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THE BENGALI PRESS AND LITERARY WRITING,

1818-1831.

by

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### Abstract

This thesis is intended as a study of Bengali literary writing during the period 1818 to 1831, and as part of that study it notes and assesses the contribution made to literary writing by the printing press and the newspaper. It also takes account of the relationship between the literature inherited from the pre-1800 period and that which was developing as a result of the impact of western standards and ways of life on Calcutta society. The period under review was one of transition and an attempt has been made to strike the balance between innovation and tradition.

The first two chapters, which are introductory, survey the history of printing in Bengal and the growth of an indigenous Bengali press. Included also is a short historical review of the first origins and early development of the newspaper.

In chapters III to VI the principal form of literary writing at the time, namely prose satire, is studied as a literary genre and as a reflection of the condition of Calcutta society. As most of the works examined in these chapters are generally ascribed to Bhabānīcaraṇ Bandyopādhyāy,



it has been necessary to look at his life, his place in society and his religious and social controversies with Rāmmohan Rāy.

Chapters VII and VIII are devoted to a more detailed analysis of the literary works themselves, first, from the point of view of metre, and, secondly, from the point of view of Bhabānīcaran's technique as a satirist and his success in handling satire.

The final chapter (IX) is a conclusion. It draws together the various evaluations which have been made of literary compositions, both prose and verse, it looks at contemporary taste and attempts to set the works produced, and in particular those of Bhabānīcaran, in a fuller social, cultural and literary context.

Acknowledgement

When completing a work of this nature, one is very much reliant on the guidance and assistance of others, and I therefore wish to express my gratitude to the many persons who aided me in my task.

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Abbreviations

B.S.	<u>The Bābu of Syāmbājār</u>
B.S.P.	<u>Bāmlā Sāmayīk Patra</u>
B.U.	<u>Bābur Upākhyān</u>
D.B.	<u>Dūtībilās</u>
D.K.	<u>Dvijarājer Khedokti</u>
D.M.	<u>Dvijarājer Mṛtyu</u>
D.N.B.	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
K.K.	<u>Kalikātā Kamalālay</u>
N.B.	<u>Nababābubilās</u>
N.B.B.	<u>Nababibibilās</u>
S.S.C.	<u>Sāhitya Sādhak Caritmālā</u>
S.S.K.	<u>Sambādpatre Sekāler Kathā</u>

Transliteration

Vowels:

a (अ)	ā (आ)	i (इ)	ī (ई)
u (उ)	ū (ऊ)	e (ए)	ai (ऐ)
o (ओ)	au (औ)	ṛ (ऋ)	

Consonants

k (क)	kh (ख)	g (ग)	gh (घ)	ṅ (ङ)
c (च)	ch (छ)	j (ज)	jh (झ)	ñ (ञ)
ṭ (ट)	ṭh (ठ)	ḍ (ड)	ḍh (ढ)	ṇ (ण)
t (त)	th (थ)	d (द)	dh (ध)	n (न)
p (प)	ph (फ)	<del>ṽ</del> (व)	bh (भ)	m (म)
y (य)	r (र)	l (ल)	vṛ (वृ)	ś (श)
ṣ (ष)	s (स)	h (ह)	ṛ (ऌ)	ṛh (ऍ)
ṣ (श)	ṣ (ष)	ḥ (ः)	~ (ः)	kṣ (क्ष)

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## Chapter I

THE HISTORY OF BENGALI PRINTING (1778-1818).

In August 1498, Vasco da Gama landed in Calicut, a port on the western coast of India,<sup>1</sup> and the Portuguese subsequently established factories in Calicut, Cananore, and Cochin (1500). Fortresses were erected at Cochin (1503), Quiloa, Angedive and Sofala (1505). In 1510 Goa was conquered.<sup>2</sup> For almost twenty years after Vasco da Gama discovered the sea-route to India, the Portuguese had no definite commerce with Bengal. It was in 1517-18 that an expedition was sent to Bengal by the governor of the Portuguese possessions in the East. Afterwards it became an established custom for the governor to send a Portuguese ship to Bengal with merchandise annually,<sup>3</sup> and soon Portuguese trading settlements and missionary outposts sprang up in different places of Bengal.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Campos, J.J.A., History of the Portuguese in Bengal, Butterworth & Co. (Calcutta and London) 1919, pp. 11-12.
  2. Ibid., p.14.
  3. Ibid., p.30.
  4. In 1537 the Portuguese were able to found trading settlements simultaneously in Chittagong and Satgaon (Campos, *ibid.*, p.113). In 1579-80 they had established a settlement at Hooghly (Campos, *ibid.*, p.50). Before the century was out, the Portuguese had succeeded in erecting factories and custom-houses in many places in Bengal. It appears that the first group of the Portuguese missionaries arrived in Bengal in 1576 (Campos, *ibid.*, p.100).

Printing first entered India in the 16th century. It came from Europe. The circumstances were as follows. At the request of the Emperor of Abyssinia, the King of Portugal sent a printing press and a team of technicians as an aid to the promotion of the spread of Christianity in Abyssinia. It so happened that the ship carrying the press and the technicians, who were mostly Jesuits, was diverted to Goa. It arrived there on the 6th September, 1556.<sup>5</sup> The leader of the Jesuits, who was the Patriarch designated to Abyssinia, went ashore to visit the governor of Goa and was invited to prolong his stay there. While the Patriarch was still in Goa, relations between the Emperor of Abyssinia and the Roman catholic missionaries became strained with the result that the projected mission was cancelled and the printing press remained in Goa where it was installed.<sup>6</sup> It went into production in 1557. The first book to be printed was St. Xavier's Doutrina Christa;<sup>7</sup> it was written in Portuguese and printed in roman characters.<sup>8</sup> The first Indian language book to be printed was a version of the Doutrina Christa. It was published in 1578 in 'types of Malabar

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5. Priolkar, A.K., The Printing Press in India, Bombay, 1958, p.7.

6. Ibid., pp.5,8.

7. Ibid., p.8.

8. Dās, Sajani Kānta, Bāmlā Sāhityer Itihās, vol.I. Calcutta, 1353 (Bengali Era), p.21.

letters', i.e. Tamil.<sup>9</sup> The fount of type had been prepared by Joao Gonsalves, a Spaniard, who was one of the technicians who accompanied the printing press to Goa.

It appears that the missionaries did not set up a printing press in Bengal. The first Bengali book to be published was prepared at Lisbon under the auspices of the missionaries in Bengal. It was printed in roman characters. Other printed works prepared by the Roman catholic missionaries in roman characters followed. There is no evidence that the missionaries had any works printed in Bengali characters. It was in fact not until 1778, and in Calcutta, that a fount of Bengali characters was prepared. Nevertheless the publications of the Portuguese missionaries are important in the history of Bengali language and literature. They included the following texts which to the best of our knowledge at the moment were printed in 1743.

1. Vocabulario en idioma bengala e portuguez, or a Vocabulary in Bengali and Portuguese. It was published by Francisco da Silva in 1743. It consists of two parts, a Bengala-Portuguese and a Portuguese-Bengala Vocabulary. It also contains a short manual on Bengali grammar.

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9. Priolkar, A.K., op.cit., p.9.



2. Catecismo da doutrina Christaa or a catechism of the Christian Doctrine, which was composed in the Bengali language by Father Manoel da Assumpcao and printed by the same Francisco da Silva in 1743. It is more familiarly known by its Bengali title Crepar Xaxtrer Orth Bhed, i.e. the meaning of the Gospel of Mercy. The Bengali and the Portuguese texts were printed in the roman character on opposite pages, the Bengali verso, the Portuguese recto.
3. Argumento e Disputa sobre a Ley entre hu Christao, ou Catholo Romo, e hu bramene ou Me dos gentios, or Argument and Dispute upon the Law between a Roman Catholic and a Brahmin, in the form of a dialogue. This appears to be an original work written by Don Antonio, a convert from Hinduism. Bengali and Portuguese versions of the text were reproduced in parallel columns, both in roman type.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to bear in mind that the printing press to which the Portuguese missionaries had access was located outside Bengal. The establishment of the first

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10. According to Father Hosten, all the three books mentioned above were printed in 1743 at Lisbon in the printing press of Francisco da Silva (Hosten, H., The First Three Type-printed Bengali Books, article published in Bengal - Past and Present: Journal of the Calcutta Historical Society, vol. ix., part I., July - September, 1914, pp. 40-63). Dr. S. N. Sen maintains that 'Argument and Dispute upon the Law between a Roman Catholic and a Brahmin' was not printed in 1743, but that on the contrary it remained in manuscript form in the public library at Evora until 1937 when it was discovered by Sen and printed under the title of Brāhman-romān-kyāthalik-sambād from the University of Calcutta. (Sen, S. N. ed. Brāhman-romān-kyāthalik-sambād, 1937, preface, p. xxiv.)

printing press in Bengal was undertaken for political and administrative reasons after the arrival of the British in Calcutta.

The Battle of Plassey in 1757 saw the collapse of Muslim rule in Bengal and the beginning of its collapse in the other parts of India. The government of Bengal was formally assumed by the East India Company by 1772. Subsequently to consolidate its hold on the province, the Company at the suggestion of certain senior officials began to promote the Bengali language as a matter of policy. The need for learning the native languages of India was admitted by the Company as early as 1757.<sup>11</sup>

In keeping with this policy, the Company's government endeavoured to establish a printing press for printing books in Bengali characters. As a part of this project, one William Bolts was commissioned to prepare a fount of Bengali type.<sup>12</sup> Bolts, a civil servant of the Company and a Dutchman by birth, was a man of great initiative and ingenuity, but of doubtful probity. He undertook the task in collaboration with Joseph Jackson,

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11. Clive wrote to the Court of Directors on the 23rd December 1757 as follows: Mr. Watts still accompanies me in this campaign, and I cannot omit the opportunity of remarking of what great service<sup>he</sup> to your affairs by his thorough knowledge of the language and people of this country. Quoted by Dās, *Sajanī Kānta, Bāmlā Sāhityer Itihās*, p.23.

12. Khan, M. Siddiq; The Early History of Bengali Printing, article published in the Library Quarterly, vol. xxxii. No. I. January, 1962, Chicago, p.55.

a founder from London. "An inventory of 1773 listed Hebrew, Persian, and Bengali types in his (Jackson's) stock."<sup>13</sup> But the punches provided by Bolts were not satisfactory,<sup>14</sup> and Bolts' venture ended in failure.

The second move in this direction came when Halhed wrote his Grammar of the Bengal Language. In pursuance of the Company's policy Warren Hastings in 1774 suggested to Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, a young writer of the Company, that he should translate the Gentoo (Hindu) code.<sup>15</sup> This code was a digest of Sanskrit law-books made at the instance of Hastings by eleven Brahmins. Halhed translated it from a Persian version and had it printed in London, because printing facilities were not available in Bengal. In 1778 Halhed, presumably under the auspices of Hastings, wrote A Grammar of the Bengal Language for the use of his compatriots. Instead of depending upon London founders, Warren Hastings this time approached a young civilian, Charles Wilkins by

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13. Ibid., p.55.

14. Ibid., p.56.

15. Dictionary of National Biography (hereafter referred to as D.N.B.) vol. xxiv, London, 1890, p.41.

name, of the East India Company to undertake 'a set of Bengal types'. The book was printed 'at Hooghly at the press established by Mr. Andrews, a book-seller in 1778'.<sup>16</sup> It may not be possible to assert positively that this was the first book printed in Bengal, there is no doubt that this was the first book printed with Bengali movable types.<sup>17</sup>

'No record now remains'<sup>18</sup> of the press that was used to publish Halhed's grammar. But it is on record that the punches were cut by Wilkins himself. Wilkins, a friend of Halhed, joined the service of the East India Company in 1770. The grandson of an engraver,<sup>19</sup> he instructed himself in the art of punch-cutting and cut a set of 'Bengalee' punches with his own hands after he had been six or seven years in Bengal. Often described as the Caxton<sup>20</sup> of Bengal Wilkins was also a great orientalist. He was the first European to unlock 'the

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16. Marshman, J. C., The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward, vol.I. London, 1859, pp.70, 159.  
 17. Priolkar, op.cit., p.52.  
 18. Marshman, op.cit., vol.I. p.70.  
 19. D.N.B., vol. lxi, London, 1900, p.259.  
 20. 'The first English printer, William Caxton...founded his press in Westminster in 1476.' Pristley, J. B., Literature and Western Man, London, 1962, p.1.

treasures of Sanskrit lore to the literati of Europe by the translation of the Bhagvat Geeta'.<sup>21</sup> It must be remembered in this connection that Wilkins' contribution to the development of Bengali printing is not only confined to the printing of a single Bengali grammar, 'but had far deeper and more wide-reaching effects';<sup>22</sup> for he had taken care that 'his work should produce lasting results'.<sup>23</sup> He gave instructions in the art which he acquired to an expert native blacksmith named Pañcānan through whose labours printing became stabilised in Bengal.<sup>24</sup> It is wrongly maintained by some<sup>25</sup> that the first printed Bengali book i.e. Halhed's grammar, was printed with wooden types. This statement is in direct contradiction to Halhed's quite unequivocal statement conveyed in the preface to his grammar that his book was printed with types made of steel.<sup>26</sup>

The measure of Wilkins' achievement can be properly understood if it is remembered that the cutting of a Bengali fount is more intricate and time-consuming than work on a

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21. Marshman, op.cit., vol.I., p.70.

22. De, S. K., Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth century, Calcutta, 2nd edition, 1962, p.75.

23. Ibid., pp. 75-76.

24. Marshman, op.cit., vol.I. p.70; also de, S. K., op.cit., p.75.

25. Basu, Nagendranāth, Viśvakoṣ (A Bengali encyclopedia), vol.xv, p.198; also vol.xviii, pp.196-197.

26. Halhed, N. B., A Grammar of the Bengal Language, 1778, Hooghly, p.xxiii.

roman type fount; for the average Indian script has over six hundred letters if vowel-signs, conjunct consonants, etc. are included, as they must be. Wilkins surmounted all these difficulties and by 1785 he was able to provide a new fount of type on which the Honorable Company's Press was able to print a series of Bengali books.<sup>27</sup>

The first book of this series, (the second Bengali printed book) entitled 'Regulations for the Administration of Justice in the Courts of Dewannee Adaulut' was published in 1785.<sup>28</sup> This was a work compiled by Sir Elija Impey for the purpose of assisting him during the historic trial of Maharaja Nanda Kumar. Popularly known as the Impey Code, it was translated into Bengali by Jonathan Duncan, who subsequently became governor of Bombay. Duncan's translation may be considered the first complete Bengali prose work to be printed, as Halhed's grammar was in English except for its illustrative material. The Impey Code is a bilingual publication consisting of the regulations in English along with the Bengali translation, the Bengali in verso, the English in recto. It is evident from the typography of this work that Wilkins had made a tremendous improvement in cutting

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27. Khan, M. Siddiq, op.cit., p.57.

28. Blumhardt, J. F., Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books in the Library of the British Museum, London, 1886, p.8.

punches and fabricating types after 1778.<sup>29</sup>

The next Bengali book which utilized the same fount of type came out in 1791. Entitled Bengal Translation of Regulations for the Administration of Justice in the Fouzdarry or Criminal Courts; in Bengal, Behar, Orrisa, it was translated into Bengali by Neil Benjamin Edmonstone, the then 'Deputy Persian Translator to the Government.'<sup>30</sup> Edmonstone also prepared the Bengal Translation of Regulations for the guidance of the Magistrates. It was printed at the Honorable Company's Press in 1792 and the typography of this book is the same as that of the foregoing books.

The next book printed in Bengali, a Bengali translation of the Cornwallis Code, A Collection of all laws passed in 1793 by the Council of the Honorable Nawab Governor General, came from the same press, but its typography is different and it marks an improvement on the types cast by Wilkins. This book is stated to have been printed with 'an improved fount' of smaller and finer

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29. It is unjust to assume that no improvement was made on the fount that was used to print Halhed's grammar. Dās quotes an unnamed writer as stating that in seven years time from the date of the publication of Halhed's grammar, there was hardly any noticeable improvement in the typography of the Impey Code. Dās, Sajānī Kānta, op.cit., pp.24-25.

30. Blumhardt, J. F., op.cit., p.8; the copy preserved in the British Museum consists of 31 quarto pages with the first 6 pages missing.

types fabricated by Wilkins' blacksmith pupil, Pañcānan Karmakār, who, according to some, excelled his master in the art.<sup>31</sup>

Little is known of Pañcānan's antecedents except that he came from Tribenī, a place near Hooghly,<sup>32</sup> and that he was a blacksmith by caste.<sup>33</sup> He had been, as we said above, initiated into the art of punch-cutting by Wilkins. He assisted Wilkins while the latter was preparing a fount for publishing Halhed's Bengali grammar.<sup>34</sup> Later he joined Carey at Serampore in 1800 and remained associated with the Serampore missionaries until his death in 1803 (or 1804?).<sup>35</sup> During this short period of collaboration with Carey he prepared one Nāgarī fount and also a Bengali fount of smaller characters. During this period, Manohar, another pupil of Wilkins<sup>36</sup> joined Pañcānan as his assistant, and later became his son-in-law. Till his death in 1846, Manohar worked at the Serampore Mission Press, and prepared 'punches of no fewer than twelve of the characters used in India'.<sup>37</sup> He also fabricated 'the first movable metallic characters of the Chinese language'.<sup>38</sup> His son,

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31. Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., p.38.

32. Ibid., p.38.

33. Sen, Dinesh Chandra, History of Bengali Language and Literature, University of Calcutta, 1911, p.848.

34. Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., p.38.

35. Ibid., p.38.

36. Sen, Dinesh Chandra, op.cit., p.848.

37. Elberling, F. E., Description of Serampore, its population, Revenues, and Administration under the Danish Government, 1874, p.3.

38. Ibid., p.3.



Kṛṣṇachandra, also earned a reputation as a type-founder.<sup>39</sup>

It seems clear therefore that the first printing press established in Bengal was that for which Wilkins supplied the movable type. This press, which was under the management of Mr. Andrews at Hooghly, has been considered by some historian as the first printing press in India.<sup>40</sup> In view of the previous works of the Portuguese missionaries this is obviously not true.

Probably the next printing press in Bengal was that set up by James Augustus Hicky in 1780.<sup>41</sup> The first Anglo-Indian newspaper, the Bengal Gazette, which was edited by Hicky, issued from this press. In 1784, Francis Gladwin established the Calcutta Gazette Press which published the official Government Gazette. Until the Company's own press came into use, the Calcutta Gazette Press did most of the Company's printing.

A little later with the assistance of and under the supervision of Charles Wilkins the government set up its own printing press, called the Honorable Company's Press, subsequently renamed the Government Press. Other presses established in the last decades of the eighteenth century were the Calcutta Chronicle Press, the Post Press,

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39. Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., p.38.

40. Buckland, C. E., Dictionary of Indian Biography, London, 1906, p.185.

41. Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., p.27.

Ferris and Company, and Rozario and Company'.<sup>42</sup>

The first English-Bengali Vocabulary, which was for a long time believed to have been prepared by John Miller, was printed at the Calcutta Chronicle Press in 1793. It was in fact edited by A. Upjohn, the editor of the Calcutta Chronicle.<sup>43</sup> The Bengali types used in this book 'appear to be different from those used in Halhed's Grammar, and they were perhaps prepared by Panchanana Karmakar'.<sup>44</sup>

The next important work in our survey is Forster's Vocabulary, the first dictionary of the language. 'A civilian and Sanskrit scholar',<sup>45</sup> Forster was a 'student of Sanskrit as well as Bengali'.<sup>46</sup> The first volume of his dictionary, English-Bengali Vocabulary came out in 1799, while the second volume Bengali-English Vocabulary, was published in 1802.<sup>47</sup> Its typography is not different from that utilized for the printing of the Cornwallis Code which was also translated by Forster.

In 1799, Lord Wellesley, the then Governor-General of Bengal imposed severe restrictions on printing and

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42. Khan, M. Siddiq, op.cit., p.54.

43. Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., p.36.

44. Priolkar, op.cit., p.55.

45. Long, The Rev. J., A Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Works etc. (this catalogue has been reproduced in full in Dīnes Candra Sen's work, Bāṅga Bhāṣā O Sāhitya, 5th edition, Calcutta, 1921), p.608.

46. Priolkar, op.cit., p.55.

47. Ibid., p.55.

publishing at Calcutta as a wartime measure. It was known at the time that Napoleon was in correspondence with Tipu Sultan of Mysore and Wellesley was concerned to prevent news of troop movements leaking through the press.<sup>48</sup> Wellesley was also opposed to the establishment of a printing press beyond the immediate vicinity of Calcutta.<sup>49</sup> In consequence of these measures the growth of printing presses in Calcutta as well as in Bengal was slowed down until 1818 when Lord Hastings withdrew these provisions and restored the freedom of the press.

'Lord Wellesley having positively refused to allow of the establishment of a press beyond the limits of Calcutta',<sup>50</sup> the emergence of the Serampore Mission Press was made possible under the auspices of the Danish government in 1800. Serampore was at that time a Danish enclave. The idea of setting this press first occurred to William Carey, a devout missionary, who entered Bengal in 1793<sup>51</sup> without the knowledge of, and without the permission of the government. The Company's government in those days strictly followed a policy of non-interference

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48. Ahmad, Salghuddin, Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal (1818-35), Leiden, 1965, p.54.  
 49. Marshman, op.cit., vol.I., p.120.  
 50. Elberling, F. E., op.cit., p.3.  
 51. Marshman, op.cit., vol.I. p.61.

so far as the religious beliefs of the natives were concerned. They were strongly opposed to all sorts of missionary endeavour, and in conformity with this policy they were opposed to the idea of granting a licence<sup>52</sup> to a missionary from Europe to reside in Bengal. Carey therefore embarked upon a Danish vessel and landed surreptitiously in Calcutta. He then proceeded to Madnābāṭī (or Mudnabbuty as spelt by Marshman), a place in Maldah, a northern district of Bengal, and began to work as the Superintendent of an indigo factory. But his religious zeal even in the face of these hazards, did not leave him. To propagate the teachings of Christianity among the natives Carey took upon himself the task of translating the Bible into Bengali. His correspondence with the London Missionary Society reveals that the translation of the New Testament was intended to be

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52. The English residents of India in those days were broadly divided into two sections - official and non-official. The non-official section of the Anglo-Indian community resided in the country under licence granted by the East India Company which would be revoked at pleasure by the Government. There were also persons who had managed to smuggle themselves into the country in search of fortune and did not possess any licence. In the eyes of the Government these 'interlopers' as they were called resided in the country 'by sufferance only.' Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.52.

completed some time before the end of 1796,<sup>53</sup> and the work was actually complete before the year was out.<sup>54</sup> But the estimate of the expenditure for printing it was high. The idea of obtaining punches from Caslon, an eminent letter-founder in London, was abandoned as the cost was exorbitant, one guinea for each punch. Then at the beginning of 1798, the news of the establishment in Calcutta of a letter-foundry, capable of fabricating characters for 'the country languages' was published in the papers.<sup>55</sup> Carey immediately placed himself in correspondence with the projector of the scheme, with whom Pañcānan, the workman whom Wilkins had instructed in the art of punch-cutting, was working. This was possibly the first contact Carey made with Pañcānan. Soon afterwards a printing press constructed of wood was bought for £40, and installed at Madnābāṭī.

Meanwhile, in 1797, Carey was able to obtain a licence from the Company's government which enabled him as an indigo planter to reside in the country for five years from the date of issue.<sup>56</sup> In January, 1798, he wrote to the London Missionary Society asking that a group of missionaries be sent to assist him. On the 13th

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53. Marshman, *op.cit.*, vol.I. p.79.

54. Dās, *Sajanī Kānta*, *op.cit.*, p.70.

55. Marshman, *op.cit.*, vol.I. p.80.

56. *Ibid.*, pp.90-91.

October, 1799, in compliance with his request a band of missionaries, William Ward, Joshua Marshman, Grant, and Brunsdon arrived in Bengal and proceeded to Serampore, the Danish settlement 'only about sixteen miles above Calcutta'<sup>57</sup> and beyond the jurisdiction of the Company's government.

Marshman and Ward persuaded Carey to move to Serampore, and he accordingly resolved to leave Maldah and join his future colleagues there. On the 10th January, 1800, he arrived there with his family which consisted of four sons, and 'a wife in a state of insanity'.<sup>58</sup> Thus the Serampore Baptist Mission was established. The printing press was brought from Maldah and was set up there at about the same time. This press played an important role in the history of Bengali printing by 'printing the first copy of the New Testament in any Indian language, the first religious tract, and the first school books'.<sup>59</sup> The first newspaper in any Indian language was also printed there in 1818.

To evaluate the contributions of the Serampore Mission Press to the cause of Bengali printing, a brief notice may be given of the College of Fort William, as the roles of these two institutions were in fact complementary

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57. Ibid., p.112.  
58. Marshman, op.cit., vol.I. p.124.  
59. Elberling, F. E., op.cit., p.3.

to each other. The objective behind the foundation of this college on the 4th May, 1800,<sup>60</sup> was clearly expressed by its founder, Lord Wellesley, the then Governor-General of Bengal, in a minute-in-Council. Wellesley was the first Governor-General, appointed by the Company, who perceived and appreciated the changing pattern of the Company's responsibility in India. He observed that 'the civil servants of the East India Company.....can no longer be considered as the agents of a commercial concern; they are in fact the ministers and officers of a powerful sovereign.....their duties are (like) those of statesmen in every other part of the world..... Their education should be founded in a general knowledge of those branches of literature and

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60. The exact date of the foundation of the College of Fort William was the 10th July, 1800, but by Wellesley's special order the 4th May, 1800, was declared as the date of the commencement of the college. The reason for this was that this date coincided with 'the first anniversary of the glorious and decisive victory obtained by the British Arms at Seringapatam, the Capital of the Kingdom of Mysoor'. The Calcutta Annual Directory, and Almanac, for the year 1802. Revised and corrected to 1st February, 1802, Part II, p.8. The actual opening of the College however dates from the 24th November, 1800. Ranking, G. S. A., History of the College of Fort William from its Foundation, article published in Bengal - Past and Present, vol. VII, Jan-June, 1911, p.7.

science, which form the basis of the education of persons destined to similar occupations in Europe. To this foundation should be added an intimate acquaintance with the History, languages, customs, manners of the people of India.....<sup>61</sup>

The College of Fort William was provided with facilities for teaching Indian languages, including Bengali. Though Wellesley was not in favour of missionary activities within the company's territory, nor was Carey in good grace with the government, yet Wellesley took a fancy to Carey when he came across the Bengali translation of the New Testament which had been published from Serampore; and at his instance the Rev. D. Brown, the Provost of the College, invited Carey to serve the College of Fort William as teacher of Bengali.<sup>62</sup> Appointed on the 1st May with a salary of Rs.500 per month, Carey actually joined on the 4th May, 1801.<sup>63</sup>

Then commenced the second phase in the history of Bengali printing. As a teacher Carey observed that there was no Bengali prosework, either printed or in manuscript form, which could be used for teaching his

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61. Roebuck, Thomas, The Annals of the College of Fort William, Calcutta, 1819, p.iv.  
62. Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., p.87.  
63. Ibid., p.87; but according to Marshman, Carey joined on the 12th May, 1801. Marshman, op.cit., vol.I., p.148.



students. Consequently he set his colleagues<sup>64</sup> to write text books in Bengali prose, mainly designed for the Fort William students.

In the meantime Pañcānan Karmakār had joined the Mission Press at Serampore at the beginning of March 1800, only two months after its coming into existence.<sup>65</sup> With his assistance a type-foundry was erected there.<sup>66</sup>

Under the guidance of Carey, the pandits of his department wrote as many as ten books for the use of the Fort William students. Of them nine were published between 1801 and 1815. In addition to this Carey

64. According to Dās the following pandits joined the College as Carey's colleagues.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Salary</u> p.m.
Mṛtyuñjaḃ Vidyālañkāra	Chief Pandit	Rs. 200
Rāmnāth Bācaspati	Second Pandit	Rs. 100
Śrīpati Rāy	Pandit	Rs. 40
Ānandacandra Śarmā	"	"
Rājīblocān Mukhopādhyāy	"	"
Kāśīnāth (Tarkālañkāra?)	"	"
Padmalocan Cūrāmaṇi	"	"
Rām Rām Basu	"	"

Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., pp.87-88.

65. Dās Sanjani Kānta, op.cit., p.38.

66. Priolkar, op.cit., p.64; after Pañcānan's death, Manohar, his son-in-law, continued to make elegant founts of type in all eastern laguages for the Mission and for sale to others for more than forty years.

himself compiled two books, Dialogues intended to facilitate the acquiring of the Bengalee Language (1801) and Itihāsmālā (1812). The Oriental Fabulist, though also written for the Fort William students, was printed in the roman character.<sup>67</sup> Another book Prabodh Candrikā, written by Mr̥tyuñjaý Vidyālañkār, the chief pandit of the Bengali department, in 1813, was not actually published until 1833,<sup>68</sup> and so falls outside the scope of the present thesis.

The first Bengali prose work published in pursuance of Carey's programme was Pratāpāditya Caritra, i.e. a biography of King Pratāpāditya of Jessore. It was written by Rām Rām Basu and came out in July 1801. The following month saw the publication of Carey's Dialogues etc. In

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67. The title-page of the Oriental Fabulist is as follows:  
'The/Oriental Fabulist/or/ Polyglot Translations /of/  
Esop's and other/ Ancient Fables /from/ The English  
Language, /into / Hindoostanee, Persian, Arabic,  
/Brij B,hak, ha Bongla,/ and/ Sunskrit,/ in the/ Roman  
Character, /By/ Various Hands /Under/ The Direction  
and Superintendence /of/ John Gilchrist, /For the Use  
of/ The College of Fort William. /Calcutta, /Printed  
At the Hurkaru Office./ 1803./

See Dās Sajani Kānta, op.cit., pp.166-167. The Bengali, Persian and Hindusthani portions were prepared by Tārinīcaran Mitra (Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth Sāhitya Śādhak Caritālā, hereafter referred to as S.S.C., book 14, p.18) who joined the College of Fort William on the 4th May, 1801, as the second Munsi in the department of Hindusthani (Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth, *ibid.*, p.14).

68. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth, S.S.C., book 3, p.23.

1802 a Bengali translation by Golaknāth Śarmā<sup>69</sup> of the Sanskrit Hitopadeśa was published under the same title.<sup>70</sup> In the same year Batris Simhāsan was written by Mr̥tyuñjay Vidyālaṅkāra. The next work of Rām Rām Basu, Lipimālā or the Bracelet of Writing, was also brought out in 1802. In 1805 a Bengali translation by Candīcaraṇ Munsī of the Persian Tutināmā was published.<sup>71</sup> Its Bengali title was Totā Itihās. The biography of Rājā Kṛṣṇa Candra of Nadia, Mahārāj Kṛṣṇacandra Rāyasya Caritraṃ written by Rājīblocaṇ Mukhopādhyāy was also printed in the same year. Two more books came out in 1808, both written by Mr̥tyuñjay Vidyālaṅkāra. They were Rājābali, a history of India from ancient times to the advent of the Company's rule in India, and Hitopadeśa, another translation of the Sanskrit original. In 1812, the second prose work published under the authorship of Carey, called Itihāsmālā, was brought out. Puruṣ-Parikṣā, a Bengali translation of an original work of Vidyāpati, was prepared by Haraprasād Rāy<sup>72</sup> and printed in 1815.

69. Golaknāth Śarmā was not directly associated with the College of Fort William. The Council of the College nevertheless appreciated his performance and subscribed to a hundred copies of his book. Khan, M. Siddiq, Bāmlā Mudraṇ O Prakāśane Kerī Yug, University of Dacca, 1962, p.98.

70. Roebuck wrongly puts the date as 1801. See Roebuck, op.cit., Appendix II, p.29.

71. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth, S.S.C., book 14, p.23.

72. Ibid., p.37; also Roebuck, op.cit., Appendix II, p.30.

While Carey was preparing and publishing text books for the Fort William students, his principal mission, the evangelisation of the heathen, was not neglected. As has already been mentioned,<sup>73</sup> he completed the translation of the New Testament in 1796. It was brought out on the 12th February, 1801.<sup>74</sup> In 1802, the first volume of the Old Testament was published.<sup>75</sup> Next came out the third volume in January, 1803.<sup>76</sup> The fourth volume was published in 1807.<sup>77</sup> The remaining part, i.e. the second volume of the Old Testament, was issued on the 24th June, 1809,<sup>78</sup> Thus the printing of the entire Bible in Bengali was complete.

During these years, from 1801 to 1809, Carey not only dedicated his attention to the printing of religious literature; but also, apart from publishing Bengali text books under Fort William patronage, he was engaged in printing certain medieval Bengali texts which had hitherto existed only in manuscript form. As part of this programme the Bengali Rāmāyaṇ of Kṛttibās and the Mahābhārat

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73. See p. 23 of the present chapter.

74. On the 7th February, 1801, the printing of the last sheet of the New Testament was completed. Marshman, op.cit., vol.I. p.141. But it was not issued from the press until the 12th February, 1801. Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., p.102.

75. Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., p.113.

76. Ibid., p.114.

77. Ibid., p.117.

78. Ibid., p.119.

of Kāśīrām Dās were published for the first time in 1802.<sup>79</sup> It may be noted here that they were the 'first Bengali poems to be ever printed for the use of the students of the College of Fort William'.<sup>80</sup> The Rāmāyaṇ was in five volumes and the Mahābhārat in four. In 1805, the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the College of Fort William invited Carey and Joshua Marshman to publish English translations of the Indian classics along with their Sanskrit originals, and granted them a monthly honorarium of Rs.300.<sup>81</sup> In response to this invitation they commenced translating the Rāmāyaṇa and the Sāṃkhya-Darśana in 1805. The first volume of the Rāmāyaṇa with the English translation was published in 1806, but the Sāṃkhya-Darśana was never completed.<sup>82</sup>

Though the publication of Halhed's grammar in 1778 was the first step in Bengali printing, the next step in the direction of grammar was not taken until 1801 when Carey published A Grammar of the Bengalee Language.<sup>83</sup>

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79. Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., p.114.

Spelling Note: The names of the Bengali versions of the two great epics are spelt Rāmāyaṇ and Mahābhārat to distinguish from the Sanskrit versions which are spelt Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata.

80. Sen, Sukumar, History of Bengali Literature, Delhi, 1960, p.180.

81. Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., p.116; also Marshman, op.cit., vol.I., p.220.

82. Dās, Sajani Kānta, op.cit., p.116.

83. Marshman, op.cit., vol.I., p.114.

It was written wholly in English after the model of Halhed; but Carey was not an imitator, on the contrary he may be said to 'have made some distinctions and observations not noticed by him (Halhed), particularly on the declension of nouns and verbs, and the use of particles'.<sup>84</sup> A grammar written by Gaṅgākīśor Bhaṭṭācārya in 1816 was alleged by the Rev. J. Long to be the first Bengali grammar by a native.<sup>85</sup> He described it as a diglot. Long however was mistaken. The work was an English grammar written in Bengali.<sup>86</sup>

Forster's Vocabulary which was mentioned before<sup>87</sup> was followed by other dictionaries. In 1809, one 'Pitambar Mukherjee' published 'the Shabda Shindhu'.<sup>88</sup> It consists of the words which appear in the Sanskrit dictionary Amarkoṣ reproduced in the Bengali character and supplied with meanings in Bengali. Mohan Prasād Thākur, an assistant librarian in the College of Fort William, compiled A Vocabulary, Bengalee and English in 1810 for the use of students.<sup>89</sup> In 1817, the Serampore Vernacular School Society published 'the Dhatusabdaja' which contained 1000 of the more common Bengali words arranged in etymological order.<sup>90</sup> Another dictionary

84. Carey, William, A Grammar of the Bengalee Language, Serampore, Preface, pp. iv-v.

85. Long, The Rev. J., op.cit., p.626.

86. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth, S.S.C., book 7, p.61.

87. See p. 20 of the present chapter.

88. Long, The Rev. J., op.cit., p.608.

89. S.S.C., book 14, p.36.

90. Long, The Rev. J., op.cit., p.609.

known as 'Abhidhan or Alphabetical Vocabulary of difficult words' was published at Serampore in 1818.<sup>91</sup> But the first Bengali dictionary to be compiled by a native was 'Rāmcandra's Vocabulary'. It was published in 1818.<sup>92</sup> The author was associated with the Calcutta School Book Society.<sup>93</sup>

So by 1816 the printing presses in Bengal had produced books of the following kinds:

- a) Translations of Government ordinances for the benefit of the people;
- b) Translations of the Gospel in order to evangelise the natives;
- c) Text books for the Fort William students;
- d) Traditional epics, e.g. the Rāmāyan and the Mahābhārat;
- e) Grammars and dictionaries.

All these books were written either by Anglo-Indian scholars resident in Bengal, or by the natives under their patronage. The reasons for writing these books were political, religious or academic.

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91. Ibid., p.609.

92. Ibid., p.612.

93. Ibid., p.612; Rāmcandra Sarmā published his 'Abhidhān', the first Bengali dictionary in 1818 (S.S.C., books 6,7,9, p.79). In 1820 an enlarged edition was published. But its copy right was sold only at Rs.300 to the Calcutta School Book Society by the author (S.S.C., books 6,7, p.79). On the 14th May, 1827, Rāmcandra joined the Sanskrit College as a Professor of Smṛti sāstra (S.S.C., Ibid., p.69).

In 1816, one Gaṅgākīśor Bhaṭṭācārya, a Bengali Brahmin, published for the first time a book called Annadā-maṅgal. It was printed by Ferris & Co.<sup>94</sup> This book was an independent enterprise by an Indian. It was not designed to educate or evangelise, but to entertain. Annadā-maṅgal, which was written by Bhāratcandra a popular poet of the 18th century (he died in 1760), is a long romantic poem, divided into three parts - Annadā-maṅgal, Vidyā Sundar, and Mānsimha. The Vidyā Sundar episode was immensely popular in 19th century Calcutta and the rest of Bengal.<sup>95</sup> To Gaṅgākīśor Bhaṭṭācārya who had been an employee in the Mission Press at Serampore,<sup>96</sup> must be credited the realization of the popularity, actual and potential, of Bhāratcandra's erotic poem. That his assessment of popular taste was not incorrect is confirmed by the fact that the Vidyā Sundar part of the trilogy issued simultaneously from three presses in 1829.<sup>97</sup>

94. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth Sambādpatre Sekāler Kathā (hereafter referred to as S.S.K.), vol.I. (1818-1830), 1356 (Bengali Era), p.449.

95. 'It is perhaps the most classic poem we now possess in the Bengali language..... Parts of this tale have been acted as a play in private houses of Babus and listened to by crowds.....'

Long, The Rev. J., op.cit., p.681.

96. Samācār Darpan, the 30th January, 1830; S.S.K., vol.I. p.96.

97. Those presses were Rāmkrṣṇa Mallik's Yantrālay, Pītāmbar Sen's Yantrālay and Māthurānṭh Mitra's Yantrālay. S.S.K., vol.I. p.97.



Another significant feature of Gaṅgākīśor's Annadā-maṅgal is that it was the first Bengali book to be printed with illustrations, namely, six plates some engraved in metal and others in wood block by Rāmcāḍ Rāy.<sup>98</sup>

While the ruling power was trying to promote the language of the ruled for administrative reasons, the natives took a fancy to English as they realized that it embodied knowledge which was superior to that available to them in their own language. A manifestation of this realization was reflected in the fact that early in 1816 some eminent Hindus expressed a strong desire to establish a college in Calcutta 'for the education of their children in the English language and in European science'.<sup>99</sup> They found a strong supporter of their cause in Sir Edward Hyde East, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. In May 1816, a meeting attended by Europeans as well as prominent natives of Calcutta was held in his house. A resolution was passed that a college should be founded to give a generous and liberal education to native youths.<sup>100</sup> Thus the Hindu College came into being. It started functioning

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98. S.S.K., vol.I., p.449.

99. Marshman, *op.cit.*, vol.II., p.118.

100. *Ibid.*, p.118.

in 1817.<sup>101</sup> The emergence of the Hindu College did not exert any immediate influence on Bengali printing, but it precipitated the birth of a new class of readers by producing graduates who were attracted to Western ideas and opposed to traditional Hinduism. The Hindu College made a strong impact in the world of ideas of 19th century Bengal; it was felt also in the domain of literature. But in relation to the development of Bengali printing, the establishment of the Calcutta School Book Society was far more significant.

This Society, formally opened on the 6th May, 1817,<sup>102</sup> was also a European-native enterprise like the Hindu College. But whereas the College was founded mainly to provide education on Western lines, the Society was set up by persons who were interested in the advancement of vernacular education: May and Pearson at Chinsurah, Stewart at Burdwan, Harle (Harley?) at Bankipore, Marshman, Carey and other missionaries at Serampore, David Hare and Rādhākānta Deb in Calcutta and Rowe in the upper provinces were actually engaged at this times in establishing and supporting a new type of vernacular school. The efforts of these individuals to introduce an improved form of vernacular

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101. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., pp.20-21.

102. Basak, N. L., Origin and Role of the Calcutta School Book Society in Promoting the Cause of Education in India, Especially Vernacular Education in Bengal (1817-1835); article published in Bengal - Past and Present, (J.C.H.S.), vol. lxxviii, part I., January, June, 1959, p.31.

education in the country were hampered by the lack of suitable books in printed form. 'For, although printing had been introduced in this country for some time past, there had been comparatively few publications in the vernaculars suitable for use in the elementary schools.'<sup>103</sup> The Fort William publications were exceptions, but they were too few to meet the actual need. Under these circumstances the emergence of the Calcutta School Book Society was welcomed by those natives and Europeans, who were endeavouring to promote vernacular education.

The objects of the Society as envisaged in its constitution were the 'preparation, publication and cheap or gratuitous supply of works useful in Schools and Seminaries of Learning'.<sup>104</sup> Though the Christian missionaries, Carey, Yates and Robinson, were directly associated with the organisation, its character from the beginning was that of a secular organisation. It was not unknown to the architects of the project that any inclination to religious dogma would alienate native support. For financial reasons, the organizers were eager to attract cooperation from both the sections of the native population, Hindus and Muslims. In view of these considerations, the objective of the Society was strictly confined to the publication

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103. Ibid., p.40.

104. Ibid., p.38.

of books other than religious, although "moral tracts or works of a moral tendency" were not to be excluded from its purview'.<sup>105</sup> The primary object of the Society was declared to be the provision of suitable books of instruction 'for the use of native schools in the several languages, English as well as Asiatic'.<sup>106</sup> Though in the Asiatic category works in both vernacular and classical languages were included, the Society's achievements in <sup>the vernacular languages during</sup> the entire period of its existence far outstripped its activities in the classical languages and English. This position was however changed with the growing demand for English in the country which began to be felt with the beginning of Lord Bentinck's administration (1828-35), particularly after the adoption of an 'Anglicist' policy by him in 1835.<sup>107</sup>

105. Ibid., p.37.

106. Ibid., p.38.

107. Here is a table showing the comparative position of the different languages in point of copies issued from the depository of the Society during the period 1822-1831.

	<u>1822 &amp; 1823.</u>	<u>1824 &amp; 1825.</u>	<u>1826 &amp; 1827.</u>	<u>1828 &amp; 1829.</u>	<u>1830 &amp; 1831.</u>
Bengali	41,704	7,326	12,654	10,074	8,281
Sanskrit	40	61	276	177	172
Arabic	49	177	166	177	45
Persian	540	312	2,299	1,907	1,443
Hindi	1,306	786	4,624	2,452	2,891
Hindusthani	140	1,149	1,005	1,173	904
English	893	755	4,327	9,616	11,063
Basak, op.cit., p.52.					

## Chapter II

THE HISTORY OF THE BENGALI PRESS (1818-1831)

The first Bengali language newspaper was published in 1818, some 18 years after the printing press was established by the missionaries of Serampore in 1800. This was not the first newspaper to be published in Bengal. In 1780 James Augustus Hicky, a former employee of the East India Company,<sup>1</sup> had brought out an English language paper under the title of Bengal Gazette, though it was known in Calcutta as Hicky's Gazette. This paper ran for only two years. But it was followed by a number of other papers printed in the English language, the most important of which are: the India Gazette (November, 1780), the Calcutta Gazette (under the avowed patronage of government, and as such exempted from postage; February, 1784), the Bengal Journal (February, 1785), the Oriental Magazine or Calcutta Amusement (April 6, 1785) and the Calcutta Chronicle (January, 1786).<sup>2</sup> All these papers were printed in Calcutta, the future metropolis of Bengal. They were all private ventures

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1. Busteed, H. E., Echoes from Old Calcutta, 4th ed., London, 1908, p.183; according to Busteed, Hicky was a printer by trade and he described himself as 'the first and late printer to the Honorable Company'.
  2. Ibid., p.183.

as the printing of newspapers was not yet part of the Company's administrative machinery, neither did the Company exercise any control over newspaper publication during this early period. But towards the end of the 18th century Lord Wellesley, who had become the head of the Company's government in India, established a rigid censorship of the press.

A set of rules was promulgated as law by the Governor-General's Council on the 13th May, 1799.<sup>3</sup> It was laid down that the names and addresses of the editors and printers or proprietors of all newspapers were to be communicated to the government; that all material meant for publication was to be submitted in advance to the government for inspection; and that any violation of these rules was punishable by immediate deportation to England. The chief secretary to the government was nominated to act as Censor of the press<sup>4</sup> ex officio.

Till 1818, the press in India remained exposed to the constant threats of the censorship established by Lord Wellesley, though its execution, after the departure

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3. Barns, Margarita, The Indian Press, London, 1940, pp.73-75.
  4. Ahmad, Salahuddin, Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal, Leiden, 1965, p.55.

of Wellesley in 1805, was confined to periodical warnings only. In 1813, Lord Hastings (Earl of Moira) was appointed the Governor General of India. He was a man of liberal disposition and from the time of his appointment to Calcutta he was opposed to the censorship of the Indian press which Wellesley had imposed. The difficulty of enforcing Wellesley's regulations was made clear for the first time when one Jacob Heatly, the editor of a Calcutta newspaper, the Morning Post, fell foul of the authorities over a controversial despatch meant for publication in his journal. Heatly, though fully aware of the consequences of ignoring the censorship rules, refused to comply with the instructions of the chief secretary and retained certain passages, which had been declared objectionable, in spite of formal warnings. When he was charged with an offence he defended himself by stating to the government's surprise that he was of Indian extraction and could not therefore be deported to England. As deportation was the only punishment contained in the censorship regulations it was impossible to punish Heatly once his nationality was established.

Later the situation relating to the press was reviewed. On the 19th August, 1818, it was resolved to abolish censorship and replace it by a code of good behaviour for the guidance of editors. Editors were

asked to refrain from 'discussions having a tendency to create alarm or suspicion among the native population' in relation to the government. They were further asked not to reprint from the English home newspapers anything 'calculated to affect the British power or reputation in India'. And, lastly, they were prohibited from publishing any report containing 'private scandal and personal remarks on individuals tending to excite dissension in society'.

Lord Hasting's government in abolishing censorship was 'relying on the prudence and discretion' of the editors in their observance of the above rules. The editors were held 'personally accountable' for anything they published in violation of these rules. They were further asked to send to the chief secretary's office 'one copy of every newspaper, periodical or Extra', published by them.<sup>5</sup>

The general prohibitions contained in these rules were not clearly defined and they could be interpreted differently according to the convenience of the parties concerned. The measure was in fact 'a compromise between rigid censorship and unrestricted freedom'.<sup>6</sup>

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5. Barns, Margarita, op.cit., p.90.

6. Ahmad, Salahudin, op.cit., pp.56-57.



Despite its inherent weaknesses, the new arrangement worked as a strong incentive to the growth of the press in Bengal, as well as in other parts of India. Hitherto the Indian press had been confined to English language newspapers, but Lord Hastings' liberal attitude opened up new possibilities for papers in other languages, particularly, Bengali, Persian and Hindi.

While English journals in Calcutta were under supervision, the Serampore missionaries, in 1818, discussed the issuing of a periodical magazine in Bengali. The proposal was not welcomed by William Carey, the head of the missionary settlement, who 'in his anxiety for the safety of the mission consented only on condition that it should be a monthly, and should avoid political discussion'.<sup>7</sup> 'Although the chief object of the missionaries was evangelical, they had realized that this object would be facilitated by the creation of an educated public.'<sup>8</sup> And so it was decided to bring out a Bengali periodical. The Digdarśan, as it was named, appeared in April, 1818.<sup>9</sup> It had also an English sub-title, viz. the Indian Youth

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7. De, S. K., Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century, Calcutta, 1962, p.207.
  8. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.80.
  9. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth, Bāmlā Sāmāyik Patra (hereafter referred to as B.S.P.), 1354 (Bengali Era i.e. 1947 A.D.), vol.I., p.4.

Magazine. The monthly Digdarśan carefully avoided subjects of a political or religious character, and laid its entire stress upon subjects of academic interest.<sup>10</sup> It contained information of various kinds, historical, geographical and commercial. Consequently it was well received by the government. 'The Calcutta School Book Society subscribed to one thousand copies of each of the first three numbers for use in the Bengali schools.'<sup>11</sup> The success of the Digdarśan can further be ascertained from the fact that the Society requested the editor of the periodical (Marshman Junior) to publish an English-Bengali and an English version of the journal.<sup>12</sup> The request was complied with. 'By 1821 the Calcutta School Book Society had actually purchased a total number of 61,250 copies of the Dig-Darsan in all its three editions.'<sup>13</sup>

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10. The contents of the first number of the Digdarśan are as follows. a) Of the Discovery of America (āmerikār darśan bisayē); b) The Limits of Hindoost'han (hindusthaner sīma bibaran); c) Trade of Hindoost'han (tāhār bānijyer kathā); d) Mr. Sadler's Journey in a balloon (balun dvārā ākāś gaman); e) Mount Vesuvius (bisubiyās agnimay parbat).

11. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.80.

12. B.S.P., p.4.

13. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.80.

'This useful paper, however, lasted only for about three years (1818-1821).'<sup>14</sup>

Encouraged by the success of the monthly Digdarśan, the missionaries undertook a new venture, the publication of a weekly Bengali newspaper. They had meanwhile commenced the publication of a monthly magazine in English, called the Friend of India (May, 1818).<sup>15</sup> To quote J. C. Marshman 'it was intended to include original essays on questions connected with the progress of improvement in India, a repository of the reports of the various societies which were springing up in India under the genial influence of Lord Hastings and notices of the proceedings of Bible, missionary, and educational societies in other parts of the world'.<sup>16</sup> Like the Digdarśan, the Friend of India also escaped the wrath of the Censor in Calcutta. But when it was resolved to launch the weekly paper, 'Dr. Carey.. was unfavourable to the publication of the Journal because he feared it would.....weaken the good understanding..... between the missionaries and the government. He strenuously advised that the idea of it should be dropped'.<sup>17</sup>

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14. De, S. K., op.cit., p.210.

15. Marshman, J. C., op.cit., vol.II., p.164.

16. Ibid., p.164.

17. Ibid., p.161; we have already mentioned that the Company's government in the late 18th century eyed every missionary activity in India with open suspicion. This is why Carey had to take shelter in the Danish settlement of Serampore. But with the beginning of the 19th century circumstances favoured the Serampore missionaries when Lord Wellesley took a fancy to Carey and invited him to serve the College of Fort William as teacher of Bengali. See Chapter I, p.26.

Undeterred by the fears of his colleague, Joshua Marshman pressed on with his plans and on the 23rd May, 1818, the first issue of the Samācār Darpan, i.e. the Mirror of News, came off the Mission Press at Serampore.<sup>18</sup> To Marshman's delight it received the immediate approbation of government officials. The Samācār Darpan was the first newspaper to be printed in any Indian language. It was edited by J. C. Marshman (son of Joshua Marshman, elsewhere referred to as Marshman Junior) and published every Saturday. Its price was four annas per copy. Its purpose was to combine the 'propagation of the faith with presentation of district news'.<sup>19</sup>

Apart from the news, the Samācār Darpan also published from time to time sketches and articles on local superstitions and inconsistencies in social behaviour with a view to creating a healthier approach to life than had hitherto been known among the natives. Reference may be made in this connection to articles published in the Darpan under the titles of Bābur Upākhyān (the Story of a Bābu),<sup>20</sup> Śaukīn Bābu (A Foppish Bābu),<sup>21</sup> Vaidya-Sambād (The Story of a physician)<sup>22</sup> etc.

18. B.S.P., p.7.

19. Natarajan, S., History of the Press in India, London, 1962, p.28.

20. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth, Sambādpatre Sekāler Kathā (hereafter referred to as S.S.K.), vol.I. (1818-1830), 1356 (Bengali Era i.e. 1949 A.D.), pp.108-112, pp.112-113.

21. S.S.K., vol.I., pp.115-116.

22. Ibid., pp.120-123.

Though the government was in favour of such a newspaper it was however aware of the consequences that might ensue from excess and instructed the missionaries not to publish such material as might offend the religious sentiments of the natives.<sup>23</sup> The favourable attitude of the government towards this, the first Bengali newspaper, was reflected in the fact that the Samācār Darpaṅ enjoyed the 'postal facility of delivery at one-fourth the usual rates',<sup>24</sup> and 'the government subscribed to 100 copies for distribution to officials',<sup>25</sup>

Though Marshman Junior was the editor, his was in fact a supervisory job. The Darpaṅ was edited from time to time by distinguished Hindu pandits including Jaygopāl Tarkālaṅkār and Tārinīcaraṅ Śiromaṅi.<sup>26</sup> In an obituary reference published on the 5th July, 1828,<sup>27</sup> after the death of Śiromaṅi, the Darpaṅ acknowledged the services it had received from him. It also stated that the very prose style which characterized the Darpaṅ and other publications from the Serampore Mission Press owed its origin exclusively to the late Śiromaṅi. This is presumably what Salahuddin Ahmad had in mind when he wrote that the above pandits had given the paper 'a somewhat

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23. Marshman, op.cit., vol.II., p.164.

24. Natarajan, op.cit., p.28.

25. Ibid., p.28.

26. B.S.P., p.6.

27. S.S.K., vol.I., p.52.

Indian character'.<sup>28</sup> Because of this 'Indian character' the paper was patronised by the Bengali public as well as by the government.

The establishment of the Hindu College in Calcutta in 1817 had already aroused among the natives an urge to learn English,<sup>29</sup> and with this in mind the Darpan management decided in 1829<sup>30</sup> to bring out an English-Bengali edition of the journal. The popularity of the paper can be ascertained from the fact that the management felt obliged to publish it twice a week, the additional issue appearing on Wednesdays.<sup>31</sup> The monthly price for the journal was raised from Re I to ReI/8.<sup>32</sup> But the Wednesday issue was discontinued in November, 1834, after about three years, as the postal charge had in the interval almost doubled.<sup>33</sup> The last issue of the Darpan appeared on the 25th December, 1841.<sup>34</sup>

While the Samācār Darpan was received with considerable enthusiasm by the Bengali-reading public, the old aristocracy, mainly consisting of people well-versed in Persian, expressed

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28. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.82.

29. See Chapter I, p. .

30. B.S.P., pp.6-8.

31. Ibid., p.8; also S.S.K., vol.II., pp.176-177.

32. Ibid., p.8.

33. Ibid., p.8.

34. Ibid., p.8.

their desire for a Persian newspaper. One reader stated in a letter addressed to the editor of the Darpan, published on the 14th September, 1822, that the officials of the Judiciary of his district were more in favour of Persian than Bengali.<sup>35</sup> He then went to say that a Bengali newspaper was welcomed only by those readers who had no knowledge of Persian; whereas a reader having access to both the languages would always prefer Persian to Bengali. To meet the need for a Persian newspaper, the Serampore Mission Press appeared to have decided to bring out a journal in Persian provided necessary funds for such an enterprise could be guaranteed in advance.<sup>36</sup> The paper was to be named the Paiknāmābar. Like the Darpan, it was planned as a weekly, its price being four annas per copy.<sup>37</sup> The idea of publishing a Persian newspaper from the Mission Press was kept in mind, but the Paiknāmābar did not come out at all, possibly for want of funds. After four years the editor of the Samācār Darpan declared on the 25th March, 1826, that the Governor-General had requested them to publish a Persian edition of the Darpan<sup>38</sup> and in compliance he brought out a paper called the Ākhbāre Śrīrāmpour on the

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35. S.S.K., vol.I., p.99.  
 36. Ibid., p.100.  
 37. Ibid., p.100.  
 38. B.S.P., p.71.

6th May, 1826.<sup>39</sup> The government purpose in requesting the publication of a Persian newspaper was 'to provide a better communication with people in Upper India, which did not have any Indian language newspaper as yet'.<sup>40</sup>

The Akhbāre Srīrāmpur thus made its appearance with the blessing of the government, who provided a monthly subsidy of Rs.160.<sup>41</sup> But for want of sufficient popular patronage it ceased publication after only a few months.<sup>42</sup>

As has been stated<sup>43</sup> the eventful career of the Samācār Darpan came to an end in December, 1841. The missionaries decided to discontinue publication primarily because Marshman Junior, the editor of the journal, was no longer in a position to devote his full attention to the Darpan as he had at this time two more papers to look after.<sup>44</sup>

But it was also true that the Samācār Darpan had already lost much of its popularity. It had failed to popularize Christianity among the natives, though it succeeded in creating a desire for knowledge among some of them.<sup>45</sup>

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39. Ibid., p.72.

40. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.82.

41. B.S.P., p.72.

42. The Samācār Candrikā, the 30th December, 1830; see Blumhardt, J. F., Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books in the Library of the British Museum, London, 1886, p.78.

43. See p.48 of the present chapter.

44. Marshman was also the editor of the Friend of India. In addition to this, in July, 1840, he became the editor of the Bengali edition of the Government Gazette. B.S.P., p.8.

45. The Samācār Darpan of the 30th January, 1830, reports that one of its readers wrote to the editor that 'I shall not subscribe to the Darpan any further if it fails to compete with another Bengali journal of Calcutta which has pledged to give a wider coverage of events happening in the far and distant countries of the world'. S.S.K., I. p.96.



The Samācār Darpaṅ was revived under Indian management in February, 1842, and published in English and Bengali. This second phase lasted for only a year.<sup>46</sup> In May, 1851, it was launched again under the auspices of the Serampore Mission, but it was abandoned after a year and six months.<sup>47</sup>

The Samācār Darpaṅ was closely followed in 1818 by another Bengali weekly, Bāṅgāl Gejeṭi, which was the first Bengali newspaper to be owned and edited by an Indian. It was printed in Calcutta. Gaṅgākīśor Bhaṭṭācārya, the editor of the paper,<sup>48</sup> was a former employee of the Serampore Mission Press.<sup>49</sup> He joined there as a compositor,<sup>50</sup> but after some time he resigned his job and came to Calcutta where he 'printed several works at the press of a European (Ferris and Company), for which having obtained a ready sale, he established an office of his own, and opened a book-shop'.<sup>51</sup> Later encouraged by his considerable financial success he proceeded to establish a printing press of his own in Calcutta.<sup>52</sup> This press was named the Bāṅgāl Gejeṭi Press.

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46. B.S.P., pp.9-10.

47. Ibid., pp.10-11.

48. Ahmad, Salahuddin, opccit., p.85.

49. Chapter I, pp. .

50. B.S.P., p.11.

51. On the effect of the Native Press in India, article published in The Friend of India (Quarterly series), No.I. September, 1820, p.123.

52. B.S.P., p.12.

Soon after the establishment of this press Gaṅgākīśor observed that until then no Bengali paper had been published in Calcutta proper. On the 14th May, 1818, the following advertisement appeared in the Government Gazette.

HURROCHUNDER ROY begs leave to inform his Friends and the Public in general, that he has established a BENGALÉE PRINTING PRESS, at No. 45, Chorebagaun Street, where he intends to publish a WEEKLY BENGAL GAZETTE, to comprise the Translation of Civil Appointments, Government notifications, and such other local Matter, as may be deemed interesting to the Reader, into a plain, concise, and correct Bengalee Language; to which will be added the Almanack, for the subsequent Months, with the Hindu Births, Marriages, and Deaths.....The Price of Subscription is 2 Rupees per Month. Extras included. Calcutta, 12th May, 1818.<sup>53</sup>

That the Bāṅgāl Gejeṭi had commenced immediately after the appearance of the above advertisement may be confirmed by another advertisement which also was published in the Government Gazette on the 9th July, 1818. It was as follows.

HURROCHUNDER ROY

Having established a BENGALÉE PRINTING PRESS and a WEEKLY BENGAL GAZETTE, which he published on Fridays, containing the Translation of Civil Appointments, Government Notifications and Regulations, and such other LOCAL MATTER as are deemed interesting to the Reader, into a plain, concise and correct Bengalee language, ... (he) earnestly hopes that ... Gentlemen who have a knowledge and proficiency

in that language, will be pleased to patronize his undertaking, by becoming subscribers to the BENGAL GAZETTE ... The Price of Subscription is 2 Rupees per month. Extras included.

Calcutta, Chorebagan Street, No. 145.<sup>54</sup>

The above advertisements lead one to assume that it was Haracandra alone who brought out the Bāṅgāl Gejeṭi and that Gaṅgākiśor was not in any way associated with the venture. This is however not true. Haracandra Rāy was in fact one of the owners of the Bāṅgāl Gejeṭi Press.<sup>55</sup> The fact that his name appeared in the advertisements as the publisher of the Bāṅgāl Gejeṭi must not be taken to mean that Gaṅgākiśor had nothing to do with it. The Friend of India, having mentioned Gaṅgākiśor by name, unequivocally stated that

'within a fortnight after the publication from the Serampore press of the Somachar Durpan, the first native Weekly Journal printed in India, he (Gaṅgākiśor) published another, which we hear has since failed'.<sup>56</sup>

While it appears from the above evidence that the Bāṅgāl Gejeṭi closely followed the trail of the Samācār Darpan, the Rev. J. Long stated in 1855 that the Bengal Gazette

54. Ibid., p.12.

55. Ibid., p.13.

56. The Friend of India (Quarterly series), No.I. September, 1820, p.123.

i.e. Bāngāl Gejeṭi was published in 1816.<sup>57</sup> He gave the name of its publisher, who was Gaṅgākīśor, as Gangadhar. Barns then followed Long and stated that 'in 1816 Gangadhar Bhattacharya had established his Bengal Gazette'.<sup>58</sup> Natarajan made a similar statement, namely, that 'the launching of the first Indian newspaper in English, the Bengal Gazette by Gangadhar Bhattacharjee' was the most significant event in public life.<sup>59</sup> It is evident that both Barns and Natarajan drew their information from Long, but Natarajan went one step further by adding that the Bāngāl Gejeṭi was an English paper. Thus the erroneous tradition developed that the editor of the Bāngāl Gejeṭi was Gaṅgādhar Bhaṭṭācārya. Long can also be held responsible for the subsequently held opinion that the Bāngāl Gejeṭi preceded the Darpan.

The Bāngāl Gejeṭi had a very brief career. It ceased publication after about a year.<sup>60</sup> There is however not a single extant copy and it is therefore difficult to know what it was like. That the paper had a liberal tone may be gathered from the fact that a

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57. Long, The Rev. J., A Return of the names and writings of 515 persons connected with Bengali literature etc. (Calcutta), 1855, (this return was published by government of Bengal in 1855 along with other records under the title Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government, vol.XXII), p.145.

58. Barns, Margarita, op.cit., p.87.

59. Natarajan, S., op.cit., p.26.

60. B.S.P., p.15; according to Jatindra Majumdar the paper continued till 1820. Natarajan, S., op.cit., p.27.

treatise on Sati by Rāmmohan Rāy, the champion of liberal causes of the day, was reprinted by the Bāngāl Gejeṭi.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to this, Haracandra Rāy, one of the publishers of the Gejeṭi, is alleged by some as to have been associated with the Ātmīya Sabhā (Society of Friends) of Rāmmohan Rāy.<sup>62</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain whether Rāmmohan Rāy was personally associated with the Bāngāl Gejeṭi, either directly or indirectly,<sup>63</sup> but in 1821 he openly participated in journalistic activities. He felt obliged to bring out a paper of his own. The reason for his doing so is that on the 14th July, 1821, the Samācār Darpaṇ published a letter which contained some unfavourable comments on Hinduism, which Rāmmohan Rāy desired to refute. His own attitude towards Hinduism was already known to his contemporaries. As early as 1816 he had attempted to convince 'his country men of the true meaning of their sacred books'<sup>64</sup> on the one hand, and to prove to Europeans

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61. B.S.P., p.15.

62. Ibid., p.13.

63. Natarajan states that 'it is probable that Raja Rammohun Roy was responsible for the venture' and 'what is known is that Gangadhar (Gaṅgākīśor) Bhattacharjee and his supporters were enthusiastic members of Rammohun Roy's Atmiya Samaj' (Ātmīya Sabhā). Natarajan, S., op.cit., p.26.

64. Anglo India. Social, moral, and political; a collection of papers from the Asiatic Journal. London, 1838, vol.III. p.230.

that 'the superstitious practices, which deform the Hindu religion, have nothing to do with the pure spirit of its dictates',<sup>65</sup> on the other. The Samācār Darpan's unjust attack on Hinduism prompted Rāmmohan to prepare a rejoinder and send it to the editor for publication under the pseudonym of Śibprasād Śarmā.<sup>66</sup> The editor was prepared to publish part of the article in the Darpan but because he felt that the other parts of it were irrelevant or unsuitable, he advised the author to submit it for publication elsewhere.<sup>67</sup> As there was no other paper at the time to which Rāmmohan could submit his article, he decided to enter the newspaper business himself and in September, 1821, he published the Brāhman Sebadhi (the Brahmunical Magazine) or the Missionary and the Brahmun in which the entire article with an English translation appeared.<sup>68</sup>

The Brāhman Sebadhi was published in two languages, Bengali and English, the one being the translation of the other. Primarily designed to vindicate Hinduism, the Brāhman Sebadhi mostly contained articles on various

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65. Ibid., pp.230-231.

66. The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy, Calcutta, 1901, vol.I., p.207.

67. B.S.P., p.16.

68. Ibid., p.16.

aspects of that religion. It was published irregularly<sup>69</sup> and lasted only for two years. But in the meantime Rāmmohan had come to realize the importance of the press in a developing society like that of Calcutta. This is confirmed by the fact that after the Brāhman Sebadhi Rāmmohan launched two weekly newspapers, one Bengali and the other Persian. The Bengali paper, Sambād Kaumudī or the Moon of Intelligence, came out on the 4th December, 1821,<sup>70</sup> and the Persian venture, Mirāt-ul-Akhbār or the Mirror of Intelligence, on the 12th April, 1822.<sup>71</sup> James Silk Buckingham, the editor of the Calcutta Journal,<sup>72</sup> noted the appearance of the Kaumudī and wrote somewhat patronizingly:

The pleasure with which we regard the effusions of the native press does not arise from the intrinsic value of these productions, but as an earnest of what it may produce when it has attained maturity.<sup>73</sup>

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69. We have been able to trace only 4 numbers of the Brahmunical Magazine (in English alone). They were published between 1821 and 1823. The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy, Calcutta, 1901, vol.I., pp.201-283.

70. B.S.P., p.17.

71. Ibid., p.70.

72. The Calcutta Journal was an English bi-weekly which later became a daily paper. It was established in October, 1818. Das, Satyajit, (comp.) Selections from the Indian Journals, vol.I. Calcutta Journal, Calcutta, 1963, p.2. Its editor Buckingham was a man of varied experience and radical ideas. It is said that he encouraged Rammohan 'to take to serious journalism as an effective means of propagating his reformist views'. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.86.

73. Quoted by Barns, op.cit., p.107.

The Sambād Kaumudī, though 'set up by Baboo Ram Mohun Roy',<sup>74</sup> was actually edited for the first few months by Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy. But later Bhabānīcaran withdrew from it when he realized that Rāmmohan's views were too radical and reformist for him to accept. He was succeeded by one Harihar Datta<sup>75</sup> who also resigned in May, 1822.<sup>76</sup> The Kaumudī was next edited by Gobindacandra Koṅār, and the paper continued under his management for about five months. 'It had to stop publication in October 1822.'<sup>77</sup> The reason for the closure of the Kaumudī may possibly be attributed to the fact that it incurred the displeasure of a certain section of the Bengali Hindu public because of its attacks on certain orthodox Hindu institutions, particularly that of Satī.<sup>78</sup>

It was about this time that the government felt obliged to review the press laws because certain English journals of Calcutta, particularly the Calcutta Journal of Buckingham, had published articles which were considered

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74. Asiatic Journal (January-April, 1833), London, part II, p.9.

75. Harihar Datta was also one of the owners of the Kaumudī.  
B.S.P., p.18.

76. B.S.P., p.18.

77. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.87.

78. 'The paper (Kaumudī) ... has long since fallen to the ground for want of support; chiefly ... because it offended the Native community, by opposing some of their customs, and particularly the Burning of Hindoo Widows (Satī) ... 'Danger of the Native Press. The Calcutta Journal, the 14th February, 1823, pp.618-19. B.S.P., pp.18-19.



by the government to be objectionable. Since there was no provision in the existing press laws for punishing a defiant editor, Lord Hastings sought to introduce new measures to bring the press under control. He applied to the authorities in England for necessary approval. But that was yet to come when on the 9th January, 1823, Lord Hastings sailed for England. After his departure John Adams, erstwhile a member of the Governor General's Council, took over as the acting Governor General. When the authorities in England indicated their consent to restrict the press in India and authorised the enactment of such laws as were deemed appropriated, Adams lost no time in laying down a set of strict regulations for the press. With the approval of the Supreme Court, these regulations were promulgated as laws from the 5th April, 1823.<sup>79</sup> They provided for the compulsory licensing of newspapers, journals and printing establishments.<sup>80</sup> Under these new laws the licence of a newspaper was liable to be cancelled if it published any objectionable material. And for the offence of publishing a newspaper without a licence, the government could impose on its owner a maximum fine of Rs.400.<sup>81</sup>

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79. The Samācār Darpan of the 19th April, 1823 published the Bengali translation of these new laws which were reproduced in S.S.K., vol.I., pp.194-197.

80. S.S.K., vol.I., p. 195.

81. Ibid., p.197.

As a gesture of protest against the imposition of the new press laws, Rāmmohan Rāy stopped the publication of his Persian weekly, the Mirāt-ul-Ākhbār; its last number appeared on the 4th April, 1823.<sup>82</sup> It is interesting to note that the Sambād Kaumudī was revived after the restrictive laws were introduced, permission to publish having been granted to one Ānandacandra Mukhopādhyāy with effect from the 7th August, 1823.<sup>83</sup> While Ānandacandra was the editor Gobindacandra Koṅār was the printer as well as publisher of the Kaumudī in its new phase.<sup>84</sup> The fact that the Kaumudī became a popular journal can be ascertained from the evidence that from January, 1830, it began to be published twice a week. Maybe the ideas projected through the Kaumudī were gaining ground about this time. On the 15th November, 1830, Rāmmohan Rāy sailed for England.<sup>85</sup> After his departure, the management of the Kaumudī was taken over by Rādhāprasād Rāy, Rāmmohan's eldest son. Though it is not clear whether Rāmmohan had any direct association with the paper, it may be surmised that he had some influence in its affairs because after his

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82. B.S.P., p.70.

83. Ibid., p.19.

84. Ibid., p.19.

85. Anglo India etc. vol.III. p.247.

departure its popularity began to decline. It finally disappeared some time between 1833 and 1834.<sup>86</sup>

The role of the Kaumudī in the field of Bengali journalism is historically important. Though not a single copy of the paper has survived, it appears from indirect reference that its attitude to life was radical.<sup>87</sup> It was in this paper that Rāmmohan Rāy launched a series of attacks on religious institutions like Satī and Kulinism. The Kaumudī was the first paper to register a protest against the superstitions continued under the patronage of rich zamindars and Maharajas in the name of religion.

As has been stated before,<sup>88</sup> Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy deserted the Sambād Kaumudī owing to difference of opinion. He was a man of great initiative.<sup>89</sup> After leaving the Kaumudī he established a printing press of his own and brought out the weekly Samācār Candrikā, the first number appearing on Tuesday, the 5th March, 1822.<sup>90</sup> Subsequent numbers used to appear every Monday.<sup>91</sup> Its price was four annas per copy.<sup>92</sup> The Samācār Candrikā, which was the mouthpiece of opinions opposed to those of Rāmmohan Rāy, found its supporters in the wealthy conservative zamindars,

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86. B.S.P., p.19.

87. See p.58 of the present chapter.

88. V. supra, p.58.

89. S.S.K., vol.I. p.462.

90. B.S.P., p.21.

91. S.S.K., vol.I., p.98.

92. Ibid., p.98.

Gopīmohan Deb and Harimohan Thākur. Within one year of its appearance the journal became immensely popular. It was praised for its 'delightful style' (manorañjikā lipi),<sup>93</sup> and its circulation is said to have risen to 800.<sup>94</sup> The popularity of the journal reached its climax in 1829 when it began to appear twice a week, the additional number being issued on Wednesdays.<sup>95</sup> Its price however remained the same. Till 1848, the Candrikā seemed to have enjoyed an uninterrupted career under the guidance of Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy. After his death on the 20th February, 1848, his son Rājkrṣṇa Bandyopādhyāy became the editor and continued publication. But the Candrikā did not maintain its once important role because of the competition of the other popular and influential papers namely the Sambād Prabhākar (1831), the Sambād Pūrṇacandroday (1825), the Tattvabodhini Patrikā (1843). Rājkrṣṇa soon fell into debt and had to declare himself insolvent.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless he was able to continue the publication until his death on the 14th August, 1852. There is a report that Prānkrṣṇa Vidyāsāgar, a teacher at

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93. Quoted from Bhabānīcaran's biography written by his son Rājkrṣṇa Bandyopādhyāy. Extracts from this biography have been profusely reproduced in S.S.C., book 4, pp.6-18.

94. Ibid., p.18; according to Salahuddin Ahmad, by 1836 the circulation of the Candrikā was little less than four hundred and thus almost equal to that of the Samācār Darpan. Op.cit., p.89.

95. B.S.P., p.22.

96. Ibid., p.24.

the Sanskrit College, re-issued the Candrikā,<sup>97</sup> but it finally ceased publication in 1853.

The contribution of the Candrikā in the field of Bengali journalism is remarkable for two reasons. Firstly, it successfully reflected the ideas of a section of contemporary Hindu society in Bengal. Secondly, apart from publishing news and projecting the conservative opinion, it also published in prose as well as in verse a number of satirical writings, some of literary quality, which exposed to ridicule the pro-western attitude of the new rich bābus of Calcutta.

Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy, the founder of the Candrikā, was probably the first man in the realm of Bengali journalism who had ability for creative writing. In addition to his journalistic writing he also published several books, some in prose, some in verse.<sup>98</sup>

On the 21st August, 1823, one Kṛṣṇamohan Dās was granted a licence by the government to publish a newspaper called the Sambād Timirnāśak or the Destroyer of Darkness.<sup>99</sup> It was brought out in October, 1823.<sup>100</sup> The weekly Timirnāśak appeared on every Friday,<sup>101</sup> but from 1830, it

97. Mitra, Rājendralāl, (ed.) Bibidhārtha Sangraha, śaka 1780, Caitra, (1858A.D.), p.280.

98. For a fuller account of Bhabānīcaran's works, see chapters V and VI.

99. B.S.P., p.29.

100. S.S.K., vol.II. p.185. Marshman is obviously mistaken in stating that the 'Destroyer of Darkness' commenced publication immediately after the appearance of the Darpan. Marshman, op.cit., vol.II., p.163.

101. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.93.

became a bi-weekly journal.<sup>102</sup> 'It was intended to support the doctrines and to protect the interests of Hindooism.'<sup>103</sup> It stopped publication in 1836.<sup>104</sup>

Being a conservative newspaper it was to be expected that the Timirnasak would do all it could to abuse its liberal contemporaries i.e. the Samācār Darpaṇ and the Sambād Kaumudī.<sup>105</sup>

The prohibitive regulations imposed by the new press laws in 1823 retarded the growth of the vernacular press in Bengal. It appears that after the publication of the Timirnāśak in 1823, no new vernacular journal appeared till the 5th May, 1829.<sup>106</sup> In July, 1828, Lord William Bentinck assumed the office of the Governor General and not long after his arrival he asked his private secretary Andrew Stirling to draw up a detailed report on the press in Bengal to enable him to ascertain the influence it exercised on the public opinion. The report, submitted by Stirling, besides being an objective study of the actual state of things, also reflected the government attitude towards the Indian press in general. Citing facts and figures, he proved that Indian society was not

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102. S.S.K., vol.II. p.185.

103. Marshman, op.cit., vol.II., p.163.

104. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.93.

105. B.S.P., p.30.

106. Ibid., pp.4-30.

yet prepared to 'embrace a newspaper'. It was still a luxury to them. But Stirling admitted that

'the papers in the Bengallee language have always flourished because they find abundant supporters in that large class of the Hindoo population of Calcutta who have become imbued to a certain extent with English tastes and notions, and among them a love of news, which is thus supplied to them in a cheap and accessible form. Their contents are limited chiefly to notices of Shipping, Prices Current, Appointments, Police Reports, Proceedings in the Supreme Court and descriptions of Suttees.'<sup>107</sup>

While speaking about the political role of the Bengali newspapers, Stirling observed that

'they rarely touch upon politics whether foreign or domestic, and never exhibit any original remarks or speculations, excepting occasionally in defending the practices of Suttee, against the animadversions of some European Editor.'<sup>108</sup>

It is true that Lord Bentinck did not revoke the press laws of 1823, but the liberal policy which he pursued proved beneficial to the growth of the press in Bengal. As many as twenty journals came into existence between 1829 and 1835 in Bengali alone. Of them six were monthly, one fortnightly, and one bi-weekly, while the rest were weekly papers.

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107. Quoted from Barns, Margarita, op.cit., p.183.  
108. Ibid., p.183.

The first newspaper that was to commence publication after the arrival of Lord Bentinck was the Baṅgadūt. On the 5th May, 1829, one Robert Montgomery Martin was permitted by the government to publish a journal called the Bengal Herald in four languages.<sup>109</sup> While the Bengal Herald was published exclusively in English, the Baṅgadūt was 'to be printed in the Bengalee, Persian and Nagree character'.<sup>100</sup>

The weekly Baṅgadūt made its first appearance on

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109. B.S.P., p.30.

110. Quoted from the Prospectus of the Bengal Herald. B.S.P., p.30. Martin's own statement regarding Baṅgadūt is in direct contradiction to what has been described in the prospectus. Thus he writes: 'In 1829, in conjunction with Rammohun Roy, Dwarkanaut Tagore, Prussuna Comar Tagore, and other Hindu gentlemen, I established in Calcutta a weekly journal, and printed it under my own roof, in English, Bengallee, and Hinduostanee (Persian) characters, in parallel columns, with a hope of improving the tone of the native mind, and preparing it for a temperate discussion of public affairs.' Martin, Robert Montgomery, British India: its history, topography, government military defence, finance, commerce, and staple products; London, (date?), p.522. In the first place, Bengal Herald was printed in three languages, not in four. They were English, Bengali and Urdu. In the second place, the Bengal Herald was not published exclusively in English. It was printed in three languages 'in parallel columns'. Since we have not seen any copy of the paper, it is difficult to reconcile these conflicting statements.



Sunday, the 10th May, 1829, but its subsequent issues were published every Saturday.<sup>111</sup> Each number consisted of eight pages. Its price was one rupee per month.<sup>112</sup> It was owned and financed by R. M. Martin, Dvārakānāth Thākūr, Rāmmohan Rāy and Prasannakumār Thākūr, and edited by Nīratna Hāldar. It seems that some three months after its appearance Dvārakānāth, Rāmmohan and Prasannakumār withdrew their financial support from the paper.<sup>113</sup> Nīratna Nāldār continued as editor of the Bāṅgadūt for less than a year. He also became the editor of the Bengal Herald in August, 1829. Meantime Martin had incurred the displeasure of the government by publishing an article 'calculated to excite a spirit of mutiny and discontent in the minds of the European soldiery'.<sup>114</sup> Later one Bholānāth Sen obtained a new licence from the government on the 30th April, 1830, to continue publication of the Bāṅgadūt.<sup>115</sup> The paper seems to have suffered from continuous financial stringency

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111. B.S.P., p.30.

112. Ibid., p.30.

113. S.S.K., vol.I., p.382.

114. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.70. Martin writes about the incident thus: 'Some very mild comments on a court-martial sentence, dated 20th July, 1829, of "one thousand lashes on the bare back of gunner Wm. Comerford, of the 1st company 5th battalion of Bengal artillery" (whose wife had been seduced by the Captain of his company, and the seducer's life threatened by the aggrieved husband), led to the condemnation by the government of India of the journal, and its ultimate destruction, with the large property embarked therein.' Op.cit., p.522.

115. B.S.P., p.30.

till 1839, but after that date, presumably because it received increased financial support, it revived.<sup>116</sup>

On the 11th January, 1831, Ísvarcandra Gupta, who later achieved a reputation as a poet and biographer, was authorised by the government to bring out a weekly paper called the Sambād Prabhākar.<sup>117</sup> The first number appeared on the 28th January, 1831.<sup>118</sup> The history of the paper falls into three phases: it was first published a weekly, then bi-weekly and finally daily. The first two phases were not successive. The weekly Sambād Prabhākar ceased publication on the 25th May, 1832, a few months after the death of Yogendra Mohan Thākur, its chief patron.<sup>119</sup> It was revived after four years. On the 10th August, 1836, it was launched for the second time, but this time as a tri-weekly.<sup>120</sup> On the 14th June, 1839, the tri-weekly Prabhākar was converted into a daily paper, the first of its kind in the field of Bengali journalism.<sup>121</sup> After the death of Ísvarcandra Gupta in 1859, his brother Rāmcandra Gupta became the editor in his stead.<sup>122</sup>

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116. B.S.P., p.30.

117. Bengal Public Consultations, the 11th January, 1831, nos. 74-77.

118. B.S.P., p.33.

119. Ibid., p.34.

120. Ibid., p.34.

121. Ibid., p.34.

122. Ibid., p.34.

From the first number the Prabhākar indicated some editorial disapproval of the ideas professed by the liberal section of Hindu society, and the Samācār Candrikā, the organ of the orthodox Hindus, was therefore delighted to welcome its appearance.<sup>123</sup> But it was far from being entirely a conservative paper. Indeed the Sambād Timirnāśak, a conservative paper we have already spoken of,<sup>124</sup> attacked the Prabhākar on the grounds that it had changed its tone within one year of its appearance.<sup>125</sup> The truth is that the Prabhākar did not identify itself with any particular section of Hindu society. On the contrary, it seems all through to have maintained a sort of neutral role though its patrons included such liberal Hindus as Dvārakānāth Thākur, Prasannakumār Thākur, Yogendra Mohan Thākur, Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy, Kāśīprasād Ghoṣ and Debendranāth Thākur. Its contributors on the other hand belonged both to the orthodox as well as to the liberal section of contemporary Hindu society. Thus Rāmkamal Sen (1783-1844) and Rādhākānta Deb (1784-1867), two stalwarts of the conservative section, as well as Prasannakumār Thākur (1801-1868), a distinguished member of the unorthodox section, were equally welcomed by the Prabhākar as contributors.

123. The Samācār Candrikā, the 3rd February, 1831.

124. V. Supra, p.63.

125. S.S.K., II. p.185.

The Sambād Prabhākar occupies a unique place in the history of Bengali journalism for three reasons:

- a) it was the first daily paper in Bengali;
- b) it maintained a neutral role as between orthodox and liberal Hindus;
- c) it was the organ through which Išvarchandra Gupta was able to organize for the first time a literary circle in Bengal.

The Sambād Prabhākar became the forum of many budding writers,<sup>126</sup> like Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy (1827-1887), Dīnbandhu Mitra (1830-1873) and Baṅkimcandra Caṭṭopādhyāy (1838-1894). The contributions made by this trio in their respective fields, e.g. drama, poetry and novel, provided the modern Bengali literature with new directions. Akṣaykumār Datta (1820-1886), who has been described by Sukumār Sen as the first writer to have shown distinction in modern Bengali prose writing,<sup>127</sup> also became known first in the columns of the Prabhākar. The historical importance of the paper lies in the fact that it provided the young authors with an opportunity to test their literary ambitions by making it possible for their work to be published. It may well be that without the assistance provided by the Prabhākar, the emergence and development of modern Bengali literature might have been delayed.

126. Bose, Nemaī Sadhan, The Indian Awakening and Bengal, Calcutta, 1960, p.202.

127. Sen, Sukumār, Bāṅgālā Sāhitye Gadya, 3rd edition, 1949, p.54.

About this time the subject of Satī was being debated in Bengali newspapers. The practice of Satī had been declared illegal by Lord Bentinck in December, 1829.<sup>128</sup> The conservative section of the Bengali press crusaded vigorously to have the law revoked; while the liberal section welcomed it. On the 23rd February, 1831, another Bengali weekly called the Sambād Sudhākar was brought out.<sup>129</sup> Published and edited by Premcād Rāy it was at first welcomed by the conservative papers. Indeed the Samācār Candrikā informed its readers of the appearance of the Sudhākar with undoubted pleasure<sup>130</sup> presumably in the hope that the new paper would adhere to the conservative point of view. For about a year the Sudhākar remained silent on the subject of Satī,<sup>131</sup> when it announced its affiliation to the anti-Satī section of the press, an act which prompted the Timirnāśak to denounce it as anti-religious.<sup>132</sup> It is incorrect to maintain as Salahuddin Ahmad does that 'the tone of the newspaper was moderate and it stood between the conservatives and the radicals in matters

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128. Roberts, P. E., History of British India under the Company and the Crown, 1927, p.303.

129. B.S.P., p.38.

130. The Samācār Candrikā, the 28th February, 1831.

131. Ibid., the 21st March, 1831.

132. S.S.K., II., p.186.

relating to social reform';<sup>133</sup> not only did the Sudhākar welcome the abolition of Satī, it also supported the cause of female education and criticised the conservative opposition to it.<sup>134</sup>

On the 7th September, 1830, one Sekh Ālimullā was granted a licence by the government to publish a newspaper in Bengali and Persian.<sup>135</sup> The paper called the Samācār Sabhā Rājendra actually came out on the 7th March, 1831.<sup>136</sup> Little is known about it, except that it was the first venture made by a Muslim in the field of Bengali journalism. Sekh Ālimullā has been described by an anonymous writer in the Samācār Candrikā of the 30th December, 1830, as 'Śrīyut Miṃyā Āli Mollā Maulabi'. According to this letter Ālimullā was well-versed in his 'own national language Persian' (āpan jātiyā vidyā pārsī) and as he was born in this country i.e. Bengal, he was also acquainted with Bengali. Moreover, the writer continues, 'he has studied Bengali to a considerable extent' (Bāṅgālā lekḥā

133. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.96.

134. S.S.K., II. pp.247-249. The Sambād Sudhākar stopped publication some time in 1835. B.S.P., p.38.

135. Bengal Public Consultations, (the 3rd August to the 7th September, 1830), nos.104-106.

136. B.S.P., p.39.

parā adhik kariyāchen). The anonymous writer also reports that according to information he has received Ālimullā intended to appoint a person 'well-versed' in Bengali to assist him in editorial task. It is however not completely clear what Ālimullā's connection with the paper was. A contemporary record states that the Samācār Sabhā Rājendra was edited by one 'Dulubchandro Chuttopadhea'.<sup>137</sup> In the affidavit submitted to the government Ālimullā describes himself as the sole printer and publisher of the Samācār Sabhā Rājendra<sup>138</sup> but not as the editor. It appears clear therefore that the Samācār Candrikā was not in possession of all the facts when it referred to the Samācār Sabhā Rājendra on the 30th December, 1830.

On the 10th March, 1831, the Samācār Candrikā says of the Samācār Sabhā Rājendra that it was the first Bengali-Persian newspaper. Though it was managed by a Muslim, the paper espoused the causes supported by conservative Hindus. The Sabhā Rājendra had a very brief career.<sup>139</sup>

137. Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government, No. XXII, Calcutta, 1855, p. 145.

138. 'Sheik Allimullah of Cullingah in the town of Calcutta solemnly declares that he now is and is

139. intended to be the sole Printer and Publisher of a certain newspaper in Persian and Bengallee Language ... etc'. Bengal Public Consultations (The 3rd August to the 7th September, 1830), no. 104.

139. B.S.P., p. 39. It lasted until 1835. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p. 97.

On the 31st May, 1831, one Dakṣiṇārañjan Mukhopādhyāy was granted a licence by the government to publish a weekly Bengali newspaper.<sup>140</sup> The Jñānānveṣaṇ or the Search for Knowledge as it was called, came out on the 18th June, 1831.<sup>141</sup> As is evident from the title, the Jñānānveṣaṇ, an organ of the Young Bengal group,<sup>142</sup> was principally concerned with the advancement of knowledge. It opposed the inherent superstitions of Hinduism and by so doing brought upon itself the wrath of the orthodox press. 'In January, 1833, the Jñānānveṣaṇ passed into the hands of Dakṣiṇārañjan's friends, Rasik Kṛṣṇa Mallik and Mādhab Candra Mallik.'<sup>143</sup> On the 15th January, 1833, they obtained a new licence from the government to publish the journal in English as well as in Bengali.<sup>144</sup> It stopped publication in November, 1840.<sup>145</sup>

The next weekly Bengali journal to be issued in 1831 was the Anubādikā. It came out in August.<sup>146</sup> Published by Bholānāth Sen, the Anubādikā was in fact the Bengali version of the Reformer, the English weekly. Both

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140. B.S.P., p.39.

141. Ibid., p.39.

142. Ibid., p.39.

143. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.98. Though Dakṣiṇārañjan was the official editor of the paper, it was in fact edited by Gaurīśaṅkar Tarkabāgīś. B.S.P., p.40.

144. B.S.P., p.41.

145. Ibid., p.42.

146. Ibid., p.42.



the Reformer and the Anubādikā were owned by Prasannakumār Thākur.<sup>147</sup> The most interesting feature of this paper was that it 'had been circulated gratis in the Hindoo community'.<sup>148</sup> It however lasted for less than a year.

One Madhusudan Dās of Simlā brought out a Bengali weekly called the Sambād Ratnākar on the 22nd August, 1831, under the editorship of Rāmcandra Pāl.<sup>150</sup> The avowed object of the paper was to uphold the