, or illegally. Since a part of the Hetampur estate — infamous for the exploitative nature of its rulers — lay in the Santhal Parganas and thus suffered maximum when the Hool broke out, it helped the colonial state in suppressing the Hool. However, better management of estates, bringing the wastes under cultivation, and increased income from *benami* lands, erstwhile service tenures, and *ghatwal* lands, and a host of legal and illegal cesses collected from *ryots* helped the rise of new landlordism in Birbhum which, in turn, helped the colonial state strike roots in the region.

The Rajputs *ghatwals* (guards of entry points to Bengal proper from the northwest 'since time immemorial') rose in rebellion in the early nineteenth century. Marked as 'bandits' in colonial records, they enjoyed rent-free lands under the old regime. However, as the winds of change began to blow in the post-Permanent Settlement period, their 'ancestral rights' ceased to exist while new *ijaradars*, aided by the colonial state, displaced them. The rebellion, one of many such led by displaced landed elements in colonial India, started in Sarhut-Deoghar *pargana* in 1801, continued sporadically, and spread up to Bhagalpur, before being suppressed finally in 1814. The rebels were partially successful since Regulation XXIX of 1814 acceded to some of

their demands. Ghatwal 'disturbances', however, continued up to the late 1840s and prepared the ground for the first Santhal Hool of 1855-56.

Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy of the region and it depended majorly on irrigation. The upkeep of *bunds* by the old regime provided much succour to agriculture as the region periodically suffered from droughts and floods. In the post-famine period forests were cleared to expand agriculture in which the *Adivasis* played a stellar role; migrant *ryots* brought wastes under cultivation; and new crops, including indigo, were introduced. However, high rent and the paucity of capital retarded the growth of agriculture. The region could boast of its industries. This sector was gradually monetized. The author examines in detail the organization, development, and hindrances inherent within the cotton, silk, sugar, indigo, lac, and iron industries. Cotton textiles, the chief produce, had their demand in western India, the Near East, and Europe. Thanks to the political patronage, English merchants overpowered their French rivals and became the sole agency with the help of the *dadni* system. The Napoleonic Wars in Europe and the Industrial Revolution in Britain, coupled with unfavourable imposts, caused havoc from which the cotton industry never really recovered. The silk industry provided some opportunities between 1815 and 1833. However, the decline of agency houses in the 1830s and the Charter Act of 1833 — which made the English company withdraw from the trade — hindered its growth. Indigo cultivation, in which peasants were coerced to cultivate indigo on the best soil, and the dye production saw the competition between European and local planters. The sugar and iron industries witnessed Indian and European entrepreneurs in this industry. The sugar industry, after its initial upsurge, suffered due to the import of foreign sugar. It could, still, survive due to the protectionist policy of the government. The 'ancient' iron industry, which had an international market, caused rampant deforestation. It involved a wide range of people including the Agaria tribe, Hindus, and Muslims at different levels of production.

The laying of railway tracks in the 1850s boosted the economy and revolutionised the transport sectors and created jobs. However, sporadic skirmishes between railway employees and villagers became the new normal. The case studies of the Sarkars (Surul), Sinhas (Raipur), and Bandyopadhyays (Labhpur) were the best examples of the social mobility of castes, and peasants and landlords turning into entrepreneurs. The Sarkars of Surul had connection with the Sonamukhi Residency that brought luck on their side. They tried their hand at various enterprises, but their lack of knowledge about the vicissitudes of international trade, overseas competition, and internal contradiction brought an end to their enterprise. The Bandyopadhyays of Labhpur apparently defied caste rules to rise from the rank of zamindars to entrepreneurs. These examples illustrate the bourgeois trait within the landlordism in rural Bengal, while the decline of *nouveaux riches* resulted from their inability to gauge the shifts and constraints of the international commerce, adapt to the changing situations, and resist the onslaught of the colonial state.

The two penultimate chapters focus on crime and its management, and urbanization in the region. Marginal and vagrant communities — mainly dispossessed peasants and armed retainers of the former landholders — were labelled “criminals” by the colonial state that depended on local zamindars to maintain law and order while the local landed elements built a network to amass wealth through dacoity. The marginality of ‘criminals’ was reflected, for example, in the unique dialect of the *Chirimars* (Bird trappers) while, the author correctly shows, their criminality was linked to pauperism as the upper class/caste exploited the subalterns and banditry was a form of anti-British resistance. In the 1830s the state took harsh measures to control *thuggees* and built a detention centre (which the author compares to a “Nazi Concentration Camp”) to suppress them.

