Folklore and Folkloristics

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‘Yangly’ festival of ‘Tiwa’ community, Gobha Kingdom, Jagiroad, Assam

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**Reflection Section:** Short write up is published.

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**News and Information Section:** News and Information relating to any activities of culture in general and folk-tribal culture in particular is published in this section. Contributors are requested -

(i) to mention the name of exact event, incident, occasion
(ii) the exact date, time and place of commencement
(iii) name of institution, person, performer, artist, funding agency concern
(iv) name of tribe, community, caste whatever is relevant
(v) attach all possible photo documentation
(vi) mention the name, phone, e-mail of contributor (mandatory)

**Photo Gallery:** Any photograph (digital photo) reflecting exclusive feature of culture is published in this section. Please send a detailed information or statement of the photograph (of which the photo is about).

**Video Section:** Any significant video document on folk and tribal culture is uploaded in this section

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Persons belonging to any discipline of pure science and social science may write in this journal. Students, teachers, research scholars, interested persons in any discipline like – language and literature, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, folklore and folkloristics, economics, social work, physics, chemistry, medical science – so on and so forth may write in this journal. The only thing is that the write up should address culture, tradition, folklore or tribal-lore. Interdisciplinary approach is highly solicited.

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Editorial

The 10:2 Issue (December 2017) is uploaded. This issue contains SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTARY ON SISTER NIVEDITA edited by Madam Chaitali Maitra. There are three articles in the special supplementary -

“Satyer Dipsikha” - Chaitali Maitra

“A Beacon of Light: Sister Nivedita and Women’s Education In Late Nineteenth-Century Bengal” - Naina Dey

“Sister Nivedita and the Movement of ‘Nationalised Art In India” - Pritha Kundu

The other articles are -

“A Brief Study on Agriculture Related Assamese Proverbs” - Babita Das, Barnali Deka

“Dragons Images in Russian Folklore” - Victor A. Pogadaev

“The Terracotta Temples at The ‘Temple Village’ Baranagar of Murshidabad District: A Study on Structure, Style, Theme, Motif and Values as Cultural Heritage Resources” - Authors: Bikash Jyoti Nath, Tanaya Mukherjee, Sujay Kumar Mandal

“Advaitaism - As The Foundation of Swamiji’s Moral Philosophy” - Mili Dutta (Pal)

“Sur-Rekha (Musicograph)” - Sk. Makbul Islam

I am grateful to Madam Chaitali Maitra for taking the responsibility of editing the special supplementary of Sister Nivedita. Thanks are due to all those contributors and well wishers who have made their valuable contribution to run this journal. Your cooperation is as usual solicited.

Sk. Makbul Islam
Editor-in-Chief
Folklore and Folkloristics

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ABSTRACTS
Proverbs are an important part of oral literature which is backed with profound wisdom and ideas of great practical utility. Proverbs play an important role as one of the most popular sources of indigenous knowledge and communication among the Assamese people since time immemorial. Around 80% of the Assamese people, like the people of other parts of India, depend on agriculture for their livelihood. A good number of proverbs and sayings related to agriculture are prevalent in this area. Whatever is experienced by elderly people regarding cultivation and usefulness of paddy field operation has been preserved in the proverbs through which cultivators can learn many things about agriculture without having knowledge of science of agriculture. A good number of proverbs prevalent in Assam relating to agricultural context, and it also play a role in cultivation.

The present paper has been designed to explore different agricultural proverbs used by the Assamese people in the context of agricultural use.

KEY WORDS
Agriculture, Proverbs, Context, Assamese people, wisdom

1. Introduction:
The word proverb comes from the Latin word “Proverbium” meaning of which is used by folk or man. But all the sayings are not a proverb. Proverbs are short and usually of unknown and ancient origin, pithy saying, stating a general truth or piece of advice of a social group. It is spontaneous and indigenous in nature and is expressed in familiar sentences that can be easily remembered and always ready for use for different purposes. Proverbs enrich language and make a language easier and more expressive. Lots of ideas, meanings and concepts can be expressed using a single sentence. A lot of advice, rules-regulations or justification relating to religion, philosophy, science, agriculture, economy, history, culture, business, courtesy- manners etc. are found in proverbs. They are the results of experiences gathered by people while living actual life. Proverbs educate people in numerous ways. They play an effective role in exercising social control in the villages (William R. Bascom: P-290). Proverbs may be a vehicle for social protest against oppression and injustice.

According to Aristotle proverbs are fragments of an elder wisdom. Lord John Russell described proverbs as the wisdom of many and the wit of one. The people of India and Assam as well were deeply involved in agriculture and gathered a lot of experience related to agricultural activities which perhaps got reflected in their sayings. The Aryan civilization was also basically agricultural. Even the term ‘Arya’ has been derived from the root ‘Ri’, which has different meanings. One of the meanings of this word is ‘TO GO’. The Greek term ‘Aroein’ and the Latin term ‘Ararre’ carry a similar meaning of Sanskrit ‘Ri which means ‘to cultivate’. The terms ‘Ear’ and ‘Arable’ in English are also derived from this root. The main stay of the Aryas was agriculture. It is mentioned in Rig-Veda that beginning of the agriculture is the beginning of the welfare. Use of different animals in agriculture is also mentioned here. So, agriculture related activities and knowledge are transmitted from generation to generation.
2. Assamese proverbs:
Assamese proverbs are also very interesting, meaningful and practical or useful like the proverbs found in any other places/cultures. In Assamese “Dakar bachan”, “Neeti bachan”, “Krishi bachan”, “Bhakotia phakara”, “Potantar”, “Jojona” etc. have been prevalent as proverbs since long past. At present the very notion of these bachan, phokora, potantar, jojona have been mixed up. The use of proverbs has been reduced day by day in present Assamese society.

Bhabananda or Narayan Das Thakur is said to have coined many proverbs of ‘Bhakatia phakara’ (Deka and Deka: 154). In modern age the missionaries are the pioneers in collecting Assamese proverbs. Following the missionaries Benudhar Rajkhowa, Chandradhar Barua and others collected and also published a good number of proverbs (ibid).

People of Assam had enough interest in agriculture. Bullocks were regarded as the most important animal in connection with agriculture. People had a habit of engaging themselves with cultivation. Because rice is the main food of the people of Assam. A number of agricultural proverbs have been found in every nook and corner of Assam. Whatever is experienced by the people regarding cultivation has been preserved which got reflected in the proverbs. Therefore, cultivators can learn many things about agriculture through these proverbs in use without having any knowledge of science of agriculture. It is not an exaggeration to say that proverbs educate both the educated and uneducated cultivators in agricultural field. On the other hand the proverbs guide the cultivators. Since these proverbs are so simple, easily available and brief that they can easily impress the cultivators.

In the process of agriculture, the way to plough, plantation, field operation, protection of crops, proper time, season, use of different tools in tilling, proper soil or usefulness soil for better result, proportion of using fertilizer, etc. are very necessary. Knowledge regarding all these things had been carried by proverbs which are applied by the Assamese people in agriculture.

2. Objective:
The present article would be an attempt to highlight the Assamese agriculture related proverbs and their use in the field of agricultural process, production, protection etc. in the Assamese society. Through this article, an effort has been made to identify the ways of focussing Assamese proverbs as an essential tool in generating agricultural knowledge among the folk and cultivators. Some selective Assamese proverbs related to agriculture have been taken for discussion.

(1) Proverbs related to general information about agriculture
(2) Proverbs related to plantation and field operation
(3) Proverbs related to crop protection
(4) Rain and Environment

3. Methodology:
Analytical and descriptive method has been employed in the discussion in the article. The article is based on primary and secondary sources. It needs to be mentioned here that Assamese proverbs are collected from oral sources as primary data. Data has been collected from different secondary sources like books and journals of different authors, website etc. Observations and interpretation were also added here. The study will be limited to agricultural proverbs in the context of general information, plantation, advice, and rain and environment.

4. Results and Discussion:
Introduction of agricultural lessons is the motto behind the agricultural sayings. Proverbs have been imparting agricultural education to the people from different aspects. Mainly, it helps the rural folk who are somehow related with cultivation. There are many agricultural proverbs used by people in different context of cultivation.
4. a. Proverbs related to general information about agriculture:
It has been mentioned in the Vedas and Upanishads about the importance of agriculture that there is no other better religion than cultivation and no better business than it. The Assamese people also believe paddy as ‘Goddess Lakshmi’ (ie. Goddess of property) and give importance on cultivation. The following proverbs reflect it—

i)  
Dhanar majot dhanehe shobhan, Khudgal nohole mora tetikshon  
Eteke krishi koriba xar, Durbhikshot krishi kore addhar

[Meaning: Paddy is more important and beautiful than money. Cultivation is the best way and people can feed even at the time of famine.]

[Context: Aforesaid proverbs are referred to mean cultivation is better than service. Money received from cultivation remains intact whereas money coming through service is automatically spent. That is why cultivation is considered better than service.

ii)  
Ji nore xoda krishi kore, behar phal xi labh kore.

[Meaning: The person who engages himself in cultivation on regular basis, he receives all the benefits of business.

[Context: General concept of benefit from agriculture.

iii)  
Xat bhai zar, kheti hoy tar.

[Meaning: Who have seven brothers, cultivation is only for them.

[Context: It is important that more people are necessary for the purpose of cultivation.

v)  
Rode baraxune xomane chai, tebexe krishir labhok pai.

[Meaning: The profit of cultivation goes to that person who takes equally both the sunny and rainy days.

[Context: Continuous hard work irrespectively in rainy and sunny days is a must for getting benefits from cultivation.

4. b. Proverbs related to plantation and field operation:
There are some Assamese proverbs related to plantation. What, how, where and when should be planted are focused through these proverbs. It is necessary to know about plantation. Following are some examples of such proverbs:

i)  
Xali ruba beget juri, Aathur upore thake pani.

[Meaning: In Sali plantation, the distance between two bunches of paddy seedlings should be half a cubit and water level should be knee deep.

[Context: In the context of Xali plantation this proverb is used to give ideas about the method of planting Xali.

ii)  
Aahar Xaon mahor gosa, jouban kalor poo, Bhado mahor gosa, burha kalor poo.

[Meaning: Paddy seedlings which are transplanted in the month of ‘Aahar’ and ‘Xaon’ are like a son of young couple that is strong and timely produced but seedlings transplanted in the month of ‘Bhado’ is like giving birth to baby in later age. It means late cultivation and late marriage are not very effective.

[Context: Time is precious. Timely accomplishment of each and every piece of work brings desired results. Doing things late or putting off things may result in loss.

iii)  
Jalukot gobar, panot mati, kolpuli ruba tinibar kati.

[Meaning: Cow dung in pepper plants and earth in betel leaf plants are good manure while banana sapling grows luxuriantly if its trunk is cut out three times.

[Context: This proverb is referred to give useful application of things to different crops. It gives proper hints as to the cultivation of pepper, betel leaf and banana].
iv) *Xolla chahe mula, tar ardhek tula, tar ardhek dhan, bina chahe paṇ.*

[**Meaning:** Radish cultivation needs seven times ploughing, cotton plantation half of that (of radishes) and no ploughing for betel leaf cultivation.

**Context:** This proverb refers to proper ploughing for different crops.]

v) *Tamol khai pelaba pik, boka saba hoisene thik.*

[**Meaning:** Spit out juice of betel nut while chewing it, go to the mud to see its quality before transplanting paddy seedlings.

**Context:** One must observe how far the paddy field is ready before transplanting paddy seedling.]

vi) *Xate paatal, pase ghan, Chayat taamol nadan badan.*

[**Meaning:** Seven cubits distance is too much, five is too little and six is appropriate for betel nut plantation.

**Context:** This proverb is applied as a piece of advice in plantation. There are different methods of plantation. So people should follow them.]

4. c. **Proverbs related to crop protection:**

There are some Assamese proverbs related to protection of crops from insects and others. In the context of protection suggestions are given with the help of proverbs. Following proverbs are about crop protection-

i) *Aage diba aali, pase ruba Xali.*

[**Meaning:** Erect first *aali* (raised earthen boundary) and then transplant Xali (paddy) crop.

**Context:** Long time or constant water is necessary for Xali crop. So, this proverb is applied as a piece of advice for Xali cultivation.]

ii) *Ahin katit rakhiba pani, jenekoi rakhe rajai rani.*

[**Meaning:** Nurture Xali crop ensuring water in the month of Ahin and Kati, like the king treating his consort.

**Context:** For better result and protection of crops this proverb is applied.]

iv) *Athiat gobar, manoharat jabor, malbhogat sai, purat xai.*

[**Meaning:** Use cow dung as manure in Athia variety of banana, waste things in Manohar, ash in Malbhog, and provide support to Pura.

**Context:** This proverb is used to give direction about plantation and protection of banana variety.]

4. d. **Proverbs related to rain and environment:**

Rain and environment both are necessary factors of cultivation. From the ancient time people depends on rain, water and environment. That is why they observed the sun, the moon, rain, weather, etc. and gathered some knowledge about the science of climate. There are several proverbs relating to rain and environment. Some of them are as follows-

i) *Jodi barase jolor kona, anande nache krishak gona*

[**Meaning:** When it showers rain, cultivators dance

**Context:** Rain is indispensable for cultivation. To mean the necessity of rain these proverbs are referred to.]

ii) *Jodi barase ‘Aghon, Puh’, dhaan gusi hoy tuh*

[**Meaning:** Raining in the month of Aghon (Agrahayan) and Puh (Pausa) renders paddy into husks.

**Context:** This proverb is used in the context of referring to spoils of paddy due to untimely rain.]
iii) Aaharar nabami xukula pakhyat, Jodi noborose bhumar oparot,
Hal kor eri chhinto deb, rojar ghorot kario xeb.
[Meaning: One should go for govt. services and keep aside his plough if there is no raining during the month of Aahar, as this month is most suitable for paddy cultivation.
Context: It is used in the context of referring to give importance on raining in the month of ‘Aahara’.

iv) Budh Brihaspoti Sukurbar, medinie naxahe xashyar var
Jadi dekhe bahe hoy Sanibar, rajya nahi prajar khayangkar.
[Meaning: Raining on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday is the symptoms of the over burdened with products of cultivation and when it rains on Saturday there would be no product and people would face difficulties.
Context: For precaution about danger or difficulties from rain this proverb is applicable.

Conclusion:
This paper tries to discuss and analyze some Assamese proverbs which are generally used by the Assamese people in the context of agriculture. There is mention of various plants, trees and creatures in the proverbs. These proverbs give a picture of flora and fauna of Assam. Seasons of the year, occurrence of rain, relation between climate and agriculture, folk life, etc. also get mention in the proverbs. They speak about the climate and natural condition of the state. These proverbs enrich Assamese folk literature and are replete with the wisdom and real agriculture related experiences of the Assamese people through the ages. That is why these proverbs are still relevant in our agricultural context and they still enjoy regard and trust of the Assamese folk society.

