

Bangla-0-Biswa



Durga Puja

&

Silver Jubilee Celebration

Massachusetts, October 2008

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BANGLA-O-BISWA

MASSACHUSETTS

2008

Email:

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www.BanglaBiswa.org

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the BANGLA-O-BISWA MASSACHUSETTS, I welcome you and your family to attend the auspicious occasion of our 2008 Durga Puja, which will be held at Littleton High School, Littleton, MA on October 3-5, 2008. It was at this time of year back home when the sound of dhaak echoed and we awoke to the voice of the late Birendra Krishna Bhadra reciting our beloved 'Mahishasuramardini' on the radio. Out on the streets people would be stranded in traffic as the construction of puja pandels ensued in our dearest Bengal. We invite you to join us as we invoke Her goodwill upon us.

Our devoted members are working tirelessly to make this puja enjoyable for both you and your family. With the help of many others, our executive committee has arranged a grand puja ceremony, Bangla-O-Biswa's trademark luscious food (including the traditional lip-smacking bhog), and an exciting art competition for the children.

Speaking of them, special efforts have been made by our executive committee members to incite greater involvement from our younger members. Along with featured artists Antara Chaudhury, Bratati Bandopadhyay and Haimanti Rakshit Mann and various other local talents, the cultural secretaries have promised to keep the audience glued throughout the show. The Bengali puja sankha, CD and DVD stall, saree vendors, ICC booth, and financial advisor are just some of the added attractions we have to offer.

Proudly completing its 25th year, Bangla-O-Biswa boasts to be one of the oldest Indian organizations in Massachusetts. Considering the current economic situation and hike in gas-prices, we are deliberately trying to keep the puja a modest (but still equally as glamorous) affair and are abstaining from making it a lavishly wasteful event. We are also happy to inform you that we are on track to maintain the same amount of subscriptions as we have held onto this last year. For this faithfulness, we express our gratitude to our patrons, sponsors, and corporate donors for their spontaneous help. As usual your participation is vital to our progress and remains the primary determining factor concerning the success of our puja.

Here, at Bangla-O-Biswa, we strive to bring back those long forgotten times experienced back home, those which we can only try our best to recreate. We hold a vision that we will all come together as Bengalis and leave behind all disagreements and misunderstandings as we celebrate this auspicious occasion, while considering that many of us here are here far away from our true homes and loved ones. Alongside you, we shall create new memories and hope that the next generation, growing up here in America, will look back fondly on this puja just as we reminisce of the ones from our childhood days.

Please note that we will be celebrating our Kali Puja and the concluding ceremony of our 25th year on October 25, 2008 at Maynard High School. Further details will be posted on our website, www.BanglaBiswa.org.

We look forward to seeing you there along with your family and friends.

Best Regards,
Gautam Maulik
President
BANGLA-OBISWA, MASSACHUSETTS

A Note from Gautam Maulik, President of Bangla-O-Biswa

Dear Friends,

I want to express my sincerest gratitude to all those who participated and worked tirelessly to make this year's Durga puja such a success. First and foremost, I wish to thank all of you who have attended the puja, and hope that we will be blessed with your participation in the future. I would also like to thank our patrons and sponsors for their generous financial help. In particular, I would like to thank:

Promotional stalls: Samson Mathews Samuel, Partha Chakraborty, Arpita Chakraborty, Biswajit Saha and Jai M Dev, Brian Hawkins

A few names, among our many volunteers, deserve special mention:

Puja, Decoration, and Bhog: Arpita Banerjee, Supriya Chakravarty, Keka Dey, Keya Dam, Jui Dutta, Arindam Ghosh (2), Madhumati Ghosh and friends, Babli Gupta, Archana Guha-Mandal, Nilanjana Maulik, Hasi Mondal, Rita Mukherjee, Lipi Mukhopadhyay, Rinku Pal, Rita Paul, Aloka Roy, Anjana Roy, Paroma Sanyal, Kishore Sinha, Suparna Sinha, Sanchita, Arpita Chakraborty, Dipti. Drishadwati Datta, Dipak Datta, Nilanjana Rakhit

Cultural Function: Sagar Dey, Soumitro Pal, Joy Roy.

Kitchen and Food: Utpala Bandyopadhyay, Sharmila Biswas, Susmita Raychaudhuri, Ashis Bhattacharyya, Krishna Mandal, Monika Bandyopadhyay, Anita Bandyopadhyay, Jhilmil Biswas, Anupam Raychaudhuri, Kabita Lombard, Babli Gupta, Mithu Datta, Deeparati Datta, Selina Banerjee, Chirag Gangopadhyay

Reception and Front desk: Ram Sudheer Adluri, Murugavel Ponnusamy, Mahesh Thirunavukkarasu, Nishit Mukhopadhyay, Abhijit Ray.

Website and Communication: Sagar Dey, Arindam Ghosh, Joy Roy, Paroma Sanyal.

Magazine: Anup Biswas, Rimjhim Biswas, Sharmila Biswas, Rono Joy Chatterjee, Soumitro Pal, Arnab Raychaudhuri (Bubla), Amit Roy and Mahesh Thirunavukkarasu.

Youth Activity: Shohug Chakrabarti for organizing the children's art contest and Saroj Roy for sponsoring prizes for art contest

Decoration for the 25th celebrations: Anita Peterson

Compliance Issues: Nilanjana Rakhit

Sponsorship of lunch and dinner on October 4, 2008: Nilanjana Maulik

Finally, I would like to thank the current members of EC: **Utpala Bandyopadhyay (Vice President), Arindam Ghosh (General Secretary), Nishit Mukhopadhyay (Treasurer), Soumitro Pal and Sagar Dey (Cultural Secretaries), and Sharmila Biswas (Member).**

Sincerely

Gautam Maulik

From Desk of Editors

What a pleasure it is to publish a magazine to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Bangla O Biswa (BOB). On behalf of all the members of BOB, let us all extend our hearty congratulations.

Congratulations to the founding members of BOB, who had the vision to build this organization. Along the way came many hardships, yet the members remained steadfast in their beliefs and ideologies and steered forward to keep BOB as an integral part of the Bengali Community.

The seed that was planted 25 years ago was nurtured overtime by different committees and many of our community members. Today, BOB is standing tall on very solid ground with its roots spread very deep within the community. BOB is fortunate to have a present committee of very dedicated and hard working individuals who share the same values as their predecessors.

Through these seventy-four pages of this anniversary edition, we have tried to bring to you a variety of features. There are some articles on health benefits, some artwork, some photographs, some features written by our past and present members and some of our very young and the young adults whose adolescence was intertwined with BOB. In essence, we hope that every one will find something they can relate to and experience the feelings of nostalgia when they look through the pages. The members, members of Executive Committee or Editors are not responsible for editing the materials that provided by the authors or advertisers

Last but not least, a big thank you to our sponsors. Like any project, the production of this magazine needed some financial back up and without our advertisers this feat could not be undertaken or accomplished. Once again we thank everyone for their support. We specially thank Ms Neelam Wali and Mr. Anupam Wali for helping us to publish this magazine within a very short period of time.

Shubho Bijoya to one and all and hope you can join us in our Kali-Pooja and for the celebrations of our twenty fifth anniversaries.

Soumitro Pal

Sharmila Biswas

Editors and members, Executive Committee

Bangla-o-Biswa: Origin, History, Mission, Values, and Vision

Benoy Paul

Bangla-O-Biswa (BOB) was founded for the cultivation and propagation of our Bengali heritage and traditions to our succeeding generations. Towards that noble goal, some of us have been experimenting to develop a proper course of action. A few of these members, under the banner of the “Tagore Society of New England” were involved in presenting India’s right and moral course of actions for the “Independence of Bangladesh. Complete cooperation and excellent working relations flourished among the nationalities of India, East Pakistan, and the American citizens of greater Boston. Most of these participants were from the world of Academia, politics, and public media. Continuation of that lofty ideal of keeping the best of our tradition and absorbing the good qualities of the West transpired in the formation of the goals of BOB: “Live and let live, share and care, accept and respect.” Be inclusive, compassionate, civil, and open. We and our children have been adopting the virtues of the West. It would be beneficial to all concerned to assimilate the sense of punctuality, straightforwardness, and responsibility. Our guiding philosophy has always been “Basudiva Kutumbaikan; the whole world is our family”

Thus, we founded BOB in the spring of 1982 at an open general meeting for the Bengali community at Carney Hospital, Boston. Community members were invited to participate by mailing letters, phone calls, and word-of-mouth. All relevant issues were discussed and debated and the gist of majority opinions was adopted. Among many alternative names for this association, BOB got the majority vote and was accepted.

For many years, during our Durga Puja, we observed the “Bangla Dibas” and “Boswa Dibas” based on the main features of Bengali culture, in addition to the performances of non-Bengali communities. Thus we had Hindi, Punjabi (Bhangra), Gujrati, Kashmiri, Italian, Irish, and other western musical and dance programs. In addition to the various Pujas (Durga, Saraswati, Kali, etc.) we observed the Spring and Summer festivals, Rabindra and Nazrul Jayanti, children’s drama and dance program and the annual drama during the Bijoya Sammelan, as well as summer picnics. After our first birthday in 1983, BOB performers successfully participated in the North American Bengali Conference (NABC) in Queens, NY. For the first time, a club from the greater Boston area performed at the NABC. The next year, BOB hosted the NABC 1984 as an exception; only the Cultural Association of Bengal (CAB) of New York, NY had hosted all the previous Banga Sammelan.

Our venue was Kresge Auditorium, MIT, Cambridge, MA. Dr. Rama Choudhuri, Vice-Chancellor, Rabindra Bharati University, was the guest of honor and keynote speaker. Many clubs from USA and Canada joined in the festival; many certificates and prizes were awarded to the best talents. Dr. Rama Choudhuri was honored with an inscription on a plaque. Seminars and discussions on issues of propagation of our cultural issues for the young generation and harmonious co-existence in our adopted homeland were passionately debated. Artworks of local artists were exhibited and the visitors appreciated the artwork. Sangam, the Indian Students Organization of MIT, facilitated the use of Kresge Auditorium and other resources from MIT. Excellent working relationships evolved and continued among MIT officials, Sangam staff, and BOB chairman-president and BOB members.

All challenges could be tackled, if they are pursued with honesty, integrity, decency, civility, sense of dedication, transparency, democratic values, and accountability. To achieve these goals, BOB had annual general meetings and held annual elections from 1982 until the mid-1990s. All members were encouraged to participate in the meetings and related events by correspondence, phone calls, and word of mouth. In addition, paid membership forms were included with each mailing and about six times a year. Membership forms were handed out from the reception desk during all the events. The list of BOB members was updated. BOB also maintained transparency by distributing the financial statements at every annual meeting and all other events of the year. This club was fortunate to have many talented and dedicated members from the early 1980s until today. There were many silent workers, who did not want to be in the limelight, but worked equally hard for the mission and vision of BOB. As the pioneers of BOB, their efforts should always be acknowledged and appreciated.

BOB also took the lead in publishing a literary magazine annually to include the writings of the younger generation and the adults to nurture and share their talents. These efforts must be sustained. Production of children's programs, dance and drama, required a lot of hard work and sacrifice from young artists, their parents, and BOB management. Such events were staged annually and the community enjoyed and benefited significantly.

It is very important and necessary to abide by the adapted constitution. For approximately a dozen years, this has not been the case. Key provisions regarding valid voting members, general meetings, elections, quorums, amendments, and statements regarding finance were not met. Do we have voters according to the constitution? Do the voters receive adequate notice? Do we have voting members? The Board of Trustees has the advisory role. During my speech as Chairman of the 25th year anniversary program on November 10, 2007, I said that the atmosphere should be there so that the trustees can discharge their responsibilities. According to the constitution, the immediate past president is a trustee. Yet, when the first president of the club duly transferred his responsibility in the mid 1990s to the successor, the successor denied the first president from joining the Board of Trustees. To my knowledge, no one from the executive committee(s) and the general body did anything at that time. Many years later, this was recognized and the first president was appointed as a trustee and this was reaffirmed last year. From the mid 1990s until today, trustees were not asked to deliberate with the executive committees or the general body. There have been serious problems over the years. Together, the managers, the Board of Trustees, and the voting members can and should try to solve these problems democratically and in line with the constitution.

BOB and Bangladesh Association of New England (BANE) jointly celebrated "Ekushe February" at Kresge Auditorium, in the memory of the Bengali students, whose moral and legitimate struggle for having the Bengali language as one of the two state languages of Pakistan was suppressed by the Pakistani dictators. The programs included freedom related inspirational and folk songs from East and West Bengal and varieties of dance performances. The military dictators and civilian leaders of Pakistan denied this birth-right of linguistic freedom and tried to silence the voice by causing a massacre on the date in 1952, although East Pakistanis accounted for 56% of the Pakistani population. Urdu, the Pakistani state language was spoken by only 18% of the population. BOB was proud of active participation in this moral and human cause of freedom of Bangladeshis. Bengalees are the only people murdered for the rightful recognition of

their rich language. The United Nations declared February 21st as International Language Day. Today, Bengali is the national language of the independent nation of Bangladesh.