The author shows Birbhum had two urban centres, Rajnagar and Deoghar in the pre-colonial times. Under colonial rule, four types of urban centres, *viz.* administrative, religious, commercial, and railway

towns slowly grew out of large villages with a stratified caste-based society. The history of urbanization demands further research.

The last chapter discusses the Santhal Hool of 1855-56. Before the Hool, recent research has shown, the Santhal world had to encounter problems of obtaining credit for agriculture and the 'Paharia question' in the *Damin-i-Koh* region while they were equally coerced by the state and *dikus*. The messianic role of the leaders led to the initial peaceful march of the Santhals to Calcutta that "suddenly" turned into the violent Hool on 7 July 1855 in which rumours and ballads also played a vital role. The Second Hool of 1871 was much limited in nature. The involvement of non-*Adivasis* indicated the greater social alliance between oppressed sections vis-à-vis the alliance between landlords, caste Hindu traders, and the state. The author sympathises with the rebels and holds that these revolts were essentially anti-feudal and anti-imperial uprisings.

In the appendices, the author has highlighted contemporary market prices, weights of agricultural items and precious metals, the historiography of the Hool and a contemporary ballad, and bibliographical references. The author believes that a "comprehensive and authentic history" of the Hool is yet to be written, (p. 541) as the histories of the Hool so far are either coloured by the imperial vision or suffer from the inadequate use of Santhal sources as primary documents. With cutting comments, the author has explored the limitations of the existing works and contradicted fictions represented as fact.

The present work stands out among the regional histories of Bengal. It is a valuable addition to the corpus of literature on the economic history of modern Bengal and attempts to go beyond his in-depth study, *The Economic Life of a Bengal District: Birbhum 1770-1857* (The University of Burdwan, 1984) which is largely based on *The Economic Life of a Bengal District: Birbhum, 1793-1857* (Ph.D. dissertation, Calcutta University, 1976) under the guidance of Professor Binay Bhushan Chaudhuri. The strength of the work lies in the author's honest effort

to analyse huge empirical data. He has attempted to touch upon every aspect of the region and establish a link between the local and the global. The volume would have been richer had there been a map of the region like the one included in Gupta's thesis (drawn by Captain Sherwill in 1852) and genealogical tables of indigenous entrepreneurs. The author had to decipher old, brittle source documents with obvious linguistic errors (he called these errors "distorted language"). Ironically, spelling errors and printing mistakes occasionally mar a painstakingly done, brilliant work that will be considered an authoritative text for many years to come. The prose is lucid; however, the narrative could have been tightened in places. The index could also have been way better than what is printed.

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SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

SANSKRIT

आ = ā	ई = ī
ऊ = ū	ऋ = ṛ
ऌ = ṝ	च = ca
छ = cha	ज = ja
ट = ṭa	झ = ṝha
ठ = ṭha	ञ = ña
ड = ḍa	श = śa
ण = ṇa	◌' = ṃ
ष = ṣa	

TIBETAN

ཀ = ka	ཁ = kha	ག = ga	ང་ = ṅa/nga
ཅ = ca	ཆ = cha	ཇ = ja	ཉ = ṅa/nya
ཉ = ta	མ = tha	ད = da	ན = na
པ = pa	ཕ = pha	བ = ba	མ = ma
ཅ = tsa	ཆ = tsha	ང = dza	ལ = wa
ཇ = zha	མ = za	འ = 'a	ཡ = ya
ར = ra	ལ = la	ཤ = śa/sba	ས = sa
ཨ = ha	ཨ = a		

ARABIC (both Cap & Small)			
اَ (long)	A	a	ا
اِ (long)	ā	ā	آ
ب	B	b	ب
ت	T	t	ت
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ج	J	j	ج
ح	H	h	ح
خ	Kh	kh	خ
د	D		د
ذ	Dh		ذ
ر	R		ر
ز	Z		ز
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ش	Sh		ش
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It will flourish, if naturalists, chemists, antiquaries, philologists and men of science, in different parts of Asia, will commit their observations to writing, and send them to the Asiatick Society at Calcutta; it will languish, if such communications shall be long intermitted; and it will die away, if they shall entirely cease.

Sir William Jones
on the publication of the Asiatic Society