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Authors:
Mrs. Babita Das, Asst Prof., Dept. of Education, Pub Kamrup College, Assam, E-mail: babitatadas.pkc@gmail.com

Dr. Barnali Deka, Asst. Prof. Dept. of Assamese, Pub Kamrup College, Assam, E-mail: bdeka99@gmail.com
Dragons Images in Russian Folklore

- Victor A. Pogadaev

Abstracts

Dragons are found in legends of peoples all over the world. In Russian folklore, dragons live on the border with the other world, often among the mountains, in a flame or under water. Usually they are winged many-headed serpents (with 3, 6, 9, and even with 12 heads).

There are four types of dragons in Russian ancient myths and legendary epic: (1) Zmey Gorynych (mountain serpent) who has three heads, is green, walks on two back paws, has small front paws, and spits fire; (2) Tugarin Zmeievich with Turkic name, probably symbolizing the Mongols and other steppe peoples; (3) Chudo-Yudo, a monstrous, multi-headed dragon who is a manifestation of the giantess itself; (4) dragon in Christianity symbolizing Satan (as in the legend of St George killing the dragon).

Different from the Eastern beliefs, Russian dragons are the symbol of evil, the embodiment of brutal enslaving force. In ancient times dragons primarily symbolized the menacing dark clouds in the sky which closed the way for sun's rays and thereby deprived the living world of the main source of life. Later dragons were associated with snake-like lightening departing from «celestial mountains», which reinforced this image.

Some prehistoric structures, notably the Serpent's Wall near Kiev, the ancient capital of Russia, have been associated with dragons as symbols of the warlike nomads of the southern steppes. The legendary heroes, Russian bogatyrs (knights) usually fought against dragons and killed them. Among the famous bogatyrs are Dobrynya Nikitich and Alyosha Popovich.
Dragons, under the name of serpent, or snake (in Russian zmey), is often found in the genres of Russian folklore. It is a character of the epic, spiritual poetry and fairy tales. In each of these genres, the image of the snake has its own characteristics.

Most vividly it appears IN THE EPIC. The serpent appears in the plots of several epic stories named in Russian as ‘bilina’. First of all it’s the bilina “Dobrynya and the Serpent”. It’s plot is ancient and one of the most popular: it is known in more than one hundred versions. It was especially common in the North.

The plot of this bilina is the battle of the hero Dobrynya Nikitich with the serpent. It happens twice, in two different episodes. At the beginning of the epic, Dobrynya violated his mother's order not to swim in the “ferocious Puchai River,” and during the bath the snake flew at him. Dobrynya managed to defeat the snake by hitting it with the hood or the cap of "Greek land" weighing "three poods" (48 kg) – as a result the snake fell into the grass. This is the first fight, it is short and not final. The defeated serpent offered Dobrynya "to conclude a great commandment" by which he undertakes not to fly more to holy Russia, while Dobrynya promised not enter serpent’s domain. Believing the snake's promise, Dobrynya let him go, and the snake immediately violated the agreement: flew to Kiev and abducted Prince Vladimir's niece Zabava Putyatichna. Dobrynya in return invaded the serpent possessions, and here he started "bloody battle-fight" with the serpent. Having defeated the serpent, the hero liberated not only Zabava, but also a lot of other people abducted by the serpent.

The serpent in this bilina has all the signs of a dragon. He is fire-breathing and lives in a river with streams of fire. It flies "under the clouds". In this bilina it is the enemy of Kiev, of the Russian people and of the Christian faith: it fell from the blow with the cap of the “Greek land” - a symbol, a
monastic headdress in the form of a hood originating from Byzantium, from where Christianity was brought to Russia.

Plot which is rare, but close to the bilina "Dobrynya and Serpent" where this image takes on other shapes is the bilina "Alyosha Popovich and Tugarin Zmeevich." In one of the two well-known versions of it, Alyosha rides a clean field and sees Tugarin, who flies under the clouds. Alyosha prayed that it would rain and soak up the paper wings of Tugarin, so that he and the serpent could fight. A thunderstorm with rain began, and Tugarin descended to the ground. Alyosha went out to meet the serpent and killed it thanks to his cunning and dexterity.

In another version, the action took place at the feast of Prince Vladimir, where Tugarin was also present and behaved himself like a host. Alyosha insulted Tugarin, then a fight between them took place during which Alyosha killed the serpent. Tugarin is a double-natured character. In connection with its name, the historical character of the Polovtsian Khan Tugorkan is mentioned. But the features of a person in Tugarin are combined with serpents. It wears a "snake" name (although sometimes called simply Tugarin). Before the battle, it threatens Alyosha "to burn him with fire” or appears as a rider on a horse, spewing fire. It is flying. It is interesting that in this bilina Alyosha gives a "bird’s" epithet to Tugarin - "loon without leg". But unlike the snake from the previous bilina, Tugarin's ability to fly is vulnerable: in the rain his "paper wings" are inactive. The element of water is alien to it.

These are two bilinas, where a snake or a character with snake features is one of the central. In the Russian epic, there are other epic stories, where the features of the serpent are attached to the episodic characters.

Such is the bilina "Dobrynya and Marinka". In it, Dobrynya frees Kiev from the witch, who fascinates the heroes, and then turns them into animals. In this epic a "dear friend" of Marinka appears whom Dobrynya accidentally kills. This character is mentioned in the bilina in passing, and his snake affiliation can be guessed only by his names in different versions - Tuga Zmeevich or Gorynische.

In one episode of another bilina, "Mihailo Potyk" the hero fights with a snake in the dungeon - the grave of her deceased wife. He beats the serpent with iron bars, and the serpent asks for mercy and brings living water to resurrect the dead.
In the bilina "Volkh Vseslavievich" the serpent is represented as the father of the main protagonist, and it is only mentioned at the beginning. This bilina is one of the oldest stories known in a small number of records. Abilities attributed to the snake - the ability to werewolf, wisdom - are revealed here in the Volkh, the great hunter, the only hero in the Russian epic who is werewolf and wizard. In the bilina about Volkh mythological ideas are reflected, according to which the children born from the serpent possessed magical properties.

The serpent in the bilinas is one of the main characters, the enemy of the main hero. Its image in them is an image of a mythological snake or half-beast-half-man. It can also be a secondary character, in which some signs of a snake are only glimpsed.

As one of the main characters the snake appears IN THE GENRE OF SPIRITUAL POETRY about Yegory - St. George. Spiritual verses about Yegory exist in two plots - the "Tortures of Yegory" and "Yegory and the Serpent" ("Yegory and Olisaphia"). Their sources are folklore and apocrypha. In the second of these stories, the serpent is reminiscent of a snake in the epic.

The kingdom of Rakhlin (the city of Rokhlim) suffered a disaster - a snake eating people and cattle. To stop this misfortune they decided to determine the victim of the serpent by casting lots, which fell on the king. It was decided to send the royal daughter Olisaphia as a substitute for the devouring of the "cruel snake". It is emphasized that Olisaphia holds a different faith than the inhabitants of the kingdom, she is a Christian. She is taken to the lake (sea), where the snake lives, and is left on the shore. Here appears Saint Yegory, "a nice fellow on a good white horse." When a serpent rises from the lake, Yegory subordinates him to himself, resting the spear in its mouth: "Be quiet, snake, like a peasant’s cattle." Binding the snake on the silk belt, Yegory gives it to Olisaphia with the command to take him to the city. Residents of the city are given a condition: they must accept the Christian faith, or the snake will be released again. Residents accept this condition, and in the finale of the verse Yegory destroys the serpent, striking it with a silk belt, which makes the snake break into "small parts", baby snakes.
The serpent in this spiritual verse retains the typical features. But there is a special feature related to its image in this epic genre. It is defeated by a Christian saint, and the snake in the final is not just defeated - it serves as a means for the inhabitants of the kingdom-city to accept Christianity. In light of this, its very appearance at the beginning of the verse as a terrible scourge can be seen as part of a design that was realized with the participation of a saint. It is interesting that one of the performers called the serpent "the grace of God."

The echo of the serpent's image with the individual features of the dragon is also in the spiritual verse about Yegory's torment. This story was more widespread and popular than the first one. In the full edition of this verse, Yegory first is tormented for faith and successfully confronts them, and in the second part travels through holy Russia as a distributor of Christianity and / or as an avenger for his torment. The snake appears in this second episode as one of the "outposts" - obstacles that the saint overcomes during the performance of his mission. It wrapped itself in a ring around the kingdom in which Yegory's tormentor "the monarch Kudriyanische" lives. From the snake's mouth the flame "from the earth to the sky" and "from the east to the west" flutters. Here, as in the story of Yegory and Olisaphia, this serpent submits to Yegory and his order to turn into separate snakes.

Finally, snake as a folkloric character could be found also IN FAIRY TALES. In the book of the famous literary critic V.Ya. Propp "Historical roots of a fairy tale" Chapter 7 "Near the fiery river" begins with point 1, which is called "Serpent in a fairy tale". Here it is told, from what particulars the shape of the snake is formed. The author notes first some features of its external appearance.

First of all, the snake "is always a multi-headed creature [...] This is the basic, permanent, indispensable feature of it" [1, p. 216]. All other features are mentioned only sometimes.

"The serpent is a fire creature" [1, p. 217], and the connection of the snake with fire is its constant feature.

But, besides the fire, the snake is connected with another element, water. The serpent can be not only a fiery king, but also a water king, and these properties can be combined.

It is no accident that the snake is called Gorynych. He lives in the mountains, although at the same time he is a sea monster. "Staying on the mountains is an ordinary trait of a snake" [1, p. 218].

Next, the author describes the actions of the snake: "In the main, the snake has two functions. First: he abducts women. Abduction is usually lightning fast and unexpected "[1, p. 218].

In addition, the snake is the guardian of borders. In such cases, he lives near a fiery river called Smorodinka, and a bridge through it is a Kalinov bridge. This river is the border, and the snake guards the bridge, through which you can go only after killing the snake.
There are a lot of fairy tales with a snake. For example, in the well-known three-volume collection of fairy tales by A.N. Afanasyev it is about three dozen. Therefore, the image of a snake in fairy tales, depending on in which story it appears, has more varieties.

The most typical of them is like one in the epic where the serpent acts as the kidnapper of the woman - the mother or the bride of the hero, whom he frees. This group of fairy tales is the most numerous. Some of them resemble the spiritual verse "Yegory and Olisaphia", exactly repeating the details of its plot. As signs of the genre, important episodes of the fairy tale (the struggle with the serpent) are doubled or tripled: instead of a single snake there are two or three in a fairy tale, and with each of them the hero beats in turn ("Ivan Tsarevich and Marpha the Tsarevna").

The serpent in fairy tales also realizes its function as a guard of the underground kingdom. The six-headed snakes guard the entrance to the copper, silver, gold and diamond kingdoms that the hero passes on his way for the bride. But snakes in the role of guarding the dungeons - episodic
characters; the hero easily pacifies them, and there is no more mentioning about them in the tale ("Three kingdoms - copper, silver and gold").

Another form that the serpent acquires, apparently, only in the narrative genre - still remaining an opponent of the hero, it certainly loses to him in intelligence, ingenuity, cunning. Stupid and cowardly, it constantly falls into the traps set up by the hero, causing a comic effect (as in the fairy tale "The Serpent and the Gypsy").

And another, also not possible in the epic, role of the snake - when it becomes a magical assistant to the fairy-tale hero. So, in the tale "Wonderful shirt" the snake appears at the moment when a misfortune happened to the hero, and helps him, and then remains his benefactor throughout the fairy tale. In another tale, the snake selects among the heroes-candidates for the bride the most worthy, forcing them to roll back the stone that closes the entrance to the dungeon, and then helps to the one who managed it, to go down there and advises on the road.

In the fairy-tale genre, the snake more often retains its traditional menacing appearance, although it is more schematic than in the epic. As in some bilinas, the image of the snake can shift to the periphery of the narrative.

Remaining the main character, the fairy-tale serpent can acquire features that are not peculiar to him in the epic - in such fairy tales he preserves only the external attributes of the old snake, the content of the image changes so much that, in fact, this is a different character with different functions and the opposite sign (snakes as the magical assistant of the hero of a fairy tale). And although such plots are less common and such role of the snake is not always a dangerous and hostile character to the hero. In a fairy tale, this image seems to be absorbed and reduced, approaching the world of people.

Bilinas, spiritual verses and fairy tales are the main, but not all genres of Russian folklore, where a snake-dragon is present. In each of them this image retains its mythological basis, changing in accordance with the peculiarities of the genre.

The serpent in Russian folklore is manifested primarily through the motif of snakefighting. This is a negative character, the enemy whose fate is to be defeated by the hero.

Heroes who fight snakes in the epic are the best, the first and favorite heroes, Dobrinya Nikitich and Alyosha Popovich, images that have a bright personality; in spiritual verses it is a Christian saint. In fairy tales, this is the most courageous and resourceful, outstanding hero of his qualities.

The consequences of fighting with snakes in the epic are significant and large-scale. The feat of the hero - the killing of a snake and the liberation of a woman - also gives freedom to the whole kingdom, to the city, to holy Russia, to Kiev, and in spiritual verses leads to the adoption of a new faith.

If you compare the images of the serpent in bilinas, spiritual verses and fairy tales, the greater similarity certainly exists between the serpent in the bilinas and the serpent in the spiritual verses. With the greatest constancy, this image retains its typical features in spiritual verses. In the bilinas, some of these traits can disappear or transform. And the serpent-dragon experiences the greatest changes in the fairy-tale genre, where his appearance can take a variety of forms, up to the form of a good helper.
THE MAIN TYPES OF DRAGONS IN RUSSIAN ANCIENT MYTHS AND LEGENDARY EPIC

(1) The Russian bilinas tell us that the winged seven-headed dragon ZMEY GORYNYCH lives on the Sorochinsky mountains in a deep cave. It keeps there various treasures and stolen girls, for whom he flies to Holy Russia. More than once the heroes fought with Gorynych, Dobrynya himself met him more than once.

One day - when a dragon started to fly to a certain Marina Ignatievna in her room -
Dobrynya took out his sword,
Rising above his violent head:
"But do not you want me to cut
Zmey Gorynich into peaces,
And to scatter them in the clean field?"
And the seven-headed Zmey Gorynych
Turned tail, and ran away ...
And while running, Zmey Gorynych swore:
"God forbid me to come again
To Marina’s house! "

But the dragon did not calm down even after the experience of fear. He kidnapped Prince Vladimir's
niece Zabava Putyatichna, and then Dobryny's aunt Maria Divovna. At this point, they started to
fight for life and death.

There is no cloud - only rain drizzles,
There is no rain - sparks fall:
Zmey Gorynych is flying.
It rushed to Dobrynya,
Nearly burned him with fire ...

But the hero again overcame the dragon and this time killed it. A lot of dragon blood leaked out,
Dobrynya stood in it for three days, did not know how to get out. On the fourth day
Dobrynya heard a voice from heaven:
"Beat the earth with the spear,
Beat and say:
Break up, mother - earth!
Eat all the blood of the serpent!"

Dobrynya did so. The dragon blood had gone underground. Since then, it became easier to live in
Russia.
And in fairy tales, Zmey Gorynych is capable to turn into anything: to a good fellow, a stone, or even
a broom. The fight against Zmey Gorynych is conducted by fabulous Ivan Tsarevich, and if not
him, then by Ivan the merchant's son or Ivan the peasant son - and, of course, in the end they defeat
the evil creature.

(2) TUGARIN, in Russian epics and fairy tales is a mythological image of an evil, harmful creature
of serpentine nature. His other names usually include the motif of "serpentine" - Serpent Tugarin,
Serpent Tugarethin, Tugarin Zmeevich, Serpent Tugarishche, etc. The main text in which Tugarin
appears is the bilina about the battle of Alyosha Popovich with Tugarin in different versions. When
going to Tugarin's duel, his horse neighs like an animal, Tugarin whistles like a snake. Snakes of fire
are intertwined around Tugarin. It is obvious that Tugarin is connected with fire, which in various
forms acts as its main weapon: it threatens Alyosha Popovich to strangle him with smoke, engulf
with sparks, burn with flame, shoot with firebrands. Tugarin is connected with the element of water too, and the battle with Alesha Popovich usually takes place at the river Safat. But at the same time Tugarin is also a flying serpent. He skirrs in the heights with his paper wings which fail him when they are wet in the rain. Alyosha Popovich who defeated Tugarin dissected its corpse and swept it over a clean field. In some epics, the motif of Tugarin's love affair with the wife of Prince Vladimir is outlined: Tugarin is put on the bed of Vladimir’s wife, etc. When she learned about the murder of Tugarin, she became sad and reproached Alyosha Popovich for separating her with her "dear friend".

Tugarin is a chthonic character of the ancient serpentine myth related to the Snake Gorynych, Fiery Snake, etc. In Kievan Rus in the era of struggle with the nomads it became a symbol of the wild steppe, the danger came from it, paganism. The very name of Tugarin corresponds to the cuman Khan Tugorkan mentioned in the 11th century annals.

The reminder of this could be the Serpent's Wall, an ancient system of earthen fortifications stretch across all of Ukraine. The remaining ancient walls have a total length of 1,000 km. According to one of the theories it was erected by Slavs against the warlike nomads of the southern steppes who are often associated with the winged dragon.

(3) CHUDO-YUDO in Slavic folk tales - a terrible many-headed, mighty dragon. And huge. "In general, the word Chudo," - wrote the researcher and connoisseur of Russian folklore, A.N. Afanasyev in the book "Poetic views of the Slavs on nature" published in 1866 - in the old days meant a giant "- and refers us to the dictionary of the Church Slavonic language.

The name "Yudo", according to many scientists, goes back to the ancient Indian word "yadas" - a water animal. Indeed, Chudo-Yudo is connected with the water element. Chudo-Yudo appears always out of the water. Here is how it is described in one fairy tale: "The duck quacked, the beaches clinked, the sea fluttered - Chudo-Yudo climbs, the six-headed snake". It owns two magical sources: if you drink from one - you will become a mighty warrior, from another - you will have golden hair.

In another folk tale, a meeting between Chudo-Yudo and the Russian hero Ivan Bykovich, a cow's son, on the Kalinov Bridge across the Smorodina river is described.

"Suddenly the waters on the river were agitated, on the oaks the eagles shouted - six-headed Chudo-Yudo went out. Here they came to each other, they hit so hard that the earth moaned around. Chudo-Yudo was not lucky: Ivan Bykovich from one sweep cut off its three heads. Again they came
to each other, again hit; Ivan Bykovich cut off the last heads of Chudo-Yudo, took the trunk, cut it into small pieces and threw it into the Smorodina River, and put six heads under the Kalinov Bridge.

The next day ten-headed Chudo-Yudo went to fight with Ivan Bykovich. Now the hero had a harder time.

"As the hero waved his sharp sword a couple of times, he cut off six heads of the evil creature; then Chudo-Yudo struck and drove the hero till knee to the ground. Ivan Bykovich seized a handful of earth and threw directly into Chudo-Yudo eyes. While Chudo-Yudo wiped his eyes, the hero cut off the rest of his heads "... Thus Ivan Bykovich defeated a ten-headed monster. But this is not the end of the battle. The next morning ...

Twelve-headed Chudo-Yudo comes; his horse has twelve wings, his horse's hair is silver, his tail and mane are golden.

- Oh, are you here? Why did you come?
- To look at you, unclean force, to try your strength!
- How could you try my strength! You are a fly in front of me!

Ivan Bykovich answers:

- I came not to tell you stories, but to fight to the death!

He swung his sharp sword and cut three Chudo-Yudo heads. Chudo-Yudo picked up these heads, scribbled on them with his fiery finger - and immediately all the heads grew, as if they had not fallen off its shoulders. 

And no matter how many heads were cut down, they all magically grew back. It was very bad for the hero. But suddenly ...

Ivan Bykovich contrived and cut off the Chudo-Yudo fiery finger. After that, he cut down all its head, one by one, torn the trunk into small pieces and threw everything into the Smorodina River. "Thus all multi-headed Chudo-Yudo met the end.
There is a serpent (or dragon) in Russian folklore connected with a legend about victorious George (Saint George) which is more or less common with European legend (the very one that is depicted on the coat of arms of Moscow). The dragon originally lived in Libya and threatened to destroy the country if it wasn’t given a virgin every year. On the day when the famous battle took place, it was the turn of the royal daughter to go to the sacrificial altar. In a fierce battle, George slaughtered the dragon and freed the beautiful princess. But later he was executed for his religious beliefs - he was a Christian. Now, at once the question arises whether the dragon was not right when he was terrorized the country and whether George had to interfere.

The image of dragons in modern Russian animated feature films

One of the interesting phenomena in modern Russian culture is the attempts to attract attention of today’s generation of youth and children to Russian folklore, including that one about heroes and dragons, through animated feature films. One of them is “Alyosha Popovich and Tugarin the Serpent” produced in 2004 by the Melnitsa Animation Studio. Alyosha Popovich has to catch Tugarin Zmey and bring back the stolen money with the help of a talking Horse (which talks all the time and has an opinion on everything), a wise granny, a donkey and a beauty Lyubava. And the other is “Dobrynya Nikitich and Zmey Gorynych” produced in 2006 by the same studio. Prince Vladimir’s niece, Zabava, is kidnapped. Dobrynya Nikitich and his young apprentice, Yelisey, go to find her, discovering betrayal and treachery where least expected. In the last film dragons lost most
of their menacing features, became week and funny. It is naughty and when began to sink in the swamp Dobrynya Nikitich and his friend Yelisey came even to rescue it.

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Author: Victor A. Pogadaev, Nusantara Center, Lomonosov Moscow State University, E-mail: povial@yahoo.com
THE TERRACOTTA TEMPLES AT THE ‘TEMPLE VILLAGE’
BARANAGAR OF MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT: A STUDY ON
STRUCTURE, STYLE, THEME, MOTIF AND VALUES AS CULTURAL
HERITAGE RESOURCES

BIKASH JYOTI NATH¹, TANAYA MUKHERJEE² & SUJAY KUMAR MANDAL³

Abstract
The paper attempts to study the late medieval Bengal temples in reference to the Char Bangla Temple, Gangeswar Temple and Bhavaniswar Temple at Murshidabad. Terracotta temple is an important part of traditional architecture of Bengal. In the district of Murshidabad there are many terracotta temples. It is one of the sites of West Bengal with spectacular traditional terracotta art. The places like Baranagar and Bhattamati or Bhattabati carries the splendid art of terracotta. The Char Bangla Temple, Gangeswar Temple, Bhavaniswar Temple and Ratneswar Temple show the rich heritage terracotta art culture of this region. The themes of the terracotta plaques are mainly based on the stories of Ramayana, Mahabharata and myths. Incredible architectural and decorative skills can be traced through the terracotta temple of Baranagar. This heritage site has significant value in the society as cultural heritage resources. The present paper will analyze the styles, themes, designs and motifs of these terracotta temples.

Keywords: Terracotta, Architecture, Plaque, Folklore, Cultural Heritage

1.0 Introduction:
Terracotta temple is an important part of traditional architecture of Bengal. In the district of Murshidabad there are many terracotta temples. It is one of the heritage sites of West Bengal with spectacular traditional terracotta art. The places like Baranagar and Bhattamati or Bhattabati carries the splendid art of terracotta. The Char Bangla Temple, Gangeswar Temple, Bhavaniswar Temple and Ratneswar Temple show the rich heritage terracotta art culture of this region. Baronagar can be designated as ‘Temple Village’, since this small village has number of temples which belong to the period of 18th centuries. These temples located in clusters with their intricate terracotta art, displaying the mastery of the local craftsman who created these temples. The themes of the terracotta plaques are mainly based on the stories of Ramayana, Mahabharata and myths. Incredible architectural and decorative skills can be traced through the groups of terracotta temples of Baranagar. This heritage site has significant value in the society as cultural heritage resources. In this paper we are analyzing the styles, themes, designs and motifs of these terracotta temples.
2.0 Terracotta Temple Architecture of Baranagar

Baranagar temples were built under the patronage of Rani Bhabani of Natore (presently in Bangladesh).1 Rani Bhabani was a personality to reckon with in the 18th century Bengal. The few temples survived ravages of time stand out as a reflection of her achievements among the best of Bengal with the architecture of terracotta.2 The terracotta temples present at this moment in Baranagar are: Bhavaniswar Temple, Char Bangla Temple Complex and Gangeswar Temple etc. There we find the plaques of terracotta portraying various myth and contemporary society. Architectural design of the temples such as Bhavaniswar- Octagonal, Char Bangla- Two roofed, Gangeswar-Jor Bangla.

2.1 Overview of Terracotta Temples of Baranagar

The terracotta temples of Baranagar are captivating in its beauty. The terracotta plaques charm the looks more. It carries various meanings. The river Bhagirathi or Ganga flows beside temples. In other words the temples of Baranagar i.e. Char Bangla, Gangeswar and Bhavaniswar temples are situated at the bank of the river. At present there are houses of the people residing there, schools that exist in the locality of the temples.

2.2 Historical Background

All the terracotta temples have a rich historical background. The temples were built in between 1755-1760, during the reign of Rani Bhabani. She came to this place from Nator (now in Bangladesh) after her husband’s death and built these wonderful monuments. Rani Bhabani was a devotee of Lord Shiva. Because of that she constructed or patronized all the temples dedicated to Lord Shiva.

2.3 Structure

The structure of terracotta temple of Baranagar is unique in its styles, themes and construction (Fig.1). It has some similarities with its contemporary temples of Bishnupur and Bangladesh that Rani Bhabani had built. The temples are the result of skilful handwork of workers. Every corner of the temple shows the dedication and strength of the workers. In real sense, the temples are the mesmerising work of art.

2.3.1 Char Bangla Temple

Char Bangla (‘Char’ means ‘four’ and ‘Bangla’ means ‘Banglow’) temples are the excellent examples of exquisite terracotta temple work on walls. There is magnificent and outstanding work of burnt clay known as terracotta. The most noticeable and important thing is the terracotta plaques. The Char-Bangla temple is a cluster of four temples on platforms forming an inner courtyard. Each one is build on 1.5 feet high foundation. The size and shapes are equal of four temples of Char- Bangla (Fig.2 & 3)
2.3.2 Gangeswar Temple
Gangeswar temple was built by Rani Bhabani in the 18th century. The temple is also known as Jor-Bangla, as there are two bangla connected with. The word Jor means pair. There are similarities in structures between Char Bangla and Gangeswar temple (Fig.4 & 5).

2.3.3 Bhavaniswar Temple
This temple was built by Rani Bhabani’s daughter Tarasundari. It was constructed in 1755 A.D. The temple is remarkable for its height and unusual style. It is octagonal structured and the roof looks like an inverted lotus (Fig.6 & 7).
2.4 The Themes, Styles and Motifs in the Terracotta Temples

The terracotta temples of Baranagar have various themes from Hindu epics with unique style and Hindu religious motif reflected on them.

2.4.1 Style of Terracotta Temples and Themes of Terracotta Plaques

2.4.1.1 Style: The Char Bangla temple is a complex containing four temples. Each temple is Dochala (two roofed) hut shaped. In every temple there are three doors and inside three Shiva Lingas each, which is one of the finest example of Bengal architecture at that time. The temples are connected to each other by their foundation. They are constructed in such a way that each one is situated in the same distance (Fig.8).

The finest temple of Baranagar is Gangeswar temple. It has two Dochala hut shaped bangla connected as pairs. This temple also has three doors contains one Shiva Linga. The curvilinear form of the roof is typically of Bengali temple architecture (Fig.10). The Bhavanisvar Temple is different from others in its style. The roof is like an inverted lotus. The temple has a corridor with sloping roof decorated with large floral motif. The lotus like dome is 18 metre long (Fig.9).

2.4.1.2 The Theme: The themes in the Char Bangla temple plaques portray the mythological story and daily and social life. The mythological scenes that are depicted on walls are the scenes from the Hindu epics, the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas.

The first temple has a peculiar work of art in one of its wall in front of the entrance. It’s a statue of Lord Shiva, which is a unique decoration not found in any other temple. Above the three entrances of the temple, there are mythological stories (Fig.11): (1) Kali in Battle (on right), (2) Ravana’s last prayer before the war (at the centre) and (3) war between Krishna and Kangsa (on the left).
In the second temple, there are the pictures above the entrance portraying the battle of Ramayana. And in the upper view we can see various Avatars of Lord Bishnu and other Hindu Gods (Fig.12).

The third temple left undecorated most part. But the above portion of the middle entrance is decorated with different floral design, conveying the meaning of purity of the temples (Fig.13).
The fourth temple is in one point different from other three. It has remarkable work of lime and mortar. In one of the entrance of this temple present a large ‘Kurukshetra’ scene. On the right hand, Krishna and Arjuna and on the left warriors from Kaurava’s (Fig.14).

Apart from all these, each temple has the design of lotus in the middle of every single entrance (Fig.15), which signifies the pure devotion to God. The geometrical structure (Fig.16), i.e. find almost in every temple and the social life (Fig.17) is best reflected in the skilful creations.
2.4.2 Motifs in the Terracotta Plaques
In terracotta temple there are motifs intact in the plaques. While having a discussion on terracotta motif is one of the important matter or aspect to be discussed. There are various kinds of motif used in the temples discussed above as follows:

2.4.2.1 Floral Motif: In the terracotta art form there is floral motif. In the terracotta plaques here used various designs of flower in the walls to be decorated (Fig.18).