The Cambridge Public Library, Central Square Branch, Cambridge MA opened the Bengali section on February 21, 1999. The representatives of the consulates of India and Bangladesh and a past president of BOB were the guest speakers at the opening ceremony. All these resources are accessible to all visitors of the Cambridge community. Residents of other cities can also borrow these resources through inter-library loan programs. Years of dedicated and selfless sacrifice of a gentleman, a Cambridge resident, made this resource possible.

Two of our objectives were to be inclusive and to treat everyone the same, irrespective of the amount of donation. Money, hard work, commitment, loyalty, good judgment, etc, are important for continued growth. Retention of members is also important. We have been losing some members, and we should hear them out and try to address and accommodate their issues and concerns.

After 26 years, the community is anxious. For its sustenance and forward movement, we need young blood and adult wisdom that will maintain this tradition of excellence with new energy. This must always be based on the principles of transparency and democratic values and wide inclusion. When controversies appear, they must be dealt with by open debate and fairness to all for the long term interest of your community. Short term approaches, band-aids, and placing the unpleasant issues under the rug will undermine our noble mission and vision. Civil response and sincere compliments always go a long way and generate an atmosphere of good will and guarantee active community participation. "To mean what is said, and to say what we mean, are the elements of virtue." For any issue, we should always ask: Is it true? Will it nourish friendship and benefit our whole membership? These abiding principles are followed by the renowned Rotary Clubs; all functional groups, large or small, and the business community also follow these values. We the BOB members could adopt these guiding principles of humbleness, sincerity, and inclusion.

Time is of the essence for preparing the next generation to take the lead. We talked about this for years. Last year in my speech as the 25th year celebration Program Chairman, I elaborated and suggested that a youth committee be formed and that we support them in every way possibly. Nothing has been done so far. Without this, propagation of our rich culture and heritage will not take place.

I thank the managers and everybody in the community, from the early 1980s to today for their contributions. Please stay involved. This is our association. Protect it. It is more important than we realize!

Wishing you all the best for BOB.

Benoy B. Paul

The author served the first President and as Chairman of the 25th year anniversary celebration on November 10, 2007.

Being a Bangla-O-Biswa kid

-Rupsha Biswas (Rimjhim)

“Nimi, I just ironed your *salwar kameez*. It’s on your bed.”

“Ma! Why can’t I wear jeans? I don’t like wearing *salwars*. They’re uncomfortable.”

“Nimi, don’t argue. You have to wear a *salwar kameez*.”

Every year it would be the same thing. My mother and I would have an argument over what to wear. Every year, she would win, and I would grudgingly wriggle my way into a tight-fitting *salwar kameez*. Then my sister and I would walk into the bathroom, my mother would mask our faces in a film of powder, put a *teep* on each of our foreheads, *choories* on each of our arms, and then it would be time to go. This routine meant one thing: Puja. Durga Puja. Kali Puja. Saraswathi Puja.

Sure, maybe I found a *salwar* uncomfortable, but from the moment we pulled into the Watertown Church parking lot, my discomfort and petty problems instantly disappeared. Instead, I was consumed by feelings of anticipation. I would rush through the church entrance and immediately hunt down my friends. From the second I saw Kristina Datta’s and Anita Bandopadhyay’s shining faces coming towards me, I knew it would be a good day. And it was always was.

I loved puja. The mass of smiling faces that I saw on these days soon became my extended family. Things that would annoy me regularly, such as watching Rana Dada, Bappa Dada, and Bubla beat up Rono, or watching Rono run around with Rickey and Deepan creating havoc, were welcomed scenes on this joyous occasion. I loved playing in the big hall downstairs with the other kids; using the big columns as safety zones in games of tag. I also loved sitting on the stairs by the side of the stage, watching Sohug Didi, Aparna Didi, or my Didi perform their own renditions of “Na Der Der Thaa.”

However, my fondest memories are of the plays. Every kid who was a “Bangla-o-Biswa kid” knows what that title connotes. Sunny in his green Ninja Turtles sweatsuit as the inquisitive Koka Babu; Arjun adorned in his fancy brown vest as the well-groomed Koka Babu; Raja in his abnormally tall, black wizard hat; Bubla in his monkey costume; Rana Dada with his shrill voice as the “Badar Kalla Thekbe Na Ke Ay” crier; Deb Dada in his pumpkin costume; Bappa Dada as the king with a mustache; Debika Didi as a beautiful, graceful dancer; Anita Datta as a fairy in her white flowing dress; Aparna Didi, Sohug Didi, Didi, and Monika as sharp-tongued village women; Anita, Kristina, and me as *Projapati* dancers; Samrat Dada and Toby Dada cast in several roles (roles that they were rightly given because they could act). Numerous productions of *Abol Thabol*, *Koka Babur Shawpno*, and *Shonkolitha* brought the entire community together and gave each child a chance to showcase his or her talents. Each production required a number of rehearsals – every weekend was dedicated to teaching the thirty children their parts, though it was also an excuse for all the families to congregate inside those same two classrooms at MIT, drink *cha* and socialize.

In the weeks leading up to Bangla-O-Biswa's Silver Anniversary, my mother, father, and I sat down in our family room and re-watched each of the performances. In the half-hour series of mess-ups, cute dances, and witty comments that comprised each play, there was an underlying maturity that was increasingly evident in each successive performance. Maybe this sense of maturity manifested itself through bolder acting, I am not quite sure – but as we grew, the plays became more sophisticated, and our overall demeanor grew more mature.

The Bangla-O-Biswa community has been a pivotal force in my upbringing. After a few years, my mother and the other mashies ceased their production of plays. While we no longer had weekly rehearsals to attend, we were all still an integral part of each other's lives. These rehearsals were slowly replaced by social gatherings, high school graduations, and college graduations. Though we got older and embarked on our own journeys, we still knew that we had a familiar support network to which to return, and that remains true to this day. Every year, during Puja time, there is usually a mini-reunion with all the students who return for this one weekend. We sit together in the darkened hall, doing our homework, socializing, and watching the new generation of "Bangla-O-Biswa kids" sing their own songs and debut their acting skills in parent-directed plays. Welcome to the family.

Bangla-O-Biswa has been my family for twenty-two years, and it will remain my family for the rest of my life. Thank you and congratulations on your 25th anniversary.



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Indian presence in New England: People and Ideas

Bandana Purkayastha¹

At every gathering, such as the celebration of the Durga Puja, we have begun to recognize how many of us are here in the USA. People, who arrived in the late 60s or early 70s, can recall the times when they could not indulge in Bengali events because there were so few Indians, and even fewer Bengalis. Our perceptions are based on fact. Until 1965, migration from the Indian subcontinent was strictly controlled through a series of laws, including the omnibus Asian migration ban in 1917. We “arrived” in the US relatively recently, as a consequence of changes following the Civil Rights Movement. The pioneering Sikh men, who arrived in small numbers and settled on the West Coast, paved our passage to this country. People like Bhagat Singh Thind who filed a lawsuit to claim citizenship for Indians, and Dalip Singh Saund, the first Indian member of the House of Representatives were among the earliest immigrants to challenge the prevalent notions about India and Indians. However, Swami Vivekananda probably launched this challenge, in a public way, decades earlier.

While several scholars have written about the Indian migration experiences in the US, less is known about our presence in New England and the North East.¹ This is a very brief introduction to that history.

Early Encounters

In the centuries leading up to the 1890s, Asian Indian migrants were considered to be an alien presence in New England (and the US), despite the flourishing trade with India. The early American traders were eager to profit from India’s vast resources of precious gems, silks, linens and spices, often using Calcutta as their base. But colonial and evangelical missionary rhetoric emphasized the problematic character of Indians, even as Yankees benefited from the India trade.

The earliest Indians were not considered to be “assimilable;” they could only become part of the black population in any town. One of the earliest testimonies was written in 1790, by Rev. William Bentley of Salem, Massachusetts. According to his diary, he saw “a native of the Indies from Madras...he is of dark complexion...being much darker than any native Indians of America. I had no opportunity to judge his ability but his countenance was not expressive. He came to Salem with Capt. J. Gibaut, and has been in Europe” (quoted in S. Chandrasekhar 12). And in 1851, the Fourth of July parade in Salem, organized by the East India Marine Society, included six Asian Indians, who later settled in Salem, married “negro” women and became part of the black population of the town (Jensen 26).

As Susan Bean points out, while individual Indians were still novel enough that their alien presence was noted in diaries, Yankee clipper ships were making voyages to India, trading in salt, rice, cloth and opium. The wealth generated from this trade was the source of fortune for the first American millionaire, E.H. Derby of Salem. As the trade

¹ An expanded version of the socio-religious history of Indians in New England in the early 20th and 21st centuries is available in a chapter by Bandana Purkayastha and Anjana Narayan entitled *Bridges and Chasms: Orientalism and the Making of Indians in New England*, published in “Asian Americans in New England,” forthcoming from the University of New England Press.

with India grew, the East India Marine Society was created in 1799 for the elite of Salem's India traders, whose members paraded through the streets before their annual meeting, in a procession that showcased Indian artifacts and curiosities. By the 19th century, members of this society established the Peabody Museum, featuring items that had appeared exotic to the traders—for instance, a pair of hooks with which natives apparently swung their brethren to help them recover their caste, and life-like models of Indians that created an enigmatic eastern ambience in Salem.

Besides the growing Peabody Museum, the East India trade financed other New England landmarks. For instance, Elihu Yale, a retired East India merchant whose grandmother was a Yankee from New Haven, Connecticut, was approached by Cotton Mather to donate money for a college in New Haven. According to Dexter, Yale, who had amassed a sizeable fortune through trade with India, donated nine bales of goods that were auctioned off by William Taylor of Boston to raise £562, leading to the establishment of the institute in New Haven that was renamed Yale College in 1718.

While the India trade contributed to Yankee wealth, a formidable series of laws, contributed to the absence of Indians in this region (and in the US). Barringer et al state that the US Census shows that there were only 84 Indians in the US in 1850. By 1900, another 595 Indians arrived; by 1924, there were 8,663 Indians in the US. New England was home to even a very insignificant proportion of this population. Even Yale University, originally founded with money from the India trade, had few Indian students. Purkayastha records that a search of the colleges in Connecticut showed that most of the Indians students were Christian missionaries. In fact, the first Indian to graduate from Yale in 1906 was a Christian minister.

Imagining India and Indians

Even though there were very few Indians in the United States, the lives and beliefs of Indians were the subject of many public discussions, sustained and structured by political and missionary interests. During the nineteenth century, the establishment of British colonial power in India was justified by a discourse emphasizing a “civilizational mission” of the British in India that highlighted the flaws of Indians and Indian society. For instance, since Bengal became the headquarters of the colonial power, the colonialists frequently used language such as “the effeminate Bengali” to describe Indians, and emphasized the need to civilize the Indian population and to root out their savageries and exotic customs (Rolfson). The US supported the British stance. The political discourse was paralleled by the discourse of evangelical missionaries who created stories about Indian heathens as a way to raise money to save their souls.

There were some exceptions to this general atmosphere of non-acceptance. In general, the intellectuals of the Northeast were not active participants in such overt racialized discourse. Jane Jensen states that New England intellectuals developed a deep interest in Indian religions in the early 19th century, at about the time the New England-India trade developed. She describes how Boston society became interested in Indian literature and in Indian religions, especially Hinduism, Buddhism and the Brahma Samaj movement. Intellectuals at universities such as Harvard began to cultivate an active scholarship and also initiated a nascent Indian art collection at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The theosophical writing of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, as well as Walt Whitman's poems (such as “Passage to India” and “Leaves of Grass”),

are reflective of this trend. These earlier writings of the Transcendentalists, on the “life of the spirit” (developed on the basis of an earlier encounters with Hinduism), prepared the ground for Vivekananda and his message.

An Indian on India:

Given the absence of Indians in this region (and the very small numbers in the US), there were very few people to challenge the negative propaganda about “heathen” Indians. Since Vivekananda traveled to different parts of the country, before and after the World Parliament of Religions, lecturing about India and Hinduism, he attracted a great deal of negative responses. His veracity was questioned repeatedly, and his facts repudiated. Thus the first public debates about India and Indians in the US, which actually involved an Indian, centered on Vivekananda

Vivekananda spoke to many audiences in New England. According to Mary Louise Burke, during his stay at Metcalf, Massachusetts, Vivekananda spoke to Mrs. Sanborn’s guests at Breezy Meadows and also to the Ladies Club in Salem, where his discourses were received positively. He also addressed hostile Ramabai circles. He lectured several times in Boston, at the Procopiea Club, at the Harvard Philosophy Club. He spoke at Annisquam, Holliston, Lawrence, Lynn, Medford, Melrose, Northampton, Plymouth, Salem, Sherborne and Swampscott, and at Hartford, Connecticut.

A set of socially prominent, progressive-minded families were receptive to Vivekananda’s ideas. This group included Sara and Ole Bull, John and Mary Wright, the Hales, the Legetts, Sanborns, and Josephine MacLeod. They organized his visits and talks and tried to thwart some of the most vicious attacks made on him by other people in the region. Some members of this group, like Christina Greenstidel (Sister Christine) and Sara Ellen Waldo, became his disciples. This group was attracted to the message about a universal religion. As he repeated in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1896, he said, “[w]e must learn to love those who think exactly opposite to us. We have humanity for the background, but each must have his own individuality and thought. Push the sects forward and forward till each man and woman are sects unto themselves” (Burke 3:479).

Vivekananda also spoke to members of Harvard’s philosophy department; his reception was mixed. When Vivekananda addressed them, in March 1895, the influential metaphysicians of the time, William James, a pluralist and pragmatist, and Josiah Royce, an idealist, while respectful of Vivekananda, summed up his view of Eastern religions by stating, “the Hindoo and the Buddhist...are simply afraid of more experience, afraid of life” (James 39). While Vivekananda’s lectures on Vedanta did not fundamentally alter the outlook of the established philosophers, he clearly impressed some students; American idealist, William Hocking, later wrote that he rethought his philosophical foundations after listening to Vivekananda at Harvard.

But, like his experience elsewhere in the US, Vivekananda attracted the ire of people who had their own ideas of what India and Indians. When he was invited to speak before Ramabai circles—groups that had been set up after Pandita Ramabai’s visit soliciting money to help poor widows in India--these networks were highly critical of “hindoo” women’s status, pointing to the abject condition of child widows and Indian women. Vivekananda countered the broad attack on Indian womanhood by addressing the gendered *and* racist content of the messages by using the trope that Indian women were worshipped as mothers. He pointed out that, unlike any other religion, Hinduism

was replete with female goddesses and strong female imagery, and that mothers were highly regarded across India. As he reflected upon the charges raised by the Ramabai circles, he wrote to Sarala Devi, by then a leading nationalist leader in Calcutta, “If talented and bold women like yourself, versed in Vedanta, go to England and preach...speak [to] America, if an Indian woman in Indian dress preach[es] there...there will rise a great wave which will inundate the whole Western world...you have power, wealth, intellect and education, will you forego this opportunity?” (Quoted in Basu 158).

While Sarala Devi did not come to the US to preach, Vivekananda found another fiery, erudite leader to carry out the task of generating and spreading other ideas about Indians and India. Apart from her work on Hinduism, Sister Nibedita inspired a range of people, Nandalal Bose among them, to study Indian traditions, break away from European hegemony, and to chart paths towards multiple Indian modernities.

Reflections on Early Encounters

Reflecting on these early encounters, during the time of Durga puja, makes it hard not to draw a parallel between the image of a goddess armed with the most powerful weapons who takes on a hitherto unmet challenge and the battles of a lone individual who attracted the unjust approbation of the ignorant. The lesson of these early encounters is that such battles are often battles of ideas. As William Radice has pointed out in his seminal book on Vivekananda and the Modernisation of Hinduism, we have contemporary battles to take on, not the least of which are the unfinished battles against the misrepresentations of Vivekananda’s purpose and message. Vivekananda’s call for a great wave of erudite, powerful female leaders is not yet met. And, our battles against intolerance, and the barriers that make it difficult for us to live our lives by acknowledging our humane ties through socially just actions, need to be won.

¹ I am confining most of this discussion to Hindus, even though Sikhs, Muslims, and Christian Indians played a significant role in creating room for all of us in the US.

Sources for this article: Herbert Barringer et al, *Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States*. 1995; Shamita Basu, *Religious Revivalism as Nationalist Discourse : Swami Vivekananda and New Hinduism in Nineteenth Century Bengal*. 2002; Susan Bean, “Yankee Traders and Indian merchants, 1785-1865.” *Festival of India in the United States 1985-1986*. in Festival of India, 1982. Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West: New Discoveries*. 6 vols. Kolkata: Advaita Ashram. 1983; S. Chandrasekhar, (ed.) *From India to America: A Brief History of Immigration; Problems of Discrimination; Admission and Assimilation*, 1982; Franklin Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of Yale College with Annals of the College History*. October 1701-May 1745, vol. 1, 1745; William James, *Pragmatism*, 1907; Joan Jensen, *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America*, 1988; Bandana Purkayastha “Asian Indians in Connecticut.” *Research Paper Series*. Vol. 2. 1999; Catherine Rolfson, *Resistance, Complicity and Transcendence: A Postcolonial Study of Vivekananda’s Mission in the West*. Unpublished MA thesis. Queens University, Canada, 2005; William Radice, (ed.). *Swami Vivekananda and the Modernisation of Hinduism*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

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(New Hampshire এর Fall Color এর প্রেক্ষাপটে,
কলকাতার কোনো এক কৃষ্ণচূড়া গাছকে চিত্ৰিত করে
আম্মার এই অভিব্যক্তি)

অনেকদিন পরে, ভীষন ভাবতে ইচ্ছে করছে তোম্মার কথা -
'কৃষ্ণচূড়া' তুমি কি আজও এইৰকম বড়িন ?

আম্মনের পাহাড়ের গাছগুলোৰ প্রতিটা পাতোয় যেন আঙন মেলাছে
আম্মার কখনও মনে হচ্ছিল

কেউ যেন নাম আৰ হুন্দু বঙ দিয়ে -
গাছের ডালে ডালে ফোলা ফোলেছে।

চাৰিদিগের এই বড়ের স্নেহমায়া

আম্মি যুঁজে পেতে চাই আম্মার সুপ্নিল মনকে,

কৃষ্ণচূড়ের মতো তাই তাকিয়ে আছি দুঃখে স্নেহে -

ঠিক যেমন বাৰান্দার এক কোনে দাঁড়িয়ে দেখতাম তোম্মায়!

তোম্মার লালিকা এইভাবেই একদিন মাতাল করেছিল আম্মার মনকে

তোম্মার বড়ের স্নেহে আম্মি যুঁজে পেয়েছিলাম

নিৰুদ্দেশের পথে হাবিয়ে যাওয়ার আনন্দ।

অনেকটা পথ পেড়িয়ে এগোছি আজ -

প্রবাহের এই ব্যস্ত জীবনে

মাকে মাকে বড় একা লাগে।

জানি না, তুমি এখন কী করছ, কেমন আছ -

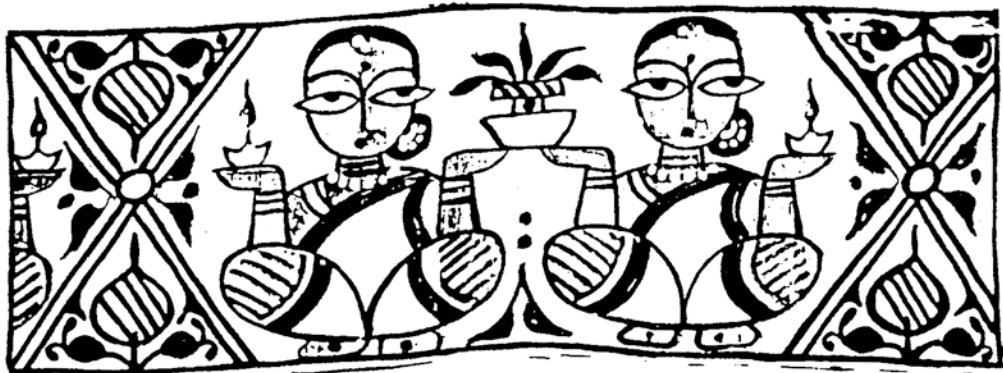
শুধু এই হুঁতুৰে -

ভীষন ভাবতে ইচ্ছে করছে তোম্মার কথা!

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ON THIS OCCASION OF DURGA PUJA
CELEBRATION AND THE TWENTY-
FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF
BANGLA-O-BISWA



Nitis, Mahua, Shankha, and Ranjan Mukhopadhyay
Glastonbury, Connecticut

WISH

ALL PARTICIPANTS, PATRONS AND
THEIR FAMILIES THE VERY BEST OF
HEALTH, PEACE, AND PROSPERITY

DURGA PUJA

BY SELINA BANERJEE (age 7 yrs)

It was a morning in October. As soon as I woke up in the morning I was full of excitement. I was so excited. But I did not know why. I could only feel only one thing. I could only feel that something special was going to happen to me that never ever happened before. I was keen to know what is going to happen! I quickly brushed my teeth, went downstairs, and ate my breakfast. Then I asked my mom if anything is going to happen today but she did not say anything. Then I sat down on sofa and thought a little bit. Then I realized that it should be a surprise, so I just had to wait. My mom told me to dress up so I went to my room and dressed up with a long Indian dress. Then my dad told me to get in the car. Then we all got in the car and traveled for about one hour. And then we came to a place I never seen before. We got inside the building and I saw a lot of people sitting in a school cafeteria. "Is it Monday?" I asked my mom. "It's Saturday today", my mom said. "I am going to a new school on Saturday" I thought. With a big surprise then I saw a big statue with ten hands and five people around it. "This must be some kind of Indian festival" I said to myself. "What kind of Indian festival it could be" I thought, Then my heart overflowed with joy and excitement, I realized "today is Durga puja."

My parents explained that the big statue in the middle is the statue of very powerful women with ten hands holding ten very powerful weapons: that is the image of Ma Durga. We believe that Ma Durga is mother of all of us and saves us from evil spirits. Her carrier is a lion, which is a symbol of power. Under Ma Durga, there is a green colored statue. It is Mahishasur, which is the symbol of evil spirits. That is why the lion was attacking Mahishasur and Ma Durga is killing him with her Trishul. By the right side of Ma Durga, there was one of her daughters, Devi Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Her carrier was an owl. By the right side of Devi Lakshmi, there is Ganesh, the elephant headed God. He is one of sons of Ma Durga. He is the god of success. His carrier is a mouse. By the left side of Ma Durga, there is Devi Saraswati. She is the other daughter of Ma Durga and is the goddess of knowledge and music. Her carrier is swan. On the left side of Devi Swaraswati was Kartik. He is the other son of Ma Durga. He is the goddess of braveness. His carrier is a peacock.

"What time is it" I asked my dad. "It is 1.30 pm" he said. "We must be having lunch now" I said to myself. We had to stand in the line for a long time. While I was standing in the line, I saw some of my mom and dad's friends. They started talking about many things. It seemed like everybody forgot about me. Finally, when we reached at the table for the food, I got rice and rice pudding. We sat down next to one of my mom and dad's friends. Finally, someone noticed me. "Who is this" he asked? "She is my daughter" said my mom. "What is her name"? Her name is Selina." That is a nice name". One of my mom and dad's friends was announcing in microphone asking to go to the auditorium because some kind of show was going to happen. We all went to the auditorium and sat down. Someone came out from behind the curtains, "Ladies and gentlemen our annual Durga Puja program will start now. Up first is a little beginning song by a group". Five people came out and performed a song about Ma Durga. Next was a dance performance

based on bharata natyam. She started to dance and it looked very nice. Then we had tea break. Everyone got out of the auditorium and went in to the cafeteria. Me and my parents got out too. My mom was going to get the tea. "mom", I asked, "can I go with you?" "sure" said my mom. "can I get some tea too?" I asked. "sure" said my mom and she got me some tea. "What are you drinking" asked my dad. "Try to guess" I said. "I think your drinking milk" he said. "I'm drinking tea. I'm done" I said. "Please go to the auditorium" said someone. We went to the auditorium. "Ladies and gentlemen next up a poem" said someone. Someone came out and said a short poem. We were almost at the end of the show. The five came out and sang a short song. Then we all left the auditorium. We went to the cafeteria watched the puja performance of Ma Durga. Me and my mom got in the front. After watching the puja we left that place. As it was late in the evening, we had to go home.

I enjoyed the whole Durga Puja ceremony a lot. It was great and I had lot of fun. I wished it all to happen again but I know I had to wait till next year.

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Viva La Vida

-Amrita Ray

With heavy hearts and mournful cries,
The weary looked towards the skies.
In a flash, they saw the life,
Of those who'd fallen in the strife.
The gleaming souls, a pillar of white,
Screaming, burning, fires ignite.
With one last blow, a mighty breath,
Fallen giant, rejecting death.
To their living foes, they bowed,
Standing tall and proud,
For the final end had come to pass,
With little blood shed on the grass.
The soldiers left, the hills still green,
Was it a battle, or was it a dream?



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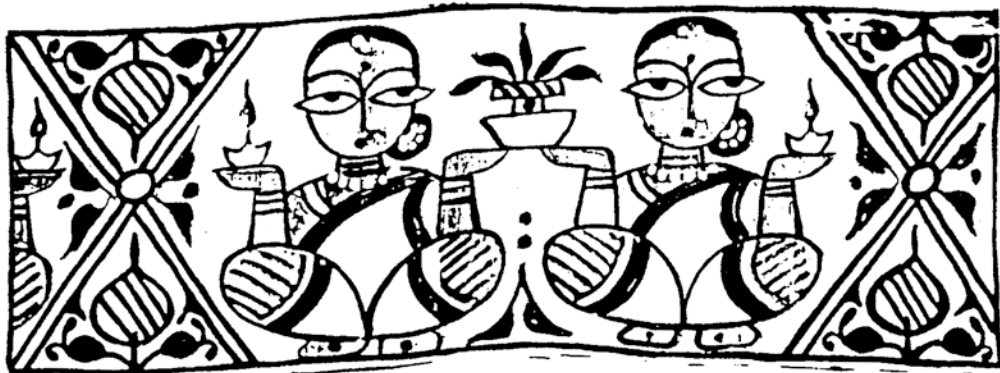


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এলিশকে আপনাদের মনে পড়ে? সত্যিই আমি কি বোকা! সে তো বড়ো পপ singer বা বড় athletic নয়, সে আর পাঁচজনের মতোই এক সহযাত্রী, অত্যন্ত সাধারণ মেয়ে। কমিউটার ট্রেনের আর দশজন যাত্রীর মতোই সে ও একজন। কখন কিভাবে কেমন করে এলিশের সঙ্গে আমার প্রথম পরিচয় এবং পরে আরও গভীর পরিচয়েরই কথা আপনাদের বলবা। Worcester থেকে ট্রেনটা এখনও ছাড়েনি। আপনাদের ট্রেন ধরার তাগিদ আছে, জানি মশাই সবই জানি। এলিশের সঙ্গে আমার আলাপ! সে ছোট্ট এক ইতিহাস।

Summer শেষ হবার মুখে, গাছের পাতায় fall color এর ছোপ সবে ধরেছে, পড়ন্ত বিকেলের ট্রেনটা ধরে সেদিন ফিরছি, হঠাৎ আমার নাম ধরে ডাকায় বিস্ময়ে তাকিয়ে দেখি একটা শীর্ণকায় মেয়ে আমার দিকে তাকিয়ে হাত নেড়ে ডাকছে। আস্তে আস্তে আমার সীট থেকে উঠে এসে ওর পাশের সীটে বসলাম, মেয়েটা নিঃসঙ্কোচে বলল - "আপনি তো গ্রেগরী।" হঠাৎ ট্রেনের ব্রেক কষার মতন মনের মধ্যে একটা ধাক্কা খেললাম। কিছুক্ষণ নিস্তব্ধতার মধ্যে কটলা। দুজনেই দুজনের দিকে অপলক দৃষ্টিতে তাকিয়ে ছিলাম। বিস্ময়ের ঘোর কাটতে প্রথম প্রশ্ন করলাম, - "আপনি আমার নাম জানলেন কি করে?" আমার মুখের দিকে তাকিয়ে একগাল হেসে বলল, - "love at first sight' বুঝলেন কিছু?", বলেই খিলখিল করে হেসে উঠল।

ট্রেনের গতিটা আস্তে আস্তে কমছে। মেয়েটার দিকে তাকিয়ে দেখি সে তার সোনালী কোঁকড়ানো চুলগুলো মুখের ওপর থেকে সরিয়ে দিলো; আবার ঠিক তেমনি হাসি মুখ নিয়েই বলে উঠল, - "এক friendly love। আমার ঘরে আছে জন। বড়ো ভালোবাসে আমাকে। আমরা সুখী দম্পতি।"

মনে মনে বিরক্ত প্রকাশ করলাম। আপনি সুখী কি দুঃখী আমার জানার প্রয়োজন নেই। সত্যিই তো রাগ করারই কথা। গায়ে পড়ে এ রকম আলাপ আগে কখনও হয়নি। সেইজন্য কিছুটা অস্বস্তি।

ট্রেনটা এসে থামল Grafton Station-এ। আমরা দুজনেই নামলাম। Vanity bag-টা দোলাতে দোলাতে বলে উঠল, - "আপনি কি অযাচিত আলাপে রাগ করেছেন? আমি মাপ চেয়ে নিচ্ছি।" মেয়েটার মুখের দিকে তাকিয়ে হাসব কি রাগ করব, ঠিক তখনই বলে উঠল, - "যাক বাঁচা গেল। আপনি রাগ করেননি।" আলাপের চংটাই তার আলাদা। - "দেখুন রোজই ভাবি আপনার সঙ্গে আলাপ করব কিন্তু আপনার সীটটা দূরে, দূর থেকে আলাপ জমে না। আজ দেখলাম ট্রেনটা ফাঁকা আর আপনার আগে পরেও কেউ নেই; আলাপের ভূতটা তখনই চেপে ধরল", বলেই খিলখিল করে হেসে উঠল। চলতে চলতে জিজ্ঞাসা করলাম, - "আমার নামটা জানলেন কি করে?" - "আপনি তো ভারী বোকা। আমি কি কালা? আপনার নাম ধরে কত লোকে ডাকে।" মনের মধ্যে অসহিষ্ণু ভাবটা আস্তে আস্তে হালকা হলো। মেয়েটা তখনই একগাল হাসি নিয়ে বলে উঠল, - "বলুন তো আমার নামটা কি?" ঘাড়টা দুলিয়ে জানালাম জানি না। - "সত্যিই তো আপনি জানবেনই বা কি করে! আমাকে তো কেউ নাম ধরে ডাকে না।" কিছু শোনবার প্রতীক্ষায় চোখ দুটো বড়ো বড়ো করে আমার দিকে তাকিয়ে রইল। তারপর মুখটা নিচু করে গলার স্বরটা ততোধিক নামিয়ে বলল, - "আমি এলিশ," একটা বড়ো দীর্ঘশ্বাস আছড়ে পড়ল। আলাপটা ক্রমশঃ কাছে আস্তে শুরু করল। চোখের দিকে তাকিয়ে দেখি, এলিশের চোখের কোণে চিক চিক করছে জলা সহজ ভাবে বলে উঠলাম, - "সত্যিই কি আপনার কোনো বন্ধু নেই?" ছোট্ট একটা উত্তর বেরিয়ে এল, - "না। একজনই বন্ধু তা হলো জন। প্রথম যেদিন দেখি আপনাকে সে দিন থেকেই মনটা বলছে পেয়েছি।"

- "সত্যিই কি আপনি পেয়েছেন?" - "হ্যাঁ, সত্যিই পেয়েছি। ওই যে বললাম 'love at first sight'", সেদিন থেকেই আমরা দুজনে দুজনের বন্ধু হয়ে উঠলাম। প্রত্যেক দিনই ৬টা ৩৮ এর গাড়ীতে আমাদের যাতায়াত। আমি নেমে যাই Back Bay তে, আর এলিশ নামে South Station-এ; আমার থেকে কিছুটা পরে। এলিশ যত কথা বলে তার থেকে হাসে বেশী। এমনি করে চলছিল বেশ! ট্রেনের একঘন্টা পথটা মনে হত যেন কয়েকমিনিট মাত্র।

বেশ কয়েকদিন হল এলিশকে আর দেখছি না। মনের ভেতরটা বেশ উসখুশ করে। কদিনের আলাপেই এলিশ মনের মধ্যে অনেকটা জায়গা করে নিয়েছে। একঘন্টা পথটা আমার কাছে দীর্ঘ মনে হতে লাগল। প্রত্যেক দিনই ভাবি আজ হয়ত এলিশের সঙ্গে দেখা হবে। দিন গড়িয়ে গেল, মাসও পেরিয়ে গেল, আবোল-তাবোল চিন্তা মনটাকে কেবলই দুর্বল করে তুলছে।

Grafton স্টেশনে গাড়ীটা সবে পার্ক করেছে এমনই সময় আমার না ধরে ডাকার আওয়াজে সন্ধিৎ ফিরে এল। তাকিয়ে দেখি এলিশ নিচে দাঁড়িয়ে হাত নাড়ছে। ট্রেন মিস করার দুঃখটা মুহূর্তে কেটে গেল। Fall color-এর পাতায় পাতায় রং-এর যেন মূর্ছনা। - "কি ব্যাপার এলিশ? এতদিন কোথায় ছিলে?" - "সব বলছি গ্রেগরী। সংসারটা আমাদের ছোট্ট। জনের

চাকরি গেলা যা হোক করে চলছিল। তারপর দেখা দিল জনের দুরারোগ্য ক্যানসার। আমাদের তো medical insurance নেই। জনের চাকরিতে মেডিকেলের সুযোগ পাওয়া যায় না। আমার চাকরি দিয়েই চলছিল, এখন আমার চাকরিটাও শেষ। একদিকে জনের চিকিৎসা তারপরে খাবার চিন্তা, মনটা অস্থির। শেষ পাওয়া সম্বলটুকু দিয়েই চলছিল। জনের দিকে তাকাতে পারি না। হাসিখুশী লোকটা অসহ্য যন্ত্রণাকে চেপে রাখতে চায় কিন্তু পারে না। জনের জন্য ওষুধ আনতে যাই কাছের এক dispensary থেকে। ভদ্রলোক ভালই - যদি ধার দেয়। সেদিন রবিবার - ডিসপেনসারী বন্ধ ছিল। বারের হিসেব আমার কাছে ছিল না। খালি হাতে ফিরছি, সন্ধ্যা সবে হয়েছে। বাড়ীর কাছে আসতেই শুনি একটা গোপ্তনী চিংকার বাড়ীর ভেতর থেকে ভেসে আসছে। তাড়াতাড়ি দরজা খুলে আলোটা জ্বালাতেই চোখে পড়ল রক্তাক্ত অবস্থায় জন পড়ে আছে। নিজেই নিজের ধারালো রেজারটা দিয়ে গলাটাকে কেটে ফেলেছে। কদিনের টানাপোড়েনের আজ হলো শেষ। এইমাত্র কবর শেষ করে ফিরলাম। ফিরেই সবার আগে তোমার কথাই মনে পড়ল। ছুটলাম স্টেশনের দিকে। মনে মনে ভাবছি ট্রেনটা যদি একটু দেরী করে তা হলে হয়তো দেখা পাব। আজ যদি দেখা না হয়, তা হলে হয়তো আর কোনদিনই দেখা হবে না। -"কেন?" ছোট্ট প্রশ্ন আমরা। -"আমি চলে যাচ্ছি বহুদূরে। জানো গ্রেগরী জনকে তোমার কথা বলেছিলাম। ভেবেছিলাম একদিন তোমাকে জনের সঙ্গে আলাপ করিয়ে দেবো সেটা আর হল না। এইটাই দুঃখ। আমার বাড়ীটা তো তুমি জানো না। Grafton Station থেকে নামার পর দুটো corner পেরোবার পরই third corner-এর ধারেই বাড়ীটা। চিন্তে পারার সুযোগ বড়ো একটা maple tree। অস্পষ্ট ৭ নম্বরটা একটু কষ্ট করেই দেখতে হবে। -"বন্ধু তোমাকে একটা অনুরোধ করবা।" আমি এলিশকে বললাম, -"সন্ধ্যা কেন?" -"তুমি তো রোজই ওই পথ দিয়েই গাড়ী করে আস, একবার শুধু গাড়ী থেকে এলিশ বলে ডেকো।" এলিশ দ্রুতগতিতে চলে গেল।

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An Essay on Translation: Why, What and for Whom?

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1. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

I will briefly address these questions (why, what and for whom?), not necessarily in that order, in the context of translating an original literary or musical piece in Bengali into English or Hindi. A very important element in this exercise is the readership or an audience. The urge to translate an original Bengali piece may arise from one's desire to help those who understand English or Hindi but do not understand Bengali. A translator needs to find a good medium to help such an individual appreciate the literary and/or musical essence from an original work in Bengali.

For someone familiar with the literature-music-customs from Bengal, however, Hindi or English translation of an original Bengali piece may not generally serve a fruitful purpose. Personally, I remind myself that a translation is largely meant for someone who may not appreciate the original language of a literary or musical creation.

Here is another important point: Given that a reader is fluent in both languages, the original and the language of translation, it may be tempting to "check" whether a translated piece compares favorably with the original piece. But, that will be an exercise in futility because a translation never does or will agree with an original piece in many ways. This holds even if one knows exactly how to "compare" supposedly "similar" literary (or musical) pieces in different languages. And yet, it is a translator's solemn duty to help one enjoy and understand the very essence of a literary or musical piece that this individual could not appreciate before because of a language-barrier.

I may summarize this way: It is a fact that any translation will definitely lose some amount of "information" and "detail." This should be easy to understand. A concept of translation is fundamentally different from exchanging currencies. When one travels to Europe, for example, one may exchange \$100 to receive an equivalent amount in Euros minus the bank charges. When changing from dollars to another, one forfeits a known amount of money. When reading a translation, the basic situation is no different. However, how much information a translation may "lose" would depend heavily upon both translator's mastery and a reader's empathy.

2. ON ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF JIBAN-DEVATĀ BY TAGORE AND AMIYA CHAKRABARTY

One may gracefully accept the inevitable: Some information would be lost through any kind of translation. This assertion remains true even when the original author of a Bengali piece translates it into another language. Let me give one specific example. I assume that my readers are familiar with Rabindranāth Tagore's (1861-1941) famous piece of poetry (1896), *Jiban-devatā*, from *Chitrā* or *Sanchayitā* ([1], pp. 265-267). Tagore translated this piece into English in 1913-14. It is poem #11 in his *Poems* ([2], p. 21). Around 1930, Tagore himself created another translation of this famous piece that was included in his essays on *The Religion of Man* ([3], pp. 60-61). Why did Tagore translate his original Bengali piece again? Was the first translation not adequate in some sense?

I could not find Tagore's answers to those questions. But, I would say without any hesitation that Tagore's second translation is far superior. I also believe that neither translation of Tagore has his unmistakable fluidity and charm of expressing himself.

Amiya Chakrabarty (1901-1986) was a famous poet-linguist-scholar from India who wrote extensively in both Bengali and English. He translated Tagore's *Jiban-devatā* into English, *Lord of My Life*. His translated poem is included in a special volume, *One Hundred and One: Rabindranath Tagore*. This extraordinary volume was edited by none other than the legendary historian, philosopher, literary figure and teacher, Humāyun Kabir ([4], pp. 39-40). I must add that Chakrabarty's translation, in my view, can stand alone as a piece of beautiful English poetry that is far superior to Tagore's two prior translations.

I may remark that some Tagore-scholars, for example, Krishnā Dutta and Andrew Robinson ([5], *Rabindranath Tagore: The Myriad-Minded Man*, pp. 332-333), have recently come down on Chakrabarty very harshly. They undermined Chakrabarty's numerous contributions, creative talent and credibility. Surely, Dutta and Robinson are entitled to their views regardless of their underpinnings. At the same time, I also feel that a third person has the same right (and responsibility) to disagree with Dutta and Robinson.

I am of the opinion that sometimes it may serve well if one stays away from superficial assessments. Instead, one may form one's own opinion based on personal search and empathy. I should add that I am familiar with expositions from Binodebihāri Mukhopādhyay, Prasānta Chandra Mahālānobis, Rani Mahālānobis and others. Their writings have nothing to corroborate Dutta and Robinson's vicious criticism of Chakrabarty's monumental contributions to Indian literature and history. All spoke very highly of Chakrabarty's integrity and poetry. Ashok Rudra ([6], *Prasanta Chandra Mahālānobis: A Biography*, p. 98), for example, wrote "... Amiya Chakrabarty, the distinguished poet, who for some time acted as the Poet's (Tagore's)

personal secretary, ...". By no means, however, I ask anyone to accept my views blindly. I only suggest that a reader should formulate own views by combining assessments made by the real experts with much personal knowledge regarding myriads of complex issues, all personal politics aside.

3. A TRANSLATION AND ITS SELECTED ANALOGS

Going back to my earlier premise, a translated piece would rarely compare favorably, if ever, with an original piece. It never does and it never would. Let me draw a simple parallel: It may be easier to accept if I say that no still photo can ever capture the true depth, breadth, and emotions attached with the fall-color seen in New England! This has nearly nothing to do with a particular photographer or photographic equipment. In an analogous spirit, Satyajit Ray's film, *Panther Pāñchāli*, is certainly not equivalent to Bibhutibhusan Bandyopādhyay's original novel in any sense. Here, I interpret a photograph or a movie as a translation of an original piece created by another "author" (including nature, for example). Neither will ever match the truth, the original.

In a broad sense, a translation should stand alone in its own right as a literary or an artistic piece independently of the original one. But, one who reads or sees or hears only a translation must get an opportunity to appreciate the inner depth and beauty of the original art form that may forever remain out of reach. I have no doubt that every translated piece will carry a translator's imagination, interpretation, and originality. How much? That is the moot point where a translator would strive to achieve a balance in one's own way.

There is no reason to think that translations made by different authors based on the same original piece will impress a particular reader equally. Surely, a "reader-effect" will influence the level of appreciation of a translated piece in a big way. Factors including qualification, expertise, personality, and familiarity with the original piece of both the translator and its reader would impact the level of appreciation of translation profoundly. I am sure that this is the way it must be.

In a light-hearted moment, one may add that a translation is a kind of "remake," but it is not supposed to be an "identical copy" of an original. Creation of any art form is surely different from "Xeroxing"! Again, a translation must be a bona fide literary or artistic piece in its new medium. If a translation fails this simple "test", I will designate it weaker than it ought to be. But, then, it will be exclusively my opinion. Others must make up their own minds!

4. SELECTED EXAMPLES OF MY TRANSLATIONS

In previous sections, I have openly discussed some important core issues in the line of translation. Whatever may or may not be the core issues important to a reader, the following points should be obvious: A process of translating an original (a) Bengali prose into either Hindi or English prose is an involved task, and (ii) Bengali poem into a poem in either Hindi or English is much harder. In the second case, a translated piece must pass as respectable poetry in Hindi or English as the case may be!

After reading a Bengali poem, if one merely narrates a story in Hindi or English, then that will totally misrepresent an original piece. A poem is not a sequence of stories, because if it was so, then its author would probably have written a story as prose. To make things simple, I am keeping the traditional Bengali pāñchālies out of this discourse, knowing fully well that customarily each pāñchāli has a distinctive story to tell.

4.1. Translation of a Bengali Poem into English

I show my translation of a Bengali poem, *Bāgān? Authobā Phul?*, that was written by Dibyendu Pālit ([7], *Dibyendu Pālitér Shrésthō Kabitā*, p. 30):

Title: Garden? Or Flower?

Every flower has a different name —
In their entirety, a garden.

Garden, or flower?
This worry alone turns buying seeds into waste!

A sky above and soil down under
Midst' flower and garden 'til this day I wait.

4.2. Translation of a Bengali Song into Hindi

Translating a musical piece from one language into a song in another language has to be one of the hardest tasks of all. First, outside of *Tagore songs* and a majority of *Nazrul Geeties*, one will find very few lyrics in print compared with the full range of Bengali songs (including those of Atulprośād, Dwijendralāl, Rajanikānto, Dilip Kumār Roy) that one hears. So, one

must listen to a Bengali song over and over again in order to master both the lyric and music. Then, one ought to decode the fine artistry of how a poet expressed his passion in Bengali for an audience largely composed of those who may appreciate Hindi more than Bengali. Observe that a Bengali song describes a lyric that is also bound by rigid musical notes within a strict and intricate structure. A translator must have full respect for the poetry as well as the music. This is a big responsibility.

So, when I transform a Bengali song into a Hindi song, I closely follow an original lyric as well as its total music which magically uplifts the poetry to a different medium. Then, we all hear a song! I personally love the challenge of translating Bengali (Hindi) songs into Hindi (Bengali) songs. But, when I translate a musical piece, I keep in focus some major “do”s and “don’t”s:

- First and foremost, I try my best to preserve the original poetry’s passion and fervor.
- One may find similar sounding songs in different languages. But, I am not talking about that and it is not something that is too important for my task.
- Every moment, I remind myself that a song is more than its internal rāgā and tālā. Rāgā and tālā are crucial ingredients of any song, but rāgā and tālā alone will never ever make up a “song”. A song is a living and breathing entity with its own life. I must capture that feeling in a translation.
- I keep in mind that Hindi, like any other language, has many dialects. One dialect may uplift a translation whereas another dialect may kill it on the spot.
- Which one do I use? An answer will surely depend on the mood and style of an original song.

Next, I turn to Atulprosād Sen (1871-1934), a great poet, composer and Tagore’s younger contemporary, hailing from Lucknow, India. He had a very distinct style of his own. In Bengali, Atulprosād created some of the sweetest and prettiest melodies using simple expressions rarely with subtleties.

I show a translation of mine of a famous Atulprosādi song, *Ke Tumi Bosi Nadikulé Ekélā?* ([8], *Atulprosād Samagra*, verse #88, p. 84), into a Hindi song. One will hopefully observe that I have been careful not to destroy the beauty of the musical construction set by its original composer. At the same time, I have used Hindi words with “tender loving care” in order to preserve the internal aesthetics and simplicity of the original verse.

Koun tum baithi nadiipād ékilā?
Kis-si hoee itnii utalā?
Koun mājhi rokii ātijo gāhii?
Mītwā us-s sang koun khélā?

Din-bharii racho mālā —
Gharelu kām-jo sabvi bhulā?
Chhal-bharii tum lāyii gāgarīi
Koun-sé ās kaho ānbelā?

I end this discourse with few pointers in case one wants to sing this Hindi verse. It is set in tālā Dādrā, that is with 6 beats divided into 3 + 3 beats (dhā tin tin/tā dhin dhin). The Hindi melody should proceed just like the original Bengali melody without compromising one single musical note at any place. This Hindi melody has been tested a number of times and it works well.

One must pronounce Hindi words with due care”, that is, in a way they ought to be pronounced in Hindi. For example, the word “nadiipād” should be pronounced as “nadiipaaRR”. The alphabet “s” should be pronounced as soft “s” rather than hard “sh”. One should also realize that “a” is often pronounced with a sound between “a” and “ah” depending on a word’s construction. As I have said before, a performer must hear its Bengali original as many times as needed and that will indicate the exact number of bars that must separate two consecutive words. Done properly, one should not expect any problem with the flavor, passion, meaning, flow, tālā, and the original rāgā.

5. FINAL COMMENTS

For those who are interested, I may suggest turning to a great master and a god-like scholar, Āchāryyā Suniti Kumār Chāterjee. I have mentioned three books ([9], [10], [11]) in my list of references written by the Āchāryyā, selected from his numerous path-breaking writings.

A good selection of modern Bengali poetry in English translation was put together by Sibnārāyan Ray and Marian Maddern ([12]) in their edited volume, *I Have Seen Bengal’s Face*. It includes translated pieces from Jibananda Dās, Amiya Chakrabarty, Premendra Mitra, Bishnu Dey, Subhāsh Mukhopādhyay, Nirendranāth Chakravarty, Shāmsur Rahman, Sakti Chattopādhyay, and others.

With regard to the history of Indian music, I again suggest turning to the master Indian musicologist of all time: Gopeshwar Bandyopādhyay ([13], *Sangeetchandrikā*). Among other sources, the books by Swāmi Prajnanānanda ([14], *A Historical Study of Indian Music*) and Atindra Mojumder ([15], *Chhanda-o-Alankār*) may help in many ways.

Personally, I get involved in these kinds of daredevil literary exercises for the challenge of it. There is silver-lining in this after all! A reader may jump in at any age and follow through one's own calling boldly for the sake of one's own pure enjoyment. Happy reading, everyone!

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I thank my family-friend of many years, Gautam Maulik, for his kind encouragement to contribute a piece for inclusion in Durga Puja 2008 brochure commemorating the very special 25th anniversary of Bangla-o-Biswa.

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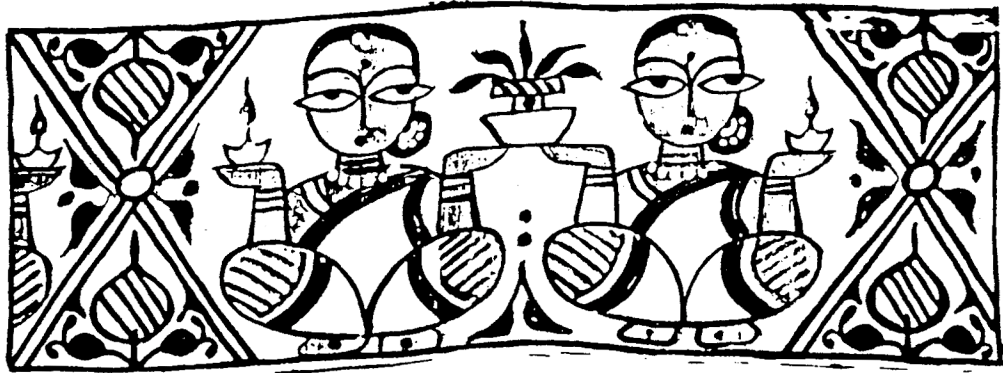
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HEART, THE HUMAN POWER PLANT TAKE CARE OF IT

By Subrata Basu, M.D.
Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine
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Within the last few years we witnessed the sad premature demise of several young prominent members of the Indian community. The incidence of coronary heart disease is frightfully high amongst the Indian population. We should arduously search for a clue and try to actively manage it meaningfully. In India surveys in 1994, indicated over a million deaths from cardiovascular diseases. The true figures may be more than twice as large. Mortality is only a part of the overall burden created by cardiovascular disease. It may be that nearly 30% of the cardiovascular disease burden arises from disabling sequel of stroke or other forms of heart disease.

High rates of coronary heart disease in people of South Asian origin (Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis) were reported from Singapore, South Africa, and Trinidad. This alarming high incidence was also noted in the United Kingdom. Higher socioeconomic groups have a higher prevalence of coronary heart disease, indicating the initial phase of epidemic proportions. In a survey on hypertension conducted in urban

Delhi, a prevalence of 17.4% was observed in persons in the 35-65 year age bracket.

The normal heart is a strong muscular pump a little larger than a fist. It pumps blood continuously, and carries oxygen and other nutrients to all part of the body, including the heart itself. It also picks up waste products from the body's cells that are then filtered through kidneys, liver, and lungs. Each day the average heart beats a 100,000 times and pumps about 2,000 gallons of blood through 60,000 miles of veins, arteries and blood vessels. In an average 70 years life span the human heart beats more than 2.5 billion times. An electrical discharge from our natural "pacemaker" causes the heart to beat. This heart rate responds to varying demands, adjusting to emotional reactions and hormonal factors. This human power plant we call the heart is a remarkable machine and deserves the care and maintenance of a sophisticated instrument.

The medical term for heart attack is myocardial infarction. A heart attack occurs when the blood supply to a

part of the heart muscle itself—the myocardium—is severely reduced or stopped. This happens when one of the arteries supplying blood to the heart is blocked due to deposits of a fat-like substance called plaque. A heart attack can also be caused by a blood clot lodged in the coronary artery. Such an event is called coronary thrombosis. Myocardial infarction is the damage or death of an area of the heart resulting from the deprivation of healthy blood.

High blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, caused by unhealthy practices such as fatty foods, smoking, and sedentary life style contribute to heart problems. These should be controlled at a very early age. The incidence of coronary mortality is more prevalent among Gujarati Hindus, Punjabi Sikhs, and Muslims from Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Atherogenic (hardening of arteries) proportion of ghee (clarified butter) used in many Indian diets have been suggested as a possible cause of high coronary risk among South Asians. In the United Kingdom diabetes is present in 20% of South Asians over the age of 40, as compared to 5% Europeans. The mechanisms of elevated sugar, high blood pressure, high triglycerides (fat), and low HDL (good cholesterol) are poorly understood. A striking finding among the majority of healthy Indians is that they have dangerously

low HDL even with low or normal cholesterol levels. This scary deficiency together with other coronary risk factors could be a marker for impending heart disease among the Indian population. Vegetarian food cooked in the Indian style is by no means fat free. They are often cooked in animal fat, like butter, and served with large dollops of cream and ghee. Furthermore, coconut oil which is 92% saturated fat, and farm palm kernel oil which is 86% saturated are commonly used in many Indian homes. Rasamalai, Kulfi, cakes, and pastry served later result in extra calories and elevated cholesterol. This anomaly in a vegetarian Indian diet was reported in the American Journal of Cardiology in March 15, 1990. The solution is recognition and prevention.

If you suffer chest pain, particularly while exerting yourself, you will almost certainly wonder whether it might be heart-related. Heart muscle pain is likely to be the first warning of blocked coronary arteries. The heart discomfort is rarely sharp stabbing pain. The textbook description of angina is a feeling of heaviness, tightness, or aching in the chest, usually accompanied by shortness of breath. Even a heart attack may not be unbearably painful at first, permitting the victim to delay seeking treatment. Angina is protest from the heart muscle that it is not getting enough oxygen due to diminished blood supply. The attack is the most

extreme state of oxygen deprivation, posing trauma to the heart and causing a region of the heart muscle cells to die. Ignoring this sort of pain because it is not unbearable or because it goes away, is the worst thing you can do. It is the only warning you can likely get of a potential lethal condition. It is no wonder that heart attacks are called the silent killers.

In summary, watch for one of the following warning signals of a heart attack.

- Uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the centre of the chest lasting more than a few minutes.
- Pain spreading to the shoulder, neck or arms.
- Chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea, lightness around the throat, or shortness of breath.

Not all of these signs occur in every attack. Sometimes they go away and return. If they occur, get medical help fast.

Your doctor will try to detect any heart damage. He may use a blood test to detect levels of certain enzymes in the blood stream. An electrocardiogram or EKG is done and a graphic record is made of the heart's electrical impulses. Sometimes a 24-hour portable

monitor is used to detect silent ischemia, or minor heart attacks. When needed, this test is conducted under stress to determine the blood flow to the heart. These are not the only way your doctor studies heart damage. Cardiac catheterization is also used. By guiding a thin plastic tube into the coronary arteries of the heart he can measure the pressure, how much oxygen the blood is carrying, and other important diagnostic information. The doctor can also inject a dye, visible to X-rays and high speed X-ray movies record the course of the dye as it flows through the arteries. Doctors can thus identify obstructions in the arteries.

When a severe heart attack occurs, it is critical to recognize the signals and respond immediately. About half of all heart attack victims wait two or more hours before deciding to get help. This reduces their chance of survival. It also reduces the chance of preserving heart muscle, which raises the risk of disability for those who survive. The importance of time cannot be overemphasized. Identify your nearest hospital with 24-hour emergency cardiac care, and know how long it takes to get there. When a coronary artery gets blocked, the heart muscle does not die instantaneously. Instead, the damage increases, the longer the artery remains blocked. If the victim gets to the hospital fast enough thrombolysis can be performed. A

thrombolytic agent is administered to dissolve clots and restore some blood flow. These drugs must be used within a few hours of an attack. The sooner the drug is used, the more effective it is likely to be. In the weeks after the attack, depending on the severity of the condition, either coronary angioplasty, or coronary artery bypass surgery may be performed to improve blood supply to the heart muscle. Remember that once a part of the heart muscle dies, its function cannot be restored.

Here are some of the more disturbing statistics:

- Heart attack is the single largest killer of American males.
- 27% of males who have heart attacks die within a year.
- In 48% of men, who died suddenly of coronary heart attack, there was no previous evidence of disease.
- Within 6 years after a heart attack, 23% will have another attack. 41% will develop angina, 9% will have a stroke.

And 13% will experience sudden death.

- 22% Asian Americans are smokers.
- Over 47% of men over 20 have serum cholesterol levels over 200 mg/dl and over 17% have levels in excess of 240 mg/dl.
- Over 32% of the population is overweight.
- Nearly 75% of all bypass procedures are performed on men.

It is very important that you control obesity. Eschew fatty foods, coffee, cigarettes, and liquor. Avoid anger, fear, depression, stress, fast foods, and too much television. Exercise regularly: walk, bike, swim and jog. During winter excellent alternative are Nordic Track (Achiever Model) and slow pushups, weight lifting and workouts on the Nautilus. Eat comfortably and avoid excesses. Have your doctor schedule your annual health checkup. If you follow a reasonably healthy life style, you can evade the clutches of "The Killer Amongst US".

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Wine, Red or White: Just Raise Your Glasses to a Healthy Heart

By Nilanjana Maulik, Ph.D

Professor

Molecular Cardiology and Angiogenesis Laboratory

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“God in His goodness sent the grapes, to cheer both great and small; little fools will drink too much, and great fools not at all”. Well, I am not sure who said this, maybe no one knows. It is a quote full of sense but has remained anonymous with respect to fact that there is no famous personality behind this quote. It took modern medical science nearly 440 years to catch up to the words of wisdom of Dr. Andrew Boorde, an English traveler and physician of the 16th century, when he said, *“Wine.....moderately drunken.....It doth quicken a man's wits. It doth comfort the heart”*. Back then there was no scientific evidence for the fact that wine can *“comfort the heart”*. **But, yes indeed it can.**

The sales of red wine in the USA increased by 44% after it was reported in ‘60 minutes’ (the CBS television news magazine) that the French, regardless of their diets rich in fat, had a lower incidence of coronary heart diseases (CHD) when compared with the western population. The low incidence of CHD among the French was related to the use of moderate amounts of wine in their diet. This phenomenon of low occurrence of heart diseases among the French despite their unhealthy dietary habits was termed as the **‘French Paradox’** (the term was coined by Dr. Serge Renaud, a scientist from Bordeaux University in France in 1992). However, it was never specified that ‘red’ wine was the source of that heart healthy ingredient that kept the French away from a doctor for any kind of heart diseases when compared to other people. People took it for granted that red wine was the one that was heart healthy than white wine. The reason.....maybe because people thought

that red wine had that ‘red’ color and so there must be something in that ‘red’ that was not there in the plain looking white wine or maybe because it was a known fact that red wine is made by crushing the grape skins (which contain the antioxidants) along with the pulp, while the grape skins are quickly separated out during the making of most white wines. That was the time when chemists embarked on a quest to identify the components in red wine that made it beneficial in combating heart diseases. It was not long before researchers realized that the *‘resveratrol’* content of red wine might be the secret ingredient behind the heart healthy effects attributed to it. Since then, no other naturally occurring compound has attracted the attention of modern medicine like *resveratrol*.

Resveratrol is a polyphenolic compound found in red wine which has been shown to possess anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, blood-sugar-lowering, and beneficial cardiovascular effects. This miracle compound is said to activate a member of the family of sirtuin proteins (Sirt1) which has been scientifically proven to regulate aging, cell death and stress resistance. Regulation of the metabolic processes as well as cellular defense mechanisms might ultimately be the key to a possible lifespan-extending role for sirtuins in mammals. In addition it has been proven with solid scientific data in animal experiments that resveratrol also activates other proteins that are necessary for decreasing tissue damage, cell death, improving the formation of new blood vessels and thereby increasing blood flow, and also improving the overall function of the heart after a heart attack. Individuals suffering from diabetes or having high amount of lipids



(fat/cholesterol) in their blood are more prone to having heart diseases. Resveratrol has proven to be a boon in these cases too. We have shown that resveratrol treatment in diabetic and high fat diet fed animals could precondition these 'sick' hearts to resist the damage that occur after a heart attack and regain better functionality when compared to the animals that were not given resveratrol.

The combination of this duo '*red wine and resveratrol*' actually stole the whole show of 'wines being heart healthy'. White wine lovers started thinking of switching to red wine because of its potential health benefits. *But it isn't easy to give up on something you loved for so long, is it? That sweet tingling sensation, that soothing effect of white wine as it flows.....*

Well, here is the good news, a soothing music to the ears of white wine lovers. Research now has ample evidence that white wine could be as heart healthy as its relative red wine. One of our recent studies that was published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry (August 2008, Volume 56, Pages 6733-6739) showed that white wine could protect the heart (less tissue damage and improved function) in animal models of heart ischemia (low oxygen state due to lack of adequate blood supply) by activation of the different proteins that are responsible in increasing cell survival and inhibition of proteins that are responsible in inducing cell death. A recent human study that was published in the September 2008 issue of The Journal of Nutrition (Volume 138, Pages 1602-1608) reported that drinking either red or white wine in moderate amounts has proven to have equal health benefits on the heart especially in the induction of Nitric Oxide, a marker of cardiovascular health. The search then started for any such compound that is present in white wine that could be directly related to its heart healthy effects. That search led to the identification of an antioxidant monophenolic compound 'tyrosol' which is present in high concentrations in white wine.

In a very recent online issue of the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry (October 2008, in press), it was revealed by our group that this tyrosol present in white wine was equally as heart healthy as resveratrol and tyrosol could also activate the expression of life extending sirtuin protein. These scientific evidences add another dimension to the white wine research, because it adds a great link to the French paradox.

It is scientifically true that wine (red or white) can protect your heart. However, it doesn't give the right to people to rationalize the number of glasses of wine they take in the name of fighting off heart diseases. Moderation of wine intake is an important message, especially for those who have trouble in moderating the amount of alcohol intake. *What good will it be if one is trying to protect his heart from a heart attack at the cost of accidents, broken family and social relationships, lost jobs.....?* Given the myriad of reports on the relationship between wine, its components and heart health, human intervention studies would still be necessary before establishing any recommendations about dietary habits for wine, resveratrol or tyrosol.

So, next time when you walk into a wine shop, don't just stand there thinking which one, red or white? Just pick one and drink to a healthy heart, but moderately. Drink more than what's recommended, your health benefits are lost and your health risks go up. Here's what's considered safe and effective:

Men: No more than two drinks per day.

Women: No more than one drink per day.

One drink is defined as a 5-ounce glass of red or white wine.

Be it either red or white, *color doesn't matter*, we should stay with the Italian tradition, raise your glass and say "**Salute a cent anno**" which means *health for a hundred years*.



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Communicating the Vedic Ideals to the Next Generation

by Jai Maha Dev

Vedic ideals are the noble virtues enumerated in the Vedas. How do we communicate the Vedic ideals to the next generation? All we need to do is live a Vedic lifestyle.

We need to speak the truth with love and love the truth with all our heart, mind, and soul. The ‘truth’ is the Wisdom of Consciousness. The ‘Truth’ is not an objective reality separate from ourselves—*it is the very essence of who we really are*. We realize the Truth only when we are fully conscious and conscientious. We have to be aware of what is right and wrong and deliberately choose what is right.

Atman (Pure Consciousness) knows the Truth, because Atman is eternal and unchangeable. The Truth is unclear only to the unenlightened mind. When the mind is inundated with Wisdom and that wisdom is put into practice, then (and only then) does the mind become fully enlightened. In other words, we need to use our power of discernment (higher intellect) to guide the mind to make right choices and do good actions, based on the knowledge we have acquired. If we acquire knowledge but don’t use it, we will lose it. If we know what is right but choose what is wrong, we will suffer injustice at the hands of our own ego. If we ‘know better’ but don’t *do better*, our life will not get better but only worse.

Where do we go to learn Wisdom? We have to go to the Wise; we cannot rely on the mind that is a prisoner of ego and images, because that mind will twist the truth to satisfy its images. ‘Going to the Wise’ simply means directing your mind to the Vedic teachings. By studying the Vedic teachings we fill the mind with Vedic ideals, and we are prompted to fulfill those ideals by actualizing them in our daily life.

A human being always acts (sooner or later) according to what they have in mind. This is the Law of Karma. We change our destiny by taking control of our mind. If we do not take control of our mind, our mind will think according to its previous impressions and will repeat or compliment the actions that created those impressions. In other words, unless we intercede and take control of our mind, we will repeat our mistakes (or create new ones).

Replacing our negative thoughts with positive ones and overcoming our selfish tendencies is part of the challenge of life. If we are going to play the Game of Life to win (and be Liberated), we have to meet the challenges head-on. If we lose our head in the excitements and thrills of temporary pleasures and fleeting relationships, we can end up sidelined in life and never reach our Ultimate Goal.

Our goal is to become completely selfless (completely free of false ego), and thus directly perceive ourselves as absolutely free. This perception is made only by the living self (Jivatman) in possession of a pure, enlightened, mind. If we are possessed by our mind we cannot ‘be our Self’ and realize the Presence of the Supreme Self.

When we are completely free of our false identity (which is supported by images in the mind), we are completely at ease and directly realize our Essence: the Self of our Self, the Soul of our Soul, the Supreme Soul (Paramatman), the Supreme Creator (Parabrahma), the Ultimate Reality, the Ultimate Goal.

The realization of our Essence is the highest ideal of the Vedas; it is the crown of all Vedic ideals. Unless and until the living self is crowned with this success, it will remain unfulfilled. We are bound by our eternal nature to continue to strive for this fulfillment by taking birth and refining our human nature until our divine nature is revealed. All other success stories are only preludes to the highest attainment of Salvation (Moksha). All worldly achievements are only 'drills' that help us in our quest for the attainment of Absolute Freedom and Divine Bliss.

The attainment of this Freedom and Bliss is the essential purpose of our existence. We communicate this ideal to others by living a Vedic lifestyle and becoming fully established in communion with our Essence.



Tvameva Mata cha Pita Tvameva, Tvameva Bandhu cha
Sakha Tvameva, Tvameva Vidya Dravinam Tvameva,
Tvameva Sarvam Mama Deva Deva.

Elucidation by Jai Maha Dev

Tvameva Mata: You are my Mother, the Supreme One Without a Second, Who nourishes me with Divine Love and graces my life with Self-Respect (the perception of my self as the Soul-Self, and not just as a body, mind, intellect, or ego).

Cha Pita Tvameva: And you are my Father, the Supreme Being Who protects me by raising my consciousness and transforming my mind into a receptacle of the divine; Who instills in me the sterling qualities of Divine Consciousness.

Tvameva Bandu cha Sakha Tvameva: You are my True Relative with Whom I am eternally related as Atman (Soul-self) with Paramatman (the Supreme Self), and You are my Best Friend, my Eternal Companion and Dearest Confident Who will never leave me.

Tvameva Vidya: You are the Divine Wisdom, the Essence of everything I know, everything I am learning, and everything I do not know but seek to understand and realize (actualize).

Dravinam Tvameva: You are the Highest Wealth (Laxmi) and the Bestower of all the best things in this life and the next. You are the Source of everything good and the Bestower of all Resources we require for our physical sustenance and spiritual enlightenment. You are the Wealth of Wisdom and the Gift of Liberation (Moksha).

Tvameva Sarvam Mama Deva Deva: You are All-in-All; You are Everything to me, You are the core of my being, the Heart of my heart, the Source of my Self, the Soul of my soul, the Ultimate Reality devoid of duality and partiality; Indivisible, Immutable, Immaculate, the Ultimate Knower and the Absolute Perfect Incomparable Supreme Being.

OM TAT SAT

রোমস্থান

ডাঃ নিশীথ মুখোপাধ্যায়

না, কবিতা আর লিখি না,
লিখতে পারি না,
নীল আকাশকে নীল দেখিনা
হলুদ বিকেল ফ্যাকাসে,
পাখীর কূজন ঝড় আনে না
গহন মনের বাতাসে,
মেঘের কোলে লুকোচুরি,
সাগর দীপের বনটায়
ইট পাথরের গোলোকখাঁধায়
হারিয়ে গেছে মনটা।
কিন্তু যদি হঠাৎ করে
খামচে ধরে মনটারে,
হারিয়ে যেতাম বনটায়
শাল, সেগুনের ফাঁকে ফাঁকে
হাসনুহানার ঝোপের ধারে
হঠাৎ আমি ফিরে পেতাম
তোমায় দেখার ক্ষণটা।
ফিরে পেতাম হলুদ বিকেল
সবুজ সবুজ মনটা
স্পর্শকাতর স্মৃতিগুলো
গভীর মনের কোনটায়।
বেরসিক এক বাসের আওআজ
চমকে দেখি আমি
ইটের স্তুপে দাঁড়িয়ে আছি
ধূসর গাছের কোনটায়।



স্বপ্নের সিঁড়ি বেয়ে

ডাঃ রথীন্দ্রনাথ গাঙ্গুলি

‘আরোরা’ এখন শতরূপে যায় দেখা,
বেসরকারী মন মজে যায়
জাভা বোরণিওর লোক সংস্কৃতিতে,
বোষ্টনের আদব কায়দার
আইনকানুন সব সহজে যায় শেখা,
সব ঘুরিয়ে দেখার স্বর্গলোকে
থাকে যে ভ্রমনার্থী
অফিস আদালত আকাশ বাতাসের বাহিরে
পরিণত যে আর একটি আকাশ
যাকে তা জানা যায়
এই বাড়তি পাওয়ার মাঝে।

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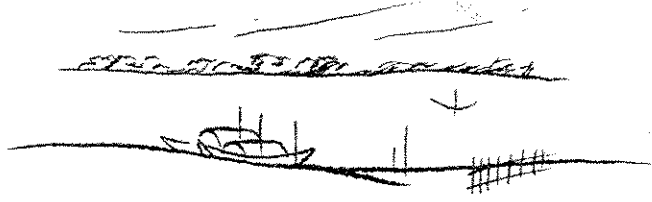
নীল আকাশকে বললাম

আমাকে একটা কবিতা দিতে পারো
আকাশ বললো আমার নীল রং যদি
হলুদ করে দিতে পারো
তাহলে তোমাকে একটা কবিতা দেবো।



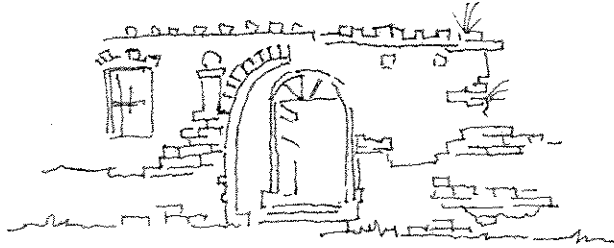
আমার গোলাপ বাগানের
গোলাপকে বললাম
আমাকে একটা কবিতা দিতে পারো
গোলাপ বললো যদি আমার
সুগন্ধের বর্ণনা দিতে পারো
তাহলে তোমাকে একটা কবিতা দেবো।

কুলকুল করা স্বচ্ছ নদীর দিকে
চেয়ে বললাম আমাকে একটা
কবিতা দিতে পারো
নদী বললো যদি আমার মতো
দুরন্ত হতে পারো
তাহলে তোমাকে একটা কবিতা দেবো।



উঠানের সবুজ ঘাসকে বললাম
আমাকে একটা কবিতা দিতে পারো
সবুজ ঘাস বললো যদি শিশির হয়ে
আমার সঙ্গে খেলা করতে পারো
তাহলে তোমাকে একটা কবিতা দেবো।

পাড়ার পোড়োবাড়িকে জিজ্ঞাসা করলাম
আমাকে একটা কবিতা দিতে পারো
পোড়োবাড়ি বললো আমার সমস্ত
দুঃখকে যদি ভালোবাসার পলেস্তারা
দিয়ে ঢেকে দিতে পারো
তাহলে তোমাকে একটা কবিতা দেবো।



প্রিয়জনদের জিজ্ঞাসা করলাম
আমাকে একটা কবিতা দিতে পারো
ওরা বললো কতকাল আর
“অজস্র পরাজয়ের ছাই মেখে
কবিতার জন্য সন্ধ্যাসী হবে।”

দিক নির্ণয়

অমলক (মুখোপাধিকার) রায়

ছোটবেলায় দিক চেনা কতই না সোজা ছিল
বাড়ী ছিল আমাদের- গাঙ্গার পশ্চিমতীরে,
দিদা শিখিয়েছিল গাঙ্গার-দিকে মুখ করে দাঁড়ালে,
সামনে পূর্ব পোহন পশ্চিম
বামে উত্তর- আর ডানে দক্ষিণ,
গাঙ্গার থেকে যখন দূরে যেতে আরম্ভ করলাম-
দিকভ্রমে যেন ডালিয়ে গেল,
দিদা বলল আমায় মনে করে সূর্য-দেখাবি,
আর দিক ঠিক করাবি,
অনেক দিন পর- দিদা যখন নেই-
অন্ধকার দিন সূর্য-নেই,
আমি প্রশ্ন করলাম, যখন নদীপথে ছিলাম
দিন কালো মেঘে ঢাকা,
কে যেন ভেতর থেকে বলে উঠল
তখন দুর্যোগের স্মৃতি থেকেই দিক ঠিক করতে হবে।



বাল্যের লক্ষ্যীরা
অর্নব রায়

অবুজ রঙের টিয়া
বেশবিলের রঙ কালো,
আমি কবকবতুয়া
চন্দা গায় ডালো,
দেয়েল দেয় শীষ
কবুই বনায় কাঙ্গা,
চতক চায় জল
হয়ূরের নাচ স্বাসা।

A reflection of South Asian immigration: History and Identity

Jhilmil Biswas

Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Bombay Dreams*, the hit Indian Broadway show that debuted in April 2004 in New York City was the one of the best selling shows of the season. With a trademark Bollywood storyline about a boy from Indian slums whose dreams come true when a Bollywood director discovers his talent and makes him a star, this musical is another way that South Asians are making their mark all over the Western world. Medicine, science, technology and engineering are inundated with South Asian know-how and more recently the arts, literature, politics and film have also been wielded in South Asian hands. From Jhumpa Lahiri's Pulitzer Prize winning books on Indian culture to M. Night Shyamalan who directed the hit movies *Sixth Sense* and *Signs*, Indra Nooyi, the president and CFO of Pepsi-cola, Anshu Jain, the head of global markets for Deutsche Bank, and Bobby Jindal who is currently in the governor's seat in Louisiana; politics, economics, academics and the arts are benefiting from South Asian influence (Kantrowitz). Today, South Asian influence is everywhere in American cities. You can go to yoga centers on every block; you can see ready made Versace saris in the windows of New York boutiques; you can order chai at Starbucks; eat at Indian restaurants, and listen to Bhangra beats integrated into the latest hip-hop music. Western culture is beginning to embrace South Asian culture in its many forms, bringing to light the stories of South Asians who first brought it here.

Over 2 million South Asians live in the United States today and have become a progressively visible ethnicity in society. Sixty two percent of these two million people are college graduates, with 58% of them with bachelors or graduate degrees (Rao). According to the Census Bureau, the average Indian family has an income of \$60,000 as compared to the national average of around \$38,000 making them the single wealthiest ethnicity in the United States next to Japanese Americans (Rao). South Asians are seen in large numbers in elite college campuses across the country and their numbers as a community are growing at a rate of 9-15% (Rao). This group's incredible growth and success is often correlated with Jewish immigration experience of success. Parmatma Saran, a sociologist at New York's Baruch College who studies South Asian immigrants, says they succeed because they balance modernity with old-world values. "South Asians are following in the footsteps of Jews," says Saran, who came from India in 1967 at 24. "They're following the Jewish model of penetrating the structural arrangement of society—economics, politics—without losing their cultural identity," he says. (Kantrowitz)." Although the luck South Asians have had in adapting easily to American culture, whether because most Indians speak fluent English or because they easily assimilate, there are costs. This immigrant group and their children deal with the model minority" complexes where they are constantly under pressure to live up to expectations their families, community and society put upon them. Even for those who do reach these expectations, their accomplishments can be considered commonplace and often they are criticized for not maintaining family values or other traditions. This type of responsibility is also part of the successful South Asian experience and reflects part of the struggle to form identity.

As a second generation South Asian woman, I have grown up in a time where I have watched my culture bloom from ideas and traditions taught to me by my family to trends that have been integrated into American society as a whole. I have struggled with the superficial ways my American culture has chosen to integrate Indian heritage and yet it's been an exciting journey all the same. I have been upset in feeling out of place and yet I feel lucky to have the great fortune to choose the best of both worlds. Through just living my life with some

deliberation and observation, I have built an identity that is in constant flux but the flux has become who I am. As one of many young adults like myself in the Bangla-O-Biswa community, our unique experience as a second generation Indian is a colorful reflection of the historical and sociological story of south asian immigration as well as the clashes and triumphs between immigrants, their children and their place and value in the world at large.

A Brief History of Indian Immigration in the United States

Popular acknowledgement of South Asian immigration is a fairly new phenomenon dating back to about forty-five years ago; however Indians, specifically, have been coming over to the United States since the early 1900's. From 1900-1947, there was a large movement of Sikh men from the state of Punjab who came to work in agriculture in California (Leonard, 40) These men had mainly farming backgrounds and came during a time there was hostility toward other Asians who had come to find work during the California gold rush. Many of these men had come to the United States leaving their wives in India, but later decided to settle in the US and married the women from the nearby Mexican communities. The family life in these expanded biethnic communities were extraordinarily difficult due to cultural clashes; the labor class of men, who wanted to keep strong ties with their roots in India, were also forced learn about women's rights, divorce laws, Mexican immigration issues and other obstacles (Leonard 42). In the 1920's, the U.S. began revoking certificates for naturalization to Asian Americans. This was adjunct to the anti-Asian sentiment at the time, especially with the "Barred Zone" Immigration Act of 1917 which stopped almost all further Asian immigration. Also, further amendments made The Alien Land Law of 1913 in 1920 and 1921, inspired by the waves of reactionary discrimination, made it very difficult for Asian farmers to acquire land (Daniels, 31). After the 1920's marked two decades of unfavorable economic conditions and labor-defying technological advances left a heavy blow on immigrants who wanted to work as farmers. Even in the onset of World War II with the new needs of a country at war, the situation remained unchanged for these immigrants (Leonard, 41), thus the South Asian numbers dwindled until 1965 in the great wave of new South Asian immigration.

The 1960's, during the time the U.S. was in the Cold War with Russia, there was a great push toward modern technology and advancement. The U.S. felt they had a shortage in people to progress forward. The 1965 Immigration Act was passed to allow highly educated people of all backgrounds to easily acquire immigrant visas to the United States as well as attractive job offers. Although this was a worthwhile offer to other ethnic groups, Asian Indians jumped on the opportunity. Left with remnants of British Rule, many Indians were already proficient in English from an early age, and did not look too different from Caucasians allowing them to assimilate easier in American society (Agarwal 22).

"Sociologist Nathan Glazer summarized the atypical nature of Indian immigrants by describing them as... "a new and rapidly growing ethnic group fed by immigration. It is not like any of the other(s). It is marked off by a high level of education, by concentration in the professions, by a strong commitment to maintaining family connections, both here in the United States and in India. (Agarwal 21)."

This was the wave of immigration that began the new identity of South Asians. This group was able to sustain themselves in the United States in the past forty years building communities,

bringing friends and families overseas, going back home to keep the connections strong and maintain a presence that has churned the influence of the modified South Asian culture we see in the United States today.

The Experience, the Transformations and the Growth of an Indian Community.

Today the people of this immigrant group in the Boston area along with their children have created Bangla-o-Biswa and many other groups with similar cultural goals around the state and the country. Together, we celebrate the many traditions of our heritage but these groups have evolved into so much more. The community created in these groups has given us a chance to find commonality with others in our dual cultural experience, to grow up and network with one another, and to forge ahead with new ideas and to recognize we are separate from India and must create our own ideals and our own life as South Asian Americans.

Growing up as children of immigrants, we have struggled at times, have resented our oddities when compared to the general public, have pushed away our cultural outlet and yet have found solace in a group of people who were often going through similar difficulties. As we have all grown older, this second generation group has begun to diverge into the many different kinds of people we all are. We have developed our own independence, we forced a new kind of realization upon this group, and I would suggest, a transformation upon our parents. Many of my friends say their parents have remained the same and have merely resigned to their different forms of rebellion; however my struggle with first and second generation clashes has been a rewarding one and has built a very tight bond between every member of my family and my community at large. I would like to thank Bangla-O-Biswa for being the constant presence in my life through moving homes, and schools in my past twenty-five years and helping me keep my friends and family near even when we are all so busy and afar. This group has given me normalcy in my childhood and so much love and blessing in my life today. I cannot be more pleased than to know that the group that I hold so dear continues to sustain success after twenty-five lovely years and has flourished to uphold the next generation to come.

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Best Wishes From

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New Britain, Connecticut



শপথ মোচন

—গৌরী দত্ত

আজীবন কথা দিয়েও ফেরৎ আসেনি শান্তনু ।

বলেছিল ,একদিন সপ্তর্ষি চেনাবো, লাল চাঁপা
অসার মাটিতেও জন্মেছে কি রকম সেই বাগানবাড়িতে
তোমাকে দেখাবো ।

গঙ্গাসাগরে যাবো লৌকা বেয়ে,
বৈঠা দিয়ে পাঁকের আদিম পদাফুল
ছাড়খার করে আসবো । আমি হেনা গাজুলি
হয়ে যেতে পারি মত্ত দুর্জয় সাহসে, সাক্ষ্য আইন
আমার জন্য মূলতুবী তোলা আছে ।কুমারসাহেব
তোষাখানা ভরে দিলে ঘর পাতবো নিশ্চই,
একদিন তোমার গলিতে ।

বলেছিলো , আমি ছদ্মবেশ পরে বাঙালিটোলার শানুদেশে
পাগলামি করতে চাই । দুর্গাপূজোর হিম মাসে
চরম উত্তাপ চাই বাইসেপ্‌সে, শিরায়, লালায় ।

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আঙনের শীষ হয়ে তোমার পয়োধি মুখ ছোঁব ।
তখন কোষের মধ্যে চার কোটি বোমা ফেটে যাবে
তখন তোমার পাত্রে আমার রক্ত চুমুক
সসাগরা পৃথিবীর সব প্রেমী মত্ত হয়ে যাবে,
আমি মশাল জ্বালিয়ে
তোমাকে লুণ্ঠন করবো শাশানের নৈঃশব্দ থেকে ।

সহস্র কথার কোনো পণশব্দ রাখিনি, শান্তনু ।

তোমাকে আমি সম্রাটের গুপ্তপুত্র ভেবে
বিশ্বাস আঙুটির মত মধ্যমায় পরিয়েছিলাম ।
সন্ন্যাসীর অভয়ের মত
তোমার চোখ দেখে আশা ছিল ইচ্ছাপূরণের
নতুন মন্ত্র অনিবার্য ঠিক জানো তুমি, শেষ বোয়িঙের
যাত্রী চলাচল সাজ্ঞ হলে তুমি ডেকে নিয়ে যাবে ।

কিন্তু বন্ধলের মত জামা পাল্‌টিয়ে,
গগ্‌ল্‌স উষ্ণীষ করে , মুখ মুছে , চেকবই নিয়ে

দুষ্টু কিশোরের মত নদী পারে ডক্‌ দেখতে গেলে ।

শোনো শান্তনু, আরো দিন কেটে গেলে
দেশের বাতাস ঘনীভূত হবে, ভারসাম্যহীন
তোমার স্থলন হবে , অস্থির হলে
ম্যাজিক ফুরিয়ে যাবে, ঘর দোর ভেঙে
উপাধি নিলামে কেই কিনে নেবে, দেউলিয়া নামে
আমি শব্দভেদী বাণে ক্ষমাহীন টংকার জানাবো ।
তুমি বেগতিক দেখে টাই খুলে ফেলে , করজোরে বলে উঠবে
‘উমা, আমি তোমাকেই চাই’—

ওমনি রানওয়ার সব কর্মচারী ,কন ক্রীটে ব্যস্ত ট্রলিকার
অউহাস্যে লালচাঁপা , সপ্তর্ষি স্নেফ ভুলে যাবে ॥

*Nil Aakashe Ke Bhashale
Saada megher bhela*

Puja Greetings



**DR MANAS RAY
DR ANASUYA MITRA**

Belmont, MA



*“Shoptomi te notun jama
Oshtomi te bhog
Nobomi te onek moja
Doshomi shubho hok”*

**SAROJ ROY
ALOKA ROY
ARNAV ROY**

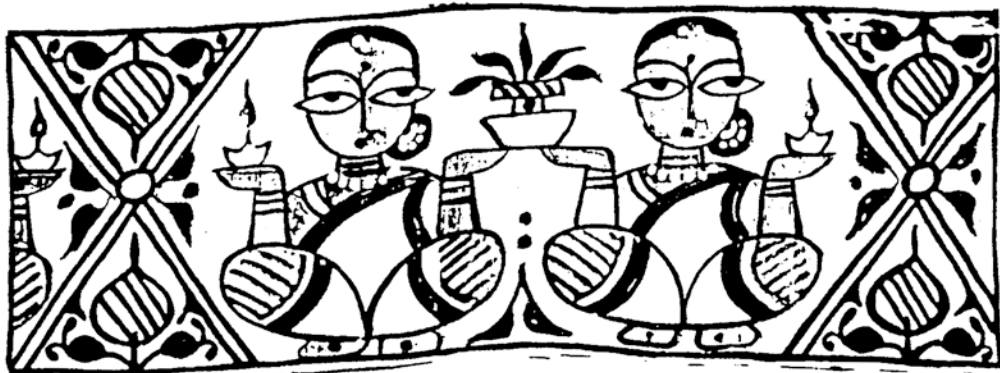
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Best Wishes From

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SATYAJIT (JIT) GUPTA**

Randolph, MA

Wish You Happy Durga & Kali Puja

**SUPRIYA SEN
KABITA LOMBARD**

Hingham, MA





Vijaya Greetings

**DILIP PAUL
ASHIMA PAUL
APARNA PAUL
DEEPAN PAUL**

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SHAROD SHUBHECHHA

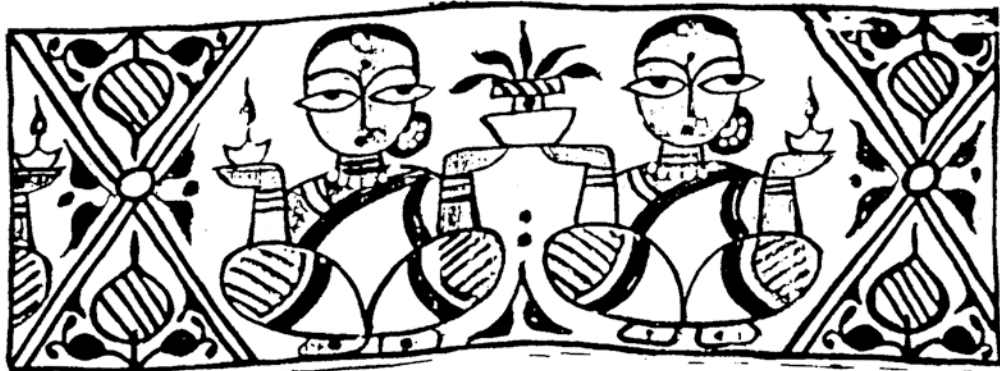
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