2.4.2.2 Motifs related to Animal World: In many plaques of Gangeswar and Char Bangla temple there are the pictures of lion, horse, elephant, cow and camel etc (Fig.19).

2.4.2.3 Geometrical Motif: There are quantitative numbers of geometrical motif and patterns exist in the terracotta plaques of the temples like triangle, square, circle, rectangular etc (Fig.21).

2.4.2.4 Motif related to Myth and Legends: There are terracotta plaques which best reflects the scenes and characters of several Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Shiva, Bishnu, Kali, Durga etc. and the war legends (Fig.20).

2.4.2.5 Socio-cultural Motif: In the temples, many terracotta plaques are the representation of the socio-economic status of that time. Plaques like hunting, social activities are the significant example of this kind (Fig.22).
3.0 Significance and Values as Cultural Heritage Resource

Terracotta temple of Bengal reflects various cultural and religious aspects. Terracotta temple architecture of the late medieval period ascertains that in this period archaeological artistry developed to its zenith establishing individuality. These are the history of present time, which carries the picture of the society during that period. From those pictures portrayed on the temples like Char Bangla, Gangeswar and Bhavaniswar, one can easily assume about the past of Bengal. The temple structures are carrying images of Bengali socio-cultural life through decades. Apart from that, these temples and monuments are sources of vast knowledge. The subjects like folklore and history will find numerous number of resource elements there. Also it is a link point to further research and higher studies. According to Sukhomay Bandyopadhyay: “Architecture is the living history of its creators and also the most vivid commentary. It is a visible record of man’s emotional, intellectual and ethical aspirations through ages. The study of temples and religious sites helps one to know the contemporary religious, social, economic and political life.”

Barnagar is a heritage place and an ancient settlement, so the value of this part cannot be denied. Value alters with time and depends on society. The terracotta temple architecture and the traditional, socio-cultural values cannot be denied in this case. The values of these temples are as follows:

- **Value of the ‘Temple Village’ as a Pilgrimage, Cultural and Rural Tourism Site:**
  Due to its prospects as tourist site both central and state government should take measures so that infrastructures of tourism could be best implemented in Baranagar village. That will be the best possible way to develop the status of the village as tourism is the best policy to do monetary profits. Even the process of preservation may be under the control of governmental trusty board. Therefore the temples of Baranagar have a potential to generate revenue by attracting tourists, they will definitely enjoy the place when they will visit this heritage village.

- **Archaeological and Historic value:** Baranagar is an important place of Murshidabad. According to history there was the reign of Rani Bhabani. The Temples are said to have been built during the early 18th century. The temples of Baranagar are the witness of contemporary history of Bengali community, their treasure, economic condition and social environment. Each and every archaeological material has archaeological value or importance as well as the historical importance and significance. History is the scholarly study of any unanalyzed past event. The scattered craftworks of terracotta temple architecture in various parts of Murshidabad district are considered as the source of regional history. The beautiful terracotta plaques on the walls of these temples are elements of amazement. We are still ignorant about the fact that how long before these were made by the local artisan. The temples with exquisite terracotta arts. Their elaborate terracotta works become important sources for the reconstruction of history of the area, development of
spiritual activity etc. Therefore, in terms of richness and aesthetics the terracotta temple architecture of this place is enough glorious possessing archaeological and historical value.

- **Artistic and Aesthetic value:** The highly artistic terracotta plaques in the temples of Baranagar reflect artistic and aesthetic value. Terracotta plaques present scenes from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Krishnalila, different gods and goddesses, along with different social and historical depiction of scenes and flora and fauna in different locations throughout the contemporary period reflects the beliefs and practices of the people of that certain era. The architectural decoration of the temple proved that the craftsmen who constructed these temples were efficient and skilled. In every edge of this architecture, large and small plaques of various size and shape have been used. The front, back, side plaques were placed by artists from different angles which exhibits the excellent measurement skills of the craftsmen. The plaque of Vishnu in Char Bangla temple, plaque of coitus scene of Shiva Temple (Rameshwar) Bhattabati are mention worthy. Their dress, ornaments, gestures, postures of standing etc. are so clear and perfect an in terracotta plaques that the artists deserve appraisal. Decoration on the walls, arches, ornate entrance to the pinnacle of the temple, the artists have signed their identity artistic skill and efficiency. This architectural remaining of the medieval period bears the witness of artistic excellence of the craftsmen of Bengal. Through this architectural work they had achieved fame in Indian art. The craftsmen of Bengal had constructed many architectural brilliants in this period and thus their work had brought a large number of exemplary monuments in front of sane eyes.

- **Architecture and Technical value:** In terms of style and decoration of the temple terracotta style folk architecture has been established as well with the artistic aesthetic qualities. Just look at the countless terracotta plaques found on the temple wall found are the best illustration of aesthetic identity. The terracotta sculptures embossed on terracotta temples result in increased temple aesthetic and practical value. Story or a combination of incidents has not been placed in a certain place rather they were etched in different places in different ways by the craftsmen. Various types of small and large plates delineate varieties and combination of events. To abolish the monotony of eyes of tourists, artists installed panels of flowers, vines, leaves, and geometric patterns. Each frame or the outline of the plaques around the temple makes it easier to understand that the bricks were made to use in building architecture. The use of terracotta decoration and bricks of traditional terracotta temple of this place are the evidence of the efficiency of the artisans. The main components of construction were terracotta, brick and chart. Elongated and square Bas Relief plaques exhibit different stories on the walls of the temples. According to the subjects of the plaques, the plaques are arranged in vertical or horizontal order. The terracotta plaques are of such high quality and accurately placed that these are considered as stones at first glance---which is considered a sign of high quality technical expertise.

- **Religious and spiritual value:** The temples are still under worship and are dedicated to Lord Shiva. The temples are testimony to the religious spirit. This is not only a religious or a pilgrim destination but also helps to collect the social and cultural historical data regarding the region. The terracotta temple architecture is responsible for bringing up the Bengal in front of the world.

- **Socio-economic value:** The temple of Baranagar has a potential to generate revenue by attracting tourists. The tourists would get enthralling experience when they visit to these temples. Many traditional and social practices still exist in this place. As a result, this place
is considered as a hub of religious and social practices, and treasure of age old traditions and values with associated information. The inhabitants of this region are still holding principle of the various religious and social customs while seizing this from getting abolished.

Research and Educational value: The place has ample opportunities for research on various aspects, such as architecture, sculpture, socio-economic and religious customs. The concerned authorities must take step on this regard to enhance the value.

4.0 Present Status and Prospects from the View Point of Preservation and Tourism
At present all the three temples discussed above are preserved and maintained by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). But there might have a lot of opportunity to work a little more on preservation and conservation. The information regarding the monuments is not sufficient. Even there is no information board on Gangeswar temple. The awareness among the people except some is not enough.
The temples are now become the cultural heritage resource for many researchers and also tourists come to visit the place. Because of these reasons, there is a major scope in the field of tourism. At present there is no such place for food and lodging. But by establishing the tourism in such remote places called as rural tourism can change the socio-economic structure of this area.

5.0 Conclusion
In this article it is tried to bring forward the main features and characteristics of terracotta temples of Baranagar. Its style structure, ornamentation and motifs are described and discussed here. With the span of time, the temples are losing its beauty and significance to a greater extent. The temples are the glory of rich past. Everyone along with the concerned authority have the duty to preserve their glorious past.

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**Fieldwork:** Baranagar, Murshidabad, West Bengal. June 25-26, 2016. **Informant:** Bikash Sarkar

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**Authors:**

1. **BIKASH JYOTI NATH**, PG Student, Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University, Assam.  
2. **TANAYA MUKHERJEE**, Research Scholar, Department of Folklore, University of Kalyani, West Bengal.  
3. **Dr. SUJAY KUMAR MANDAL**, Associate Professor, Department of Folklore, University of Kalyani, West Bengal. E-mail: sujay331@rediffmail.com
ADVAITAISM - AS THE FOUNDATION OF SWAMIJI’S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

- MILI DUTTA (PAL)

1.6 PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SWAMIJI’S NEO-VEDANTA

[Contd.] The most distinctive feature of Swami Vivekananda’s teaching is that he applied his philosophic principles to the affairs of everyday life. Generally it is believed that there always remains a gap between a theory and its practice, between ideal and actual. But Swamiji realizes that an absolutely impracticable theory, however rich it is, has no value. On the other hand, mere practice without a base of high theory must lose all its efforts. Swamiji views that though Vedanta as a theory is very high and lofty but unless we can carry it out in every part of our everyday life, it would become a mere intellectual gymnastic. Swamiji’s four lectures entitled ‘Practical Vedanta’ were delivered in London on November, 1896. He begins his lecture as follows:--

“… theory is very good indeed, but how are we to carry it into practice? If it be absolutely impracticable, no theory is of any value whatever, except as intellectual gymnastics. The Vedanta, therefore, as a religion must be intensely practical. We must be able to carry it out in every part of our lives.”

Reconciliation between theory and practice is, therefore, necessary. Integrating theory and practice, belief and life, is, thus an ideal cherished by all thinkers and ordinary people alike.

It is true that Sankaracarya placed Advaita Vedanta on the strong foundation of rational philosophy. But a thousand years later it was found that Vedanta was still confined to the forest and mountain caves. It had become the sole possession of ascetics and scholars. This was the state of Vedanta when Swamiji travelled the length and breadth of India from 1890-93. He understood that Vedanta was a necessary philosophy of life, not only for the revival of India but also for turning Western countries away from sheer materialism. So, Swamiji raised the trumpet call of Vedanta before the Parliament of Religions in Chicago on September 1893. He proved that Vedanta is neither pessimistic nor optimistic, it is realistic.

For Swamiji, Vedanta is, in fact, very simple, as simple as knowing oneself, but unfortunately the dry scholars make them complicated, the traditional interpreters of it kept them engaged either in the emancipation of the self from the world and worldly life or in mere intellectual exercise. As a consequence, the average people were unable to understand the message of it; it fails to give a room for the spiritual aspiration of the modern human being. But Swamiji brought it to the level of common man’s understanding and made it Practical-Vedanta which everyone could follow. For Swamiji, however, the ideal of Vedanta can be realized by human being in all possible conditions of life.

The most important contribution of Swamiji’s Neo-Vedanta is its practicability. Though Swamiji never claims that he had formulated a new doctrine in the name of Neo-Vedanta, but a close reading of his writings makes it crystal clear that his interpretation has some unique features that distinguish it from that of traditional understanding of Vedanta. An extremely significant aspect of Swamiji’s Practical Vedanta is that, unlike classical Vedanta, a person here does not require any pre-requisite qualities, i.e., need not be an adhikari first – to practice the ideal of Practical Vedanta. One can start
from where he is and as he is. The ideal is not impossible to achieve and is not far away of the real fact, rather realizable and achievable to ordinary people also in all possible conditions of life.

The most important ideal that Neo-Vedanta preaches us is that: Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external or internal. By urging that every man is potentially divine in character, the Neo-Vedanta gives hope of infinite progress to every man, however degraded and lowly he may be. As a true Advaitist, Swamiji restored the lost spirit of man and thereby made him conscious of his heritage, culture, dignity, and responsibility. This teaching of divinity makes Vedanta a dynamic living philosophy which can build up the human mind devoid of sectarianism, fanaticism, and dogmatism. A bold acceptance of life, a wonderful positive view of the world is found in the acceptance of life as a continuous flow of efforts of manifestation of one’s hidden divinity. This ideal teaches people that they can overcome all their miseries, all their sufferings by keeping foot on the earth. ”All creative activities, all struggles are, according to this wonderful philosophy, only efforts to manifest the innate divinity of man.”

It is a wonderful positive world-view since in it there is no denouncing of the world, no turning back from the struggle and miseries of human being. Also one’s daily life, in this philosophy, becomes sacred and every work becomes a form of worship.

Another highest ideal of Swamiji’s Practical Vedanta is universal oneness. In the course of his first lecture on Practical Vedanta, Swamiji insists that Vedanta teaches the Oneness of all beings. There is but One life, One world, One existence; everything is that One. The difference is in degree only and not in kind. To realize it, people need not to go to the depth of forest or caves. It can be realized by all irrespective of sex, caste, and race in all possible conditions of life. Universal oneness means the realization of identity of mine with the universe. When a mother loves her child she actually loves her own self. Without realization of oneness of self such kind of love cannot manifest. All differences among different races, different nations, and the division between man and the nature, the discrimination between man and woman disappear as soon as the universal oneness will be realized. His message was: it will not do simply to learn the theory that everything is Brahman, it has to be practiced in life, in our daily activities. If all jivas are essentially Brahman, then all should be loved and served equally. So, in all our actions we have to judge whether it (i.e. our action) is making for diversity or for oneness. Everything that makes for oneness is truth. So, love is truth, since love binds, hatred is false, since hatred makes for multiplicity. The real practical side of Neo-Vedanta is to see God in everything, and as everything. All men and women, and even all animals, trees, the earth and the heaven, fire and sun, hills, rivers, the stars and the water are all forms of Brahman. We are all children of the immortal, ever pure and ever free. Nothing can bind us, nothing can defile us. In this context, we may further observe that on the basis of this ideal of oneness, Swamiji also tried to solve social problems of India. He keenly criticized the practice of untouchability, priest craft etc. prevalent in India in his time. To him, a peaceful and loving relationship between man and man can be established by practicing this doctrine of oneness of existence.

Thus, it is clear from Swamiji’s Practical Vedanta that if people would realize that each man existing in this world is the manifestation of Brahman, then all the ideas of differences and distinctions would naturally disappear. But the question is: How far it is possible to actualize this ideal of oneness? Is it possible to treat a man as my equal or as my friend or brother who tried to murder me? It may be argued that a judge trying a criminal accused of murder cannot possibly treat him as his equal. Certainly, he cannot. But Swamiji’s ideal of oneness suggests that our criminals will be treated differently when we begin to realize the divinity in man. “It takes for granted that however low a criminal may be, there is still the divinity within, which does not change, and we must treat criminals accordingly”.

In his third lecture on ‘Practical Vedanta’, Swamiji goes into the question of the position of the individual in Vedanta. In Sankara’s Advaita Vedanta, the individual loses his identity when at the successful end of his tapasya he is merged in Brahman. But in Swamiji’s Neo-Vedanta the individual is never destroyed, he is raised to a new height. He claims, “The Vedantic idea is not the destruction of the individual, but its real preservation.” But the question is: How is the individual preserved? He is preserved through his progress towards the Infinite. The Vedantists believe in the infinite possibility of man, in his capacity to exceed the limitations that restrain his forward movement.
Swamiji’s Neo-Vedanta does not ask us to leave the world and retire in a forest; it does not ask us to practice severe asceticism of a monistic life.

For the new Practical Vedanta, material and spiritual development are conjoined. Work and worship go together. Where the old Vedanta said that one who did not believe in God was an atheist, Swamiji’s new Vedanta says: He who does not believe in himself is an atheist. The inner and the outer dimensions of a person must be balanced in a pleasing harmony. The new approach does not believe in a God who promises a person eternal bliss in heaven but cannot give him bread here. Practical Vedanta is an active spiritual quest – not letting things happen, but causing them to happen.

To Swamiji, the ideals of Vedanta can be carried into our everyday life – in our city life, country life, national life and in our family life. What the Practical Vedanta asks us to do is to know ourselves and to have faith in ourselves. This is the remedy for all weaknesses and the secret of man’s strength. How to arouse man’s faith in himself? By making him aware of his potential divinity. Faith in ourselves will do everything, but that faith is not selfish faith. It is not faith in the little, limited self which stands opposed to other selves. It is faith in the universal Self, the Self that is in me, that is in you, that is in all. It means, therefore, faith in all, because you are all. Love for yourselves means love for all -- for men, animals, and everything; for you are all one.

The most important and significant contribution of Swamiji’s Applied Vedanta is the removal of all kinds of privilege. The enjoyment of advantage over another is privilege and throughout ages, the aim of morality has been its destruction. Swamiji was not against inequality per se, as it was the nature of things, but he was against ‘privilege’. In Vedanta, which teaches oneness of existence, there cannot be any room for privilege. Two forces, according to Swamiji, are constantly at work in this universe, the one making for privilege and the other breaking down the privilege. Swamiji speaks of four kinds of privilege which his Vedanta criticized. The first kind of privilege is that of the strong over the weak. The strong people claims privilege over the weak because of his strength. The second kind is the privilege of wealth. If someone has more money than other, he claims a little privilege over other. The third is the privilege of intellect. If a person is more knowledgeable, he claims privilege over the ignorant. The last kind of privilege relates to spirituality. Some persons think that they know more about God, spirituality and therefore, claim privilege over those who are allegedly less spiritual. But Swamiji emphatically asserts that no person can claim privilege over any one, whether physical, financial, intellectual, or spiritual. According to Neo-Vedanta, the same power is in every creature. Given suitable opportunities, a worm also can develop itself a manhood.

Life is considered as a journey towards the divinity where all errors and sin are nothing but a movement from lower truth to higher truth. Swamiji claims that as long as we are ignorant about our infinity, our own divinity, we cannot overcome our selfishness. Hatred, selfishness comes out of fear – which is the consequence of our ignorance about our own self. Swamiji was the first to stand against the Darwinian concept of ‘survival of the fittest’ through ‘struggle for existence’, and establish the spiritual superiority of an individual over his physical, social, or financial superiority. He exposed the limitations and even the basic mistake of Darwin. Swamiji has criticized the theory of struggle for existence, because the most horrible thing in it is that by applying it one may conquer the environment but at the same time thousands are crowded out. Swamiji argues that when there is a fire in a theatre, people rush for personal safety, make stampede and kill others. But certainly more people, if not all, could come out if there had been no rush for competition. We struggle through ‘ignorance’ and ‘impatience’; and out of utter selfishness. It cannot be good that helps only one and hinders the majority. It occurs due to our fear about our existence. Faith in our own self, in our own divinity, makes us fearless and this must be the source of all prosperity of material as well as of spiritual life.

Swamiji asserts deliberately that Darwin’s theory seems true to a certain extent. Swamiji discounts Darwinism in its essential equation of the animal with the human, and feels that the physical struggle for survival that Darwin talks about in nature is essentially internalized when it comes to the human process. He feels that Darwinism could be right about the animal world. But in the human kingdom, where there is the manifestation of rationality, we find just the reverse of those laws. For instance, in those whom we consider really great men or ideal characters, we scarcely observe any external
struggle. Hence, the struggle theory is not equally applicable to both kingdoms. “In the animal kingdom instinct prevails; but the more a man advances, the more he manifests rationality. For this reason, progress in the rational human kingdom cannot be achieved, like that in the animal kingdom, by the destruction of others! The highest evolution of man is effected through sacrifice alone.”

Swamiji foresaw that the East needed the West as much as the West needed the East – not only for success, but also for survival. In his view, India possesses the wisdom of the soul but lacks a strong body to house that soul. The West, on the other hand, possesses a strong body but lacks a soul. The soul and the body need to be united to make life meaningful. The West needs the wisdom of the soul so that its mighty achievements in science and technology will not prove self-destructive. India needs Western muscle, vigor and vitality, human concern and self-dignity for her material regeneration. We can realize how practical Swamiji was by rethinking his view that according to Swamiji, by preaching the profound secrets of Vedanta in the Western world, we shall attract the sympathy and regard of these mighty nations, maintaining for ourselves the position of their teachers in spiritual matter and simultaneously let them remain our teachers in all material concerns.

Another practical side of Swamiji’s Neo-Vedanta is acceptance, not mere tolerance, of other forms of worship. We should see others with eyes of love, with sympathy, knowing that they are going along the same path that we have walked. So the Advaita of Swamiji not only tolerates but accepts and respects other religions.

Swami Vivekananda, by his Applied Vedanta, wants us to carry the eternal message of the Vedanta to every door and to every corner of the world. It is the Vedanta of the forests comes back to our home, our city, and our society. He brings Advaita Vedanta to the market-place of our world. We are not required to flee to a forest or a cave or enter a monastery to practice it. Such is Swamiji’s Practical Vedanta, a living Vedanta, and not a dry and dead theory of the Vedanta. Actually it is that applied Vedanta which enters into our ordinary life and conduct, and may inspire our individual life, social life, national life and even our international life. Swami Ranganathanandaji has truly said: “Vedanta we have in our books; Vedanta we have seen in the lives of the great sages and saints of our country; but Vedanta as Sheet-anchor of nation-building, of a dynamic social policy, by which the masses become transformed into dynamic centers of all-round social development – this type of practical application of Vedanta we had never witnessed in our country. It was the supreme glory of Swami Vivekananda that he broadcast the life-giving message of Vedanta to one and all.”

1.7 ADVAITISM – THE FOUNDATION OF SWAMIJI’S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

In this section, my intention is to show how Swamiji’s moral philosophy is greatly influenced by his deep feelings in Vedanta.

The question that arises first in ethics is about the universality of moral law. The first and most important query of morality is: Can anyone make a moral claim valid for himself alone? The answer is obviously negative. Moral claim cannot be true of only one person, but is to be valid for all. Moral laws must be universal and impartial. Swamiji established this universality of moral laws on a metaphysical truth which he experienced in Vedanta. The truth is: all jivas are Brahman in nature i.e. they are living idol of Brahman. The universe as experienced by us is nothing but Brahman. It is the Existence of the universe that is reflecting itself from the lowest worm to the Highest Perfect Being. The whole of the universe is unity, one existence – physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. Swamiji puts his views thus: “There is but one soul in the universe, not two. It neither comes nor goes. It is neither born, nor dies, nor reincarnates. How can it die? Where can it go? All these heavens, all these earths, and all these places are vain imaginations of the mind.” Hence, there is no real difference between I and you or whoever. We, every one, are part of this Highest Being. So, we all are ‘avinna’ or non-different with Brahman and we all are brothers. So, we all are with the same moral dignity. About this moral impartiality, Swamiji has said, “As manifested beings, we appear to be separate; but our reality is one …..From this monistic principle we get at the basis of ethics and I venture to say that we cannot get any ethics from anywhere else.”
We have seen that there are three main theories of ethics: Teleological Theory, Deontological Theory, and Virtue Ethics. The first two deal with action or conduct; whereas, the third one deals with virtue. All through the history of ethics, Western as well as Eastern, we find a distinction between doing and being, between ought and is. It is obvious that these are mutually complementary aspects of moral life. And yet, a satisfactory theory which unifies them has not been developed in the West because of inadequate understanding of the Ultimate Reality. The integration of the ‘being’ and ‘doing’ poles of ethics can be achieved only on the basis of a comprehensive ontological (metaphysical) view of Reality. Hindu sages developed a unique concept of the ultimate reality as the Supreme Self through which their (‘being’ and ‘doing’) reconciliation be affected. On the basis of this concept, Swamiji laid the foundation for a true ontological ethics. Swamiji had a realization that conventional morality is based on social compulsion and consists of do’s and don’ts. It has no power of attraction for modern youths. But ontological ethics is based on freedom, but it gives a new meaning to freedom. Here freedom is derived from the ever-free nature of Atman. Selflessness is the main criterion of this moral freedom.

Now, the Question is: Is it reasonable that we each and everybody are brothers and so non-different? Does to be a brother means to be non-different (avinna)? A critic might intervene and argue that the relationship of brotherhood does not implicate the oneness or identity of the individuals. In reply it is said that no person can be non-different with his brother. It would be wrong to understand Swamiji if we take the literal meaning of his statement. And the critic is entirely right only if ‘oneness’ and ‘brotherhood’ are taken in their literal sense. No man can literally be identical with his brother, it is logically impossible. What Swamiji had said is that, though as individual jivas we are different, we all are nevertheless emerged from one and only Brahman, the same Soul. Thus viewed, we all owe our individual being to the same Soul and in that way we all are on the same level. So, we all are in the same moral status and ‘avinna’ in that sense. Actually, in order to treat us as equal with one another at the practical level, it is really not necessary to acknowledge ourselves as literally identical with each other. “The recognition, that we all have the same genesis and so are persons in the same identical sense, would itself be effective enough to spawn in us that feeling of closeness to each other which we are expected to have for our brothers”.

Swamiji realized that Advaita Philosophy has got paramount importance and implication in the realm of moral philosophy. This is because if one would be in a position to realize that everybody is ultimately and really the same, then many vices of the world like hatred, jealousy, causing injury to others, sorrows, ill-feeling would automatically disappear. There can be no scope of hatred, violence etc. if this sense of identity and unity is realized. Thus, according to Swamiji, morality is an expression of the innate purity of the Atman, and that evil or sin is only ignorance of this true nature of ours. It may be mentioned here that illusoriness of the jiva, the individual self, is one of the most fundamental principles of Advaita Vedanta. Sankara calls it adhyasa or superimposition. But the moral implications of this principle had never been fully worked out. It was Swami Vivekananda who understood its ethical significance and applied it in practical life.

Thus, Swamiji affirms the universal aspect of morality by affirming the ‘Universal Soul’ – a metaphysical truth – about ourselves which entails that we all are equal, all are in the same moral status and so we have no right to hate others whose level of development may not be equal with us. Every person in the world is of equal importance. This concept of fraternity and equality leads us to think that it is wrong to harm others and even to think to harm others. Because, to harm others means to harm one’s own brothers and to harm one’s own brothers means to harm himself. In this context Swamiji put a question to all, “….. Can man degrade his brother and himself escape degradation?”

Obviously the answer is negative. This fraternity concept teaches us not only not to harm others but to help them spontaneously. The doctrine of oneness promotes in each of us an allied tendency to care and honour others. And this concept, according to many ethicists, is the nucleus of morality.

In this way, the recognition of our basic oneness would make it quite difficult for one to maltreat others and also generate in one a positive tendency to do good to others. It is in this sense that Swamiji takes the doctrine of oneness (of Advaita Vedanta) to be the basis of morality. This fraternal mentality or attitude, truly speaking, is of paramount necessity for present day people. Because a very tragic fact of today’s world is that people are hardly available to one another as they are mostly
preoccupied with their own interests. They are mostly emotionally infertile and hardly grow even really friendly ties with each other. Even our family ties often become unstable; our family members often become unavailable to us. Availability, however, does not mean just being there among others. The sense of universal fraternity of Swamiji’s philosophy exerts certainly a strong beneficial impact on interpersonal relations, in that it prompts us to become more readily and reliably available to each other. So, what a moral agent needs to lose is the sense of apartness from others. Apathy or lack of concern is the mark of this apartness. Thus, a moral agent needs to consolidate is his essential kinship with others, and consequently developing an active and genuine concern for them. “Truly speaking, a morally meaningful action differs from a simple act in that the former conveys a value-attitude towards other people; whenever an action is morally valuable, it expresses, in some way or other, recognition or the worth of some other individual or individuals. A person who dives into a river does not perform a moral action. But when he does so in order to save the life of another, he performs a moral action valuable precisely for the fact that it gives value to the existence of another. Understood in these terms, morality exists as an objectified relation to others.”

Now the question is, if everyone tries to do good to others, the society would be fully free of evils. But Swamiji did never think such irrational thought. Rather what he wants to say is that: The world is a mixture of good and evil. The external world is the field of the play of the pairs of opposite forces. Life and death, happiness and misery, good and evil go together. It cannot at any time be all good or all evil. “The utilitarian’s and the evolutionist’s idea that there will be a time when good alone will prevail without any evil, is a vain hope, as it is against the nature of things. People who hold such views think that there is a fixed quantity of good and evil, and that by eliminating the one, the other can be made to prevail exclusively. But the world’s history disproves it... With the elimination of certain physical hardships and sufferings, mental ailments and sufferings come in their place, and with the increase of refinement, sensitivity to pain also increases.” Vedanta teaches us that good and evil, enjoyment and suffering are not two entirely different entities or two separate essences, but one and the same entity appearing in different degrees and in different guises and producing various feelings in the same mind. To Swamiji also the same thing we call bad, and again another time we call good, according to the way we make use of it. Fire, by itself, is neither good, nor evil. When it keeps us warm, it is good. But when it burns our fingers, we blame it. In his own words, “......... Duty and morality vary under different circumstances.”

But if so, how can we accept the universality of moral law? In reply it is said, we should obey all moral rules in general. But there may be some exceptional situations. As for example, to tell the truth is our moral duty, but we should not tell the truth if it becomes deadly to an innocent man. Of course, we can apply the universality of moral law in this exceptional case also. We can say, if any moral law becomes avoidable for a special case, then that very law must be avoidable for all similar cases. Thus, if it is right not to tell the truth to save the life of an innocent man, then whenever to tell the truth brings threat to the life of any innocent man, it is not right to tell.

So, it is proved that every work must necessarily be a mixture of good and evil. Swamiji himself cleared this with a suitable example, “To take the nearest example: I am talking to you, and some of you, perhaps, think that I am doing good; and at the same time I am, perhaps, killing thousands of microbes in the atmosphere; I am thus doing evil to something else.” So, his decision is: “To have good and no evil is childish non-sense.”

Now, if this is true that good and evil always come hand in hand, then what to do by a moral person? He certainly not expects evil and at the same time, he cannot wipeout evil. Swamiji says, what should be done by a moral person is: to do good for others and to reduce evil at his level best. Surely, a moral man, at any rate, hates evil and longs for good. Doing good to others is one of the central requirements of morality. So, according to Swamiji, as moral beings, we should try to lessen evil and enhance good i.e. to better the conditions of human existence. “Arjuna killed Bhishma and Drona. If this had not been done, Duryodhana could not have been conquered, the force of evil would have triumphed over the force of good, and thus a great calamity would have fallen on the country.”

Naturally, a question arises, how can a man do good for others whenever he himself is whirling round in the ring of self interest in this computer run mechanical era? At the present educational
system, how is it possible to unfold all the virtues of a man like honesty, devotion, dutifulness, responsibility etc? How can a man be made honest and responsible? Swamiji’s answer: Moral science is a science which can be learnt only from a preceptor (guru). To quicken the spirit, the impulse must come from another soul. “The person from whose soul such impulse comes is called the Guru—the teacher; and the person to whose soul the impulse is conveyed is called the Shishya—the student”\(^\text{51}\). Only an honest man can make a person awaken to his honesty, as a burning lamp lights the other. So, his suggestion is, people must have an honest preceptor (guru).

For Swami Vivekananda, religion\(^\text{52}\) and morality cannot be separated from one another. Rather, religion is the groundwork of morality. God is not in the distant heaven isolated from the individual. In fact, each individual being is divine. Religion is realized by living activity in the world, serving humanity, inculcating fellow-feeling and bridging the gap between the other and oneself. Morality for him lies in unselfishness. In the moral sphere the centre is “thou ”, not” I “. If one has an awareness of divinity this faith spontaneously generates moral actions. To be religious means having faith in oneself, and this faith breaks the gap between theory and practice and overcomes all moral weakness.

Swamiji made a remarkable comment about morality. One should help others without expecting their gratitude, rather should grateful to them for giving him the occasion of practicing charity to them. The tendency of man to help others grows due to love for man and this love must be without self interest, because there is no place of selfishness in morality. “The more selfish a man, the more immoral he is”\(^\text{53}\).

Swamiji used to say, no formal education is needed to help others, it only needs a heart that can feel a feeling of uniformity. This feeling encourages man to love others for their well-being. So, Swamiji says, “Do you feel for others? ... if you feel, even if you cannot read any book........You are on the right way”\(^\text{54}\).”

But it is very difficult to do for the well being of other without any self interest. It needs strength. “Strength is goodness, weakness is sin.” Weak person usually thinks it is impossible to achieve success on right way as he has no confidence. On the other hand, strength in man makes him work in the path of justice. So, it needs strength for morality. According to Swamiji this strength is both physical and mental. He firmly declares, “My child, what I want is the muscles of iron and nerves of steel, inside which dwells a mind of the same material as that of which the thunderbolt is made”\(^\text{55}\).” Swamiji wanted the Indian youth to be manly. Manliness for him is not gender-related but it stands for courage, vigor, enthusiasm, love, and compassion.

After all these, one may ask, why should we try to do good to others? Why do we not oil our own machine? I have got the answer clearly only from Swamiji. He says, you should help others because he and you are non-different and so if you help others, you help yourself. But the argument is: to help myself also means to help others. So why should not I help myself? Why should I help others? The answer is: if anybody helps himself with the view that, it will help others, then let him do that. Because, in that case, he himself is not primary to him, but the others. The great Swamiji affirms that we should be good because goodness is our true nature. I am good not because somebody compels me to be so, not because I am afraid of punishment, but because goodness is the natural expression of my true, innate nature. Swamiji’s view makes morality a free and spontaneous expression of the innate goodness and purity of the true Self of man. This view of Swamiji can bring about a radical change in the moral attitude and behavior of people in the modern permissive society.

One may argue that can we identify anything as a distinct contribution of Swami Vivekananda in the field of moral philosophy? The answer is: His practical Vedanta. His amazing universal power to embody and clearly express the timeless truths of Vedanta to people everywhere created a global spiritual renaissance. It is not that he created Vedanta; he recreated it. Vedanta had always been known in India, but not known in the form in which he presented it. Man was God Himself to Swamiji. This is not humanism; it is much more than that. This is Vedanta which sees God everywhere and in everything. The idea of ‘oneness’ of Advaita Vedanta, as Swamiji says, is unique. Because when one is rooted in this idea, he becomes moral, sympathetic, philanthropic, and ethical.
as there is a feeling of the same Divinity in him as in all. So, it is clear that Swamiji has derived his concept of morality from the Vedantic thesis of the oneness of all beings.16

Notes & References:--

43. Bandyopadhyay, Tirthanath, ‘Vivekananda’s Notion of Morality’ in 19th Century Thought in Bengal, (Kolkata, 1998), pp. 78.
45. Bandyopadhyay, Tirthanath, ‘Vivekananda’s Notion of Morality’ in 19th Century Thought in Bengal, (Kolkata, 1998), pp. 82.
52. To Swami Vivekananda, religion is not only talk or doctrine, or theory, but realization of the best and strongest power within oneself. He also felt religion is the gist of all worship is to be pure and to do good to others. It is the idea which is raising the brute into man, and man unto God. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teachings_and_philosophy_of_Swami_Vivekananda). One becomes religious when one sees God in others.
56. Note: End of article.

Author: Dr. MILI DUTTA (PAL), Asst. Professor, Dept. of Philosophy, Chandraketugarh Sahidullah Smriti Mahavidyalaya; E-mail: milidutta71@yahoo.com
শ্ব-রেখা (মিউজিকোগ্রাফ) – একটি পদ্ধতি

- শেখ মকবুল ইসলাম

শ্বরের রেখা-চিত্র
লোকসভার নিয়ে বাংলা ভাষায় আনক কাজ হলেও সেগুলি প্রধানত সদীতের কথা বা টেক্সটে নেওয়া কাজ। লোকসভার কথা, প্রেক্ষিত, অনুরূপ, জনজীবন এবং সামাজিক প্রস্তাব ইতিহাদ বিষয়ের আলোকে কাজ হলে, সদীতের লোকসাহিত্যের বা এধরনের কাজ হয় ঠিকই কিন্তু সদীতাত্ত্বিক কাজ হয় না। সূর-তাল-দর ইত্যাদি সহ স্বরের গতিশীলতা ও বিচারের কাজ হলে তবে পারিদৈর্ঘ্য অর্থে লোকসভার কাজ হবে। ভাওয়াইয়া সংস্কৃতি-সাহিত্যচর্চার গান এবং ভাটিয়ালী দক্ষিণ বঙ্গের গান তাই এরা আলাদা – এই ব্যাখ্যা আর যাই ছে সদীতাত্ত্বিক ব্যাখ্যা নয়।

কেন সূর-বৈশিষ্ট্যের কারণে ভাওয়াইয়া ও ভাটিয়ালীর মাধ্যমে পার্থক্য, সেই সূর-বৈশিষ্ট্যকে চিহ্নিত করার কাজই প্রকৃত অর্থে লোকসভাতের মাধ্যমে কাজ। সূরের কোন বিশেষের কারণে চট্টা-পরিয়া দেখিনাসা আলাদা? দাড়া কুম্ব এবং টাঙ্গা কুম্ব গানের ভিতরে স্বরের পার্থক্য কি? এই প্রশ্নের সদীতাত্ত্বিক উত্তর পেতে গেলে শ্ব-রেখা বা মিউজিকোগ্রাফ আমাদের অনেকগুলি সাহায্য করে।

শরিলি ও শ্ব-রেখা
সৌরাষ্ট্রের হরাইজোল এবং ভাটিকাল দিক

ভাটিকাল দিক (উল্লেখ দিক): সৌরাষ্ট্রের সুরের দিকটি তার ভাটিকাল দিক। সূর উপরে-নিচে চলাচল করে (আরোহণ-অবরোহণ করে)। 'সা-সা'-এর দিকে এবং 'সাঁ-সা'-এর দিকে তার আরোহণ-অবরোহণ হয়। সৌরাষ্ট্রে, সূর মধ্য-মধ্য-তার এই তিনটি সেতুক জুড়ে চলাচল করতে পারে। আবার মধ্য সেতুকের পরিসরেই আরোহণ-অবরোহণ সম্পন্ন হতে পারে। সির-সির ছাড়া, মাঝেপ্রথমের অবস্থাতে দৃশ্যত ভাটিকাল। নিচের রেখাচিত্র-১ এ তা প্রদর্শন করা হল।

পাতা নং ৪৮
হরাইজোন্টাল দিক (আনুপ্রাণিক দিক): সদৃশতার তালে দিকটি তার হরাইজোন্টাল দিক। ভারতীয় 'তাল' তালে এই রকম আবর্তনকর। তার পূর্ব-পশ্চিম-পূর্ব আছে। সেকেল চার-চার মাত্রার তাল এই রকম:

'ধা-গে-না-তে-। না-ক-ধি-না-।। ধা -'

এখানে 'ধা থেকে না' পর্যন্ত একটি আবর্তন সম্পন্ন হয়ে, পুনরায় 'ধা'-তে এসে আর এক আবর্তন ঘূর্ণ হয়। চরিত্রগত দিক থেকে তাল-এর ধরণ বৃত্তকর। নিচের রেখাটির-২-এ তা দেখানো হল:

রেখাটির-২
কিছু বোঝার সুবিধার জন্য তাদের বিষয়টিকে আনুভূমিক ভাবে উপস্থাপন করা হয়। নিচের চিত্র-৩ এ তা দেখানো হয়েছে।

নিচের চিত্র-৩
লোকসানীতের বর্ষ-রেখা:
এবারে বর্ষ-রেখার দিকটি রুদ্ধ নেওয়া যাক। গানের বর্ষ কী ভাবে চলে? ধরা যাক ‘রা-পা-মা-পা-রা’ এই রেখাটির চলন-রেখা নিম্নরূপ (চিত্রাঙ্ক-৪):

চিত্রাঙ্ক-৪

এখানে বর্ষ আলোহন-অলোহনের চরিত্রটি দেখা যায় (ঘাটায়াল আপেডিং, ঘাটায়াল ডিসেপ্টিং)। কিন্তু সমীকরণের ব্যাপারে সর্বাধিক এমন ঘাটায়াল আপেডিং-ডিসেপ্টিং-এর আলোহন দেখা যায় না। দেখানোই সমীকরণের বিশেষত। প্রথমে লালন ফকিরের একটি গানের ‘পারে কে যাবি নবীর নৌকাতে আস’ অংশের বর্ষ-রেখাকে রুদ্ধ নেওয়া যেতে পারে। এই অংশের বর্ষলিপি নিম্নরূপ:

"সা-সা-সা। সা-সা-রা। রা-পা-পা। পা-বা-পা।"

"গা-গা-রা। গা-গা-রা। সা-সা-সা। সা-সা-সা।"

(দুটির বিশালের বর্ষলিপি অবলম্বন। প্র: বিখ্যাত:২০১৬: ৭৫)
লালনের গানটির এই অংশের স্বর-রেখা হবে নিম্নরূপ (রেখাচিত্র-৫):

রেখাচিত্র-৫

এই স্বর-রেখা অংশে যে বৈশিষ্ট্যগুলি ধরা পড়ে সেগুলি এইরকম
ক. ‘পারে’ অংশ সম্পূর্ণতাতে জ্যোতির্বিদ্যা ধর-চলন। মন্দ-ধা থেকে মধ্যস্তলের সা।
খ. ‘কে যাবি’ অংশে প্রাঙ্গণ অস্তিত্ব।
গ. ‘নদীর’ অংশে ধর-চলনের কোন ব্যাখ্যা নেই।
ঘ. ‘দৌকাতে’ অংশে প্রাঙ্গণ অস্তিত্ব।
ঙ. ‘আয়’ অংশে স্বরপ্রস্তর এবং স্বর নয়।
একটি গোটা গানের উদাহরণ (লালনের ‘ধনা ধনা বলি তারে’)

এবারে লালন কবিরের একটি গোটা গানের উদাহরণ দেওয়া যেতে পারে (রেখাচিত্র-৬):

রেখাচিত্র-৬

(ধনা ধনা বলি তারে)

শঙ্কর রায়ের ফরম্যাগ্রি অবলম্বন (স্র: রায়:২০১৪:৪২-৪৩)

এখানে তিন-তিন ছদ্মে, হয় মাত্রার কুড়িটা আবর্তন আছে। এখানে ‘ধনা ধনা বলি তারে ... কড়ি কুফান এলে পারে’ অংশটির স্বর-রেখা দেখানো হয়েছে। বাকী সূর একই রকম।
একটি গোটা গানের উদাহরণ (পটের গান – ‘দেড়কা মাঝের বিয়ে করাতে যাবো গো রসিলা’)
একটি পটের গানের উদাহরণ (রেখাচিত্র-৭):

রেখাচিত্র-৭

(দেড়কা মাঝের বিয়ে করাতে যাবো গো রসিলা – পটের গান)

সরলরেখা – লেখক (সং: ইসলাম-৩:২০১৪:৭৩-৭৪)

তুলনামূলক স্বর-রেখা:
আমরা দুটি গানের সুরের চলনের তুলনামূলক পার্থক্যকে স্বর-রেখার মাধ্যমে বুঝে নিতে পারি। স্বর-রেখা বিশেষজ্ঞদের মাধ্যমে আমরা কেবল একটি দুটি গান নয়, একটি লোক সঙ্গীতের সুর চলনের সাধারণ প্রক্রিয়াকেও চিহ্নিত করতে পারি।
এখানে ধন্য বলি তবে (লালনের গান) এবং দেড়কা মাঝের বিয়ে করাতে (পটের গান)-এর তুলনামূলক চলন রেখাচিত্র-৮-এর মাধ্যমে দেখানো হল।
রেখাটির-৮
খন্না খন্না বলি তারে (লালনের গান)

এবং
দেড়কা মাঝের বিয়ে করাতে (পেটের গান)-এর
তুলনামূলক সর-রেখা

সূত্র-সূত্রাধার কথা
যে কোনো বিজ্ঞানীর পদ্ধতির প্রস্তুতক্ষেত্রে একাধিক ভাবেই সুনির্দিষ্ট এবং তার সীমাবদ্ধতাতে থাকে। সর-রেখা প্রস্তুতের বিষয়টি পরিক্ষামূলক। তাই, এর সূত্র-সূত্রাধি-সীমাবদ্ধতা থাকারই কথা। এই বিষয়ে এখানে সংক্ষেপে উল্লেখ করা হল।

সীমাবদ্ধতার দিক
১. গুহ্ব হরের ওপরে নির্ভর করতে হয়।
২. কোমল হর (ক্ষ-জ-সা-গা) দেখানো যায় না।
৩. স্পষ্ট হর, অর্ধ-সর দেখানো যায় না।
সূচনায়িক

১. সূর-চলনের সাধারন রূপটিকে (প্রকাশকে) বুঝতে সূচনা হয়।
২. সূরের চলন ও পঞ্জিপ্রকৃতিকে দৃষ্টিগ্রহণ করে তোলা যায়।
৩. সূর বৈশিষ্ট্যের তুলনায়ক আলোচনা করা সূচনা হয়।
৪. সীমাবদ্ধতা থাকলেও এই পদ্ধতি বিকাশসম্পন্ন।

সমাপ্ত কথন

স্বর-রেখা প্রস্ত করার প্রয়োজনীয়তা আছে। সাঙ্গীতিক চরিত্রকে এবং গানের সাঙ্গীতিক আথ্যপ্রচারকে (সিউডিফিক অইডেন্টিটি) বুঝতে গেলে, স্বর-রেখা আমাদের সহায়ক হবে। স্বর-রেখা প্রস্তাবের সীমাবদ্ধতাও দূর করতে পারলে এই পদ্ধতি আরও নিদর্শ হবে। আশা করি এই পদ্ধতির সীমাবদ্ধতা অনেকগুলোই দূর করা যাবে। যদি গান শেষ করে, তাহলে রাসায়নিক জন্য স্বর-রেখা প্রয়োজন না থাকে তবে পরে। আশা করি যদি গান শেষ করে, এই পদ্ধতি সুরের চলন সম্পর্কে তাকে সমাপ্ত করবে। যদি সুরকে বিশেষ করেন, তাহলে এই পদ্ধতি একাধিক ভাবেই সহায়ক হবে। মনে রাখতে হবে, এই পদ্ধতি সাঙ্গীতিতে বিশেষ নির্দেশনের উপায় নয়, সীমাবদ্ধতা বিশেষত একটি অন্যান্ত উপায়।

উল্লেখযোগ্য

ইসলাম-১ শেখ মকবুল ইসলাম, লোকসাংস্কৃতিবিজ্ঞান: তত্ত্ব ও রূপায়ন, বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য সংসদ, কলকাতা, ২০০৮
ইসলাম-২ শেখ মকবুল ইসলাম, ইতিহাসবিজ্ঞানের দৃষ্টিতে বাংলা লোকসাংস্কৃতি, বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য সংসদ, কলকাতা, ২০১৪
ইসলাম-৩ শেখ মকবুল ইসলাম, সার্তী, লোকসাংস্কৃতি: অন্যান্ত, অন্যান্ত, বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য সংসদ, কলকাতা, ২০১৪
বিশে বিশেষ বিশ্বাস, নির্বিচার লালনগীতি সরললিপি, মম প্রকাশ, ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ, ২০১৬
রায় শকের রায়, লোক সাংস্কৃতিক সরললিপি, অঙ্গল প্রকাশনী, ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ, ২০১৪
সরলাদেশী সরলাদেশী, শতখান, ............, ০০০০

Author: Sk. Makbul Islam, Associate Professor, Department of Bengali, St. Paul’s Cathedral Mission College, Kolkata, India, E-mail: skmakbulislam@rediffmail.com
NEWS AND INFORMATION-6 (00015-FF:10:2-D2017)

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON FOLKLORE IN ANAND, GUJRAT

- Kazi Abu Zumman

The N. S. Patel Arts College, Anand, Gujrat is going to hold a National Seminar during 8-10th March 2018. The theme of the seminar is “Indian Folklore History: Reading the Region”. Department of Gujarati (Folklore) organizes the programme in collaboration with four organizations: (a) Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi (b) Gujarati Sahitya Akadami, Gandhinagar (c) Sarder Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar (d) Meghani Loksahitya Kendra, Rajkot.

Delegates from fifteen states are expected to take part in this National Seminar. The designing of the seminar is striking. Each state will present two papers – one is about the folklore of the states, the other one is about the history of folklore of the state.

Scholars and delegates from Andhra Pradesh, Bengal, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Gujrat, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab and Rajasthan.

Dr. Prasant Patel is the Convenor of the seminar. Both Dr. Sk. Makbul Islam and Dr. Sujay Kumar Mondal are invited. A report of the Seminar will be published In the next issue (June 2018, Volume 11:1 Issue).
Sister Nivedita

Special Supplementary
For Sister’s Sesqui Centenary

Editor of Special Supplementary

CHAITALI MAITRA
Editorial of Special Supplementaty on Sister Nivedita

In these decades of this 21st century, when most of us are functionaries in the web of culture industry, often dehumanised and confused, the sesquicentenary celebrations of the birth of Sister Nivedita (1867-1911) are being organised with many momentous changes events happening around the world; a blue plaque in her name is being installed in her Wimbledon home in London. One will witness many conferences, seminars and volumes of writings celebrating her supreme sacrifices, unavailing selflessness and profound spirituality.

Saluting her achievements, in this issue, we have compiled a supplement which makes an endeavour to understand Sister Nivedita’s life from different perspectives. Her lasting contribution to the women’s education in India; her role in silently encouraging the nationalist movement in the pre-independence era and her brilliant scholarship as evident in the books written by her, recommended as part of syllabus in the University of Oxford, showing her untiring efforts to give her best, in order to uplift India from a dark phase.

Margaret Elizabeth Noble, apart from being a social worker, was also a teacher (who worked in Keswick and Wrexham in England) who was well-versed in the various tenets of Buddhism and Christianity. Till meeting Swami Vivekanda in 1895, she had found little solace in the wisdom encompassed in such texts as none taught her the art and the indispensable need for self-experience. Swamiji’s influence made her realise the nature of ´self’, connecting it to ´eternity’.

The articles contributed by Dr. Naina De and Dr. Pritha Kundu are well-researched and documented with rare insights for the respective topics addressed. Both of them are associated with teaching and hold many publications and honours to their credit. We hope the readers will hope interesting pointers which would help them to enhance their respect for the rare and divine personality of Sister Nivedita.

-Chaitali Maitra

Editor of Special Supplementaty on Sister Nivedita
সতের দীপশিখা
- চৈতন্য মেত্র

ভিন্ন নিবেদিতার জমলের শতবর্ষ উদযাপন সম্প্রতি শুরু হয়েছে।
পুরুষী জুড়ে বহ জায়গায় যেখানে শিক্ষা ও মানসিক বিকাশের
সহায়তার পরিসর রয়েছে নানা ধরনের অনুষ্ঠান আলোচনা সভা
ইত্যাদি এক বছর ধরে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। এই মহিলাদের সাথিকার
তত্ত্বাবধান আদর্শ উজ্জ্বল জীবনকে নানা নিক থেকে
রুক্ষবার চেষ্টা করা যায়। আমার এই ছোট্ট রচনাটিতে প্রচের
ভাবাধরা সম্পর্কে তার প্রণালী পাঠিতের আলোচনা করার চেষ্টা
করব।

মার্গারেট এলিজাবেথ নোবেল নিবেদিতার পূর্বশ্রেয় নাম। (সামুয়েল রিচার্ড নোবেল) পিতার কাপড়ের
বন্ধা ছিল। অধ্যাপিতকা একটাই প্রথম ছিল যে মোটামুটি বাসস্থান হিসেবে তিনি সপরিবারে
ইংল্যান্ডে থেকে আসেন, চার্চ ও মাজক জীবনে যোগদান করার অভিপ্রায়। ছোট মার্গারেট বড় হতে থাকলেন
আয়ারল্যান্ডের ছোট গ্রাম হ্যামিল্টনে, প্যাডাম্বারের কাছে, আয়ারল্যান্ড থেকে প্রকাশিত সংবাদপত্র The
Nation -এর সঙ্গে তিনি পাতিয়ে যুক্ত ছিলেন। স্বাভাবিকতার সংগ্রহ মার্গারেট দাদুর কাছে পান। ক্রমশঃ
ষ্ঠানের মাঝখানে শিক্ষাদর্শীর পর মার্গারেট শিক্ষকতার কাজে যুক্ত হন।

লণ্ডনের Wimbledon-এ ১৮৯৫ তে তার প্রথম স্মৃতিজ দর্শন হয়। ১৮৯৮ সালে ভারতবর্ষে এসে
মহিলাদের শিক্ষার কাজে জীবিতে পড়েন। থাকতেন গর্ভাঙ্গ, অনেক কষ্ট করে জীবন ধারণ করতেন।
একটি সুগভীর সুদৃশ্য মূল্যবোধ ভিক্ষিক জীবন তার ছিলেবালের প্রতিষ্ঠা। মাত্র দশ বছর বয়সে পিতৃতোরা
হওয়া, দাদুর কাছে মানুষ হওয়ার সময়, লিঙ্গী কাপড় (The Nation) দিলি করা, পরে মা ও বোন
(Mary) ও ভাই (Richmond) -এর দেখাওয়ার দায়িত্ব নেওয়ার সময়ে নিজের জীবন ছিল নিত্যক্ষীন।
ততদিনে তার শিক্ষক জীবনের বেশ অনেক বছর পর ১৮৯৯ এ ভারতবর্ষে আসার পরেই তিনি
এখানকার ভাষা শিখতে শুরু করেন। অজিস্তাত্ত্বিক লিখিতেছেন। তিনিই স্বাভাবিক এই ভাষায় করেন। তিনিই রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের 'কার্তিলিওয়ালা'
We have to remember that ancient countries were less defined and more united than modern. Central and western Asia at the period in question were one-culture region...

(Nivedita-7).
Author: Chaitali Maitra, Department of English (PG), St. Paul’s Cathedral Mission College (University of Calcutta), Kolkata, India, E-mail: chaitalisubrata@hotmail.com
A BEACON OF LIGHT: SISTER NIVEDITA AND WOMEN’S EDUCATION IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY BENGAL

- DR. NAINA DEY

“... All education worth having must first devote itself to the developing and consolidating of character and only secondarily concern itself with intellectual accomplishment.”

The question that has to be solved for Indian women, therefore, is a form of education that might attain this end of developing the faculties of soul and mind in harmony with one another. Once such a form shall be successfully thought out and its adequacy demonstrated, we shall, without further ado, have an era amongst us of Woman’s Education.


After Nivedita passed away, S.K. Ratcliffe, the erstwhile editor of The Statesman, Calcutta wrote in the Daily News:

Margaret Noble was known in London twenty years ago as perhaps the most eager and brilliant member of a group of new educationists who, among other things, founded the Sesame Club. (Sengupta 24)

‘A trained teacher of exceptional gifts’, said the Times, and the Wimbledon Borough News referred to her as one who ‘had a real genius for teaching, especially little children’.

Born to an Irish-Scots family, and daughter of Samuel Richmond Noble and Mary Isabel Hamilton, Margaret Elizabeth Noble completed her education at Halifax College at the age of seventeen. In 1884, she became a teacher in a school at Keswick. In 1886, she took up a post at Wrexham and in 1889 she went to teach at Chester. Her younger sister May was then teaching at Liverpool. Her brother Richmond was a college student there.

Margaret liked teaching. Soon she became interested in a new method of teaching which was discovered by a Swiss teacher Pestalozi. One Mrs de Leeuw invited her to open a school along these lines in London. She accepted the invitation and in 1890 went to Wimbledon. In 1892 she opened a school there and named it Kingsley School which was later renamed Ruskin School. A glance at the advertisement for admission in the new school published in the Wimbledon News dated 2 November 1895 will give us some idea of this school:

THE KINGSLEY SCHOOL
KINGSLEY MEAD,
MERTON HALL ROAD

Kindergarten, Transition and Preparatory Classes for boys and girls to the age of ten.

An introduction and references required before admission to the School.

For Prospectus and all particulars, apply to MISS NOBLE, Principal.
The school was evidently meant for children up to the age of ten – Kindergarten (3-4 years), Transition (4-6 years) and Preparatory (6-10 years). Here Margaret spent ten years as a teacher from 1884-1894.

Margaret met Swami Vivekananda at the house of Lady Isabel Margesson in November 1895. She began to attend his lectures though with misgivings as she was already experiencing spiritual restlessness resulting from her uncertainty regarding religious formalities of the Church. One day the Swami was talking about the women of his country who were never sent to school by their conservative families. He turned to Margaret and said: ‘I have plans for the women of my own country in which you, I think, could be of great help to me.’ The Swami left England in December 1896. He did not take Margaret with him as he feared for her health and comfort in the extreme weather and poverty of India.

Margaret arrived in Calcutta on 28 January 1898. The Swami was at the dock to receive her. A few days later two American disciples Mrs Sara Bull and Miss Josephine MacLeod joined them. Together they proceeded to Belur. In March the same year Swamiji gave her the name ‘Nivedita’, meaning ‘Dedicated to God’.

Nivedita traveled extensively and acquainted herself with the myths and culture of ancient India. One day, when in Kashmir, the Swami asked her if she had forgotten about her mission of setting up a girls’ school. She responded by telling him of her plans. After staying with Sarada Maa at Bagbazar for some time, Nivedita moved to 16, Bosepara Lane opposite Mother’s house. Here she decided to start a school for girls. A private gathering of respected people of the neighbourhood was arranged at Balaram Bose’s house for this purpose, and here Nivedita delivered a speech on the necessity for women’s education. She had at first failed to notice the entry of Swami who began to laugh and prod the doubtful listeners – ‘Get up, get up, why don’t you get up. Being a girl’s father is not enough. All of you must help in arranging for their education. Get up and speak; respond to her request. Say – Yea. We give you our consent. We will send our girls to you’ (Translation mine). As everyone hesitated, a desperate Swamiji began to pester Haramohan babu under his breath – ‘You must’ and then said to Nivedita – ‘Well, Miss Noble, this gentleman offers his girl to you.’ The school was inaugurated the very next day, on 13 November 1898 on the auspicious day of Kali Puja. Sarada Maa herself performed the opening ceremony and prayed that the blessings of the Divine Mother be bestowed upon the school, and that the girls to be trained here may become models for an ideal society. Nivedita taught the girls to read and write and introduced painting, clay modeling and sewing.

After six months (by which time the bubonic plague had ravaged Calcutta during which she had wholeheartedly involved herself in relief-work), Nivedita realized that to continue her school she would need more money. She therefore had to return to England to raise funds for it. She and the Swami left India in the middle of June 1899. In New York she formed “The Ramakrishna Guild of help in America”, and published a booklet titled “The Project of the Ramakrishna School for Girls”. The house at 16 Bosepara Lane was her home, her school, and a meeting-place for poets, painters, monks, devotees, scholars, statesmen, politicians and scientists. Later Nivedita opened a section for adult women which enabled children’s mothers to attend classes as well. She taught them to read and write and to sew and paint. Nivedita earned money for her school by writing books. Some friends in England and America, and Mrs Sara Bull bore her personal expenses.

The school was not known by any particular name then. In her project for the school, she had called it “Ramakrishna School for Girls”. Some friends from the West called it “Vivekananda School”. The people of the locality called it simply “Nivedita’s School”. In 1918, after her death, it was taken over by The Ramakrishna Mission and was renamed “Ramakrishna Mission Sister Nivedita Girls’ School”. It expanded gradually and finally in August 1963 the management of the school was placed in the hands of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission and so it was now known as “Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita Girls’ School”.
Nivedita decided to run her school along the lines of Indian nationalism. She would not take financial assistance from a foreign government. Her girls sat in the oriental fashion, on low wooden platforms with cushions. In front of them were low desks. She encouraged them to paint Indian scenes and motifs. At a time when the singing of Bande Mataram in public was banned by the government, she introduced it in the school’s daily prayers. She also introduced spinning in the school.

Ever since she first went to stay at Bagbazar, Nivedita had been deeply impressed by Indian women. Stories of the devotion and resourcefulness of the non-Brahmin Rani Rashmoni (who broke conventions by founding the Dakshineshwar Kali Temple in 1855) inspired her, and she was an ardent devotee of Maa Sarada who loved her as her own little child. Her guru Swami Vivekananda himself hated discrimination against women as much as he hated casteism. Nivedita on her part, found Indian women shy and retiring, but gentle, proud and dignified. However, Swamiji believed in the independence of the female spirit and a simultaneous submission to the age-old traditions of loyalty towards husband and hearth. He took as ideal models of womanhood the chaste and courageous Rajput queens. Emancipation of women did not signify for him a vigorous assertion of rights, but a quiet discipline and love for one’s country and its people. Like him Nivedita wanted Indian women to be better educated, but she also exhorted them to retain their own ideals and practices. “Do not let modern fashions and extravagances of the West and its modern English education spoil your reverential humility and your lovable domestic ties”, she told them (Atmaprana 74). She called India the land of great women. She extolled to her students the ideals for which Sita and Savitri, Uma and Gandhari stood. She praised the purity and faithfulness of the Indian wife and the utter selflessness of the mother. She reminded the women of Ahalyabai and Lakshmibai who served their motherland even to their last breath. Nivedita believed that Indian would regain its ancient glory with the spiritual and intellectual enlightenment of its women.

When Nivedita came to India with the mission of educating women with the purpose of instilling in them the spirit of nationalism, a change was already taking place in the domestic and cultural life of the Indian woman. In the last decades of the nineteenth-century, the penetration of British culture was so profound that the entire world of Hindu domestic life had become a subject of debate. Members of the Brahmo Samaj (a religious reform society formed by eminent and powerful Hindu Bengalis of the time) were concerned about the need for women’s education and abolition of social practices like sati and child marriage which were debilitating for the Hindu society at large. Thus there were manuals by western-educated authors that began to reformulate the world of the Hindu women in terms of their conjugal life, child-rearing, culinary skills and a number of other subjects. The purpose of these books was to encourage women to learn how to read and write which would help them adapt their lives to the changed conditions in British-ruled India. One such manual titled *Strir Prati Swamir Upadesh* by Satyacharan Mitra states:

The husband is learned; the wife is ignorant. The husband is truthful; the wife tells lies. The husband is mild mannered; the wife is hot tempered and loves to quarrel. The husband follows the one God; the wife worship 33 crores of gods. We can see this in home after home in our country. And the cause is simply that women are not being educated. (Walsh 35)

By the time Nivedita arrived in India, the long prevailing custom of ‘Sati’ had been abolished at the initiative of Brahmo activist Raja Rammohan Roy in the 1920s. The widow remarriage system along with the spread of education among the common masses irrespective of gender, due to the efforts of Ishwarachandra Vidyasagar did much to recover the condition of women. In 1842, Peary Chand Mitra of the young Bengal group took up different aspects of women’s status, focusing on education and female seclusion as key contemporary issues. Citing examples of learned women from the past as well as women characters in Kalidasa’s plays, Mitra valorized the roles of women in spiritual life, as ‘sahadharminis’ to their husbands in ancient times, and as heroic resisters to alien rulers, choosing death rather than dishonour. From these elements of history and folklore, the images of the glorious women were recast to shape the new identity for women in the nationalist struggle for freedom. Moreover, there were attempts by foreign missionaries to establish schools that would cater especially to the middle-class women. However, in a society that was staunchly patriarchal, where
girls as young as four or five years were married off and made to bear the drudgery of household chores and premature motherhood, such attempts yielded little result. One such document to establish this reality is a letter by Radhakanto Deb (dated 10 December 1821) to W.H. Pearce regarding a meeting proposed to discuss the recent arrival of Miss Mary Ann Cooke as a part of the initiative of ‘British and Foreign School Society’ to educate women. Deb writes:

I beg leave to observe, that the British and Foreign School Society, bearing in mind the usages and customs of the Hindoos, have sent out Miss Cooke to educate Hindoo females, and that I fear none of the good and respectable Hindoo families will give her access to the women’s Apartment, nor send their females to her school if organized. They may be all convinced of the utility of getting their female children taught at home in Bengalee, by their domestic school masters, as some families do, before such female children are married, or arrived to the age of 9 or 10 years at farthest. For these reasons I am humbly of opinion that we need not have a Meeting to discuss on the subject of the education of Hindoo females by Miss Cooke, who may render her services (if required) to the schools lately established by the Missionaries for the tuition of the poor classes of Native females. (Basu 11)

It is therefore no wonder that Nivedita would experience the same sense of alienation in a land that considered her no more than a ‘white’ woman missionary – a misconception that made even Rabindranath Tagore ask her if she would teach Western culture to one of his daughters that elicited from her a gentle but firm rebuke. Nivedita’s difference from the English missionaries was not merely her Celtic blood and her sensitive insight into Indian culture and traditions, but her selfless love and comprehensive mind that perceived the spiritual heritage and cultural richness of a land of strange contradictions. To her the primal figure of Kali became the manifestation of the cosmic power of the Indian woman. In her public lecture “Kali and her Worship” delivered on 13 February 1899 at the Albert Hall in Calcutta, Nivedita clearly stated her difference from the missionaries when it came to purpose and point of view:

I see nothing in Calcutta today, which is more calculated, if we accept it thankfully, to strengthen and purify our thought of God as the Mother than the presence of a section who deny and distrust our worship. (Mukherjee & Lahiri 1)

What is notable here is Nivedita’s use of the collective ‘our’ which made her a part of the lanes of North Calcutta where people had already taken her labour of love for granted. She had not come to India to ease the ‘white man’s burden’, to civilize a ‘savage race’, but to arouse in the Indian women a sense of their lost glory, a forgotten legacy of great women of history and mythology as Padmini, Meerbai, Chand Bibi, Sita and Savitri. She believed that India could liberate herself only if her men and women worked towards the same goal – that of generating a new enlightened progeny that would embrace changes that were unavoidable outcome of foreign rule yet pride itself in its ‘organic, spiritual, altruistic’ civilization rather than blindly aping the West. The concluding passage of her essay “Future Education of the Indian Women” succinctly puts forth her view on the role of the teacher in this context:

Education can never be carried out by criticism or discouragement. Only he who sees the noblest thing in the taught can be an effective teacher. Only by the greatness of Indian life can we give a sense of the greatness of the world outside India. Only by the love of our own people can we learn the love of humanity and only by a profound belief in the future of the Indian woman can any man be made worthy to help in bringing that future about. Let the preacher of the New Learning be consecrated to the vision of one who resumes into herself the greatness of the whole Indian past. Let him hope and most earnestly pray that in this our time in all our villages we are to see women great even as Gandhari, faithful and brave as Savitri, holy and full of tenderness as Sita. Let the past be as wings leading us up the mountain of what is yet to be. Let every Indian woman incarnate for us the whole spirit of the Mother and the

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Author: Dr. Naina Dey, Assistant Professor, Maharaja Manindra Chandra College, Kolkata. She is a critic, translator and creative writer. Her books include *Macbeth: Critical Essays*, *Edward the Second: Critical Studies*, *Real and Imagined Women: The Feminist Fiction of Virginia Woolf and Fay Weldon*, *Representations of Women in George Eliot’s Fiction, Macbeth: Exploring Genealogies* and a book of poems *Snapshots from Space and Other Poems*. She is also guest lecturer in the P.G. Dept. of English, University of Calcutta. E-mail: naina.dey@gmail.com
SISTER NIVEDITA AND THE MOVEMENT OF ‘NATIONALISED’ ART IN INDIA

- PRITHA KUNDU

The words constitute the Master’s ‘benediction’ to his disciple – Swamiji’s ‘Blessings to Nivedita’. His prophetic realisation of Nivedita’s potential to “give her all” to India proved to be true indeed. She was not only the ‘spiritual daughter’ of Swami Vivekananda, and a devotee of Sri Thakur Ramakrisna and The Holy Mother, but her contribution to the women’s education in India, the Nationalist movement and her writings on Indian religion, culture and life have been instrumental to the ‘Indian Renaissance’ of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Reevaluations of her life and works have already attracted both critical and devoted attention. In this humble tribute, the present author’s purpose is to add nothing new to the wealth of writings on Nivedita, but simply to highlight some issues related to her role in patronising and supporting Indian art.

In the historical-cultural framework of the early twentieth century, the thriving Indian nationalism manifested itself, among other things, in the restoration of India’s cultural ethos through art. Ramananda Chattopadhyaya, the editor of Pravasi and The Modern Review, was one of the chief exponents of the art movement that developed with a deliberate nationalistic flavour in the early twentieth century. Chattopadhyay himself acknowledged that it was Sister Nivedita who first encouraged him to lend his editorial support to the emerging nationalist artists and their reviewers. She herself went on to contribute earnestly to the Modern Review. Her essay “The Function of Art in Shaping Nationality”, (The Modern Review, January - February 1907) begins with the observation: “It is in the endeavor to take spiritual possession of its own, in struggling to carry out the tasks before it, that the national idea is shaping itself in India. . . . Art, then, is charged with spiritual message,—in India today, the message of the Nationality”. (Complete Works, vol. 2, 11-12). She also wrote to Mrs. Ole Bull, another European devotee to Swamiji, that she nurtured a dream of the regeneration of the national arts and crafts of India.

The time when Nivedita was writing such reviews and essays was a fruitful period of ‘new’ Indian art. Such authors and painters as E. B. Havell (1864-1937) and Anand Coomaraswamy (1877-1943) were trying to bring out the indigenous and the authentic quality of ancient Indian art, free from the Western influences since the Greco-Roman times. Nivedita’s inspiring support to Havell’s claim that Gandhara art should be excluded from the true and genuine body of Indian art, helped in a way to propagate the notion of ‘nationalisation’. It was nevertheless difficult for Havell to be entirely free from the Europeans’ traditional perspective of appreciating Indian art, whereas in case of Coomaraswami and Okakura “Orientalism acquired more decidedly nationalistic overtones, rooting itself in the patriotic fervour of a rejuvenated Japan, or a deep crisis of self-identity at the denationalisation of Ceylon”(Guha-Thakurta 182). Nivedita’s involvement with the nationalistic politics in Bengal, however, helped her to engage herself in the project of reviving Indian art as part
of a “renaissance” of Indian culture. She also criticised Ravi Verma’s art for its overtly visible ‘western’ influences, lack of ‘decorum’ and materialistic sensibilities, which she contrasted with the ‘ideal’ and ‘spiritual’ values of Abanindranath Tagore’s works, oriented towards a recovery of the ‘genuine’ national tradition.

The first decade of the twentieth century saw the development of the Bengal School of Art, which soon became central to the movement of new nationalist art in India. With Havell, Abanindranath Tagore and Anand Coomaraswamy as its chief exponents, the Bengal school of Art movement was blessed to have Sister Nivedita as a mentor and guide. Abanindranath himself, and his students – Nandalal Basu and Asit Kumar Haldar gratefully recalled how she had inspired them to pursue and revitalize the once-so-rich but later, mostly forgotten paths of Indian aesthetics. When the European artist Mrs Herringham, came to India with a purpose of making copies of the Ajanta-frescoes in the caves of Ajanta, seeking assistance from some Indian artists, Nivedita recommended to her young artists like Nandalal Basu and Asit Kumar Haldar. She personally took initiative to make arrangements for the artists’ travel and lodging, bearing all the expenses.

Sister Nivedita was a learned art-connoisseur, but her devotion to the spiritual grandeur and loftiness embodied by the artworks at the Ajanta and Elephanta caves made her respond rather in a passionate voice of art-worship. In Nivedita of India (2002), translated from the booklet titled Bharater Nibedita (1998), it is thus noted: “The frescoes of Ajanta would overwhelm her. She also said that she had found the finest expression of true Indian art in the frescoes of Ajanta, and the philosophy of integration of the Hindu religion in the carved image of Trimurti in the Elephanta caves” (65).

Nivedita often recalled that she inherited much of her enthusiasm for Indian aesthetics from her Master, Swamiji. A ‘Sanyasin’ is supposed to be a renouncer and ascetic, but Swamiji was not a recluse of that kind; his vision and mission held the service to mankind and the motherland at the centre of all religion. Alongside his spiritual and philanthropic lessons, his deep reverence towards national culture, and especially art, also moved Nivedita. She learnt from Swamiji, and later herself read about the great courses of Indian art and history. Her composite vision of history represented through art found a brilliant expression in the highly imaginative passage as follows:

I have long thought that if I were an Indian prince I would use my surplus revenues first and foremost for the promotion of civic and historic painting. … I would like to build open verandahs, running round three sides of a square, and bearing on their inner surfaces great mural pictures—some in pigments, some in mosaics, and some after the fashion of the Indian past, carved in stone in low relief—of the mighty scenes of the civic and national past. . . . —Ashoka sending forth his missionaries; Kanishka seated in council; Vikramaditya offering the Ashvamedha; the twelve crowned victims of Cheetore—the Coronation of Akbar; the building of the Taj; the funeral of Aurangzeb; the sati of the Queen Jahanabi of hill Tipperah—these, and such as these, should be the subjects here displayed, and every woman on her way to the river-ghat, and every labourer going to and from his work, should be made familiar with the idea of India, and the evolution of India through four thousand years (Complete Works, vol. 3, 58)

Despite the tone of imaginative enthusiasm pervading the passage, one element may strike the modern Indian reader that Nivedita’s vision was basically historical, and not mythological. Though she was otherwise interested in myths, lores and folk-arts of India, she did prefer the ‘historicist’ way of projecting art as a major means of imparting the ‘real’ notion of modern India as a land of such rich historical traditions. Her vision was partly realised in her lifetime when she saw that her friends -- young artists of Bengal were working on some of her cherished ideas. The famous painting of ‘Bharat-Mata’ (1906) by Abanindra Nath Tagore, and ‘Sati’ (1907) by Nandalal Basu were done following the guidance of Nivedita: it was her conceptualisation of Indian art that they brought to life on canvas. Several other historical paintings followed, and a close study of them indeed may illustrate to what extent Nivedita’s dedication to the ‘modern’ and flourishing Indian art served to develop a counter-discourse to the conventional Eurocentric-Orientalist bias towards India. This is
indeed no simple matter of generalisation, for Nivedita’s own position as a ‘foreigner’ by birth, spiritually accepted as a mother, sister and daughter of India has now been made subject to critical scholarship and debates. Without going into those complexities, in view of her 150th birth-anniversary let us consider the present attempt to write a few words on Nivedita’s contribution to modern India’s ‘reniassance’ in art, merely as a devotee’s tribute to one side of her myriad-minded personality.

Sources:


Author: Dr. Pritha Kundu, Assistant Professor, Hiralal Majumder Memorial College for Women, Dakshineswar, Kolkata, E-mail: pritha_kundu2@rediffmail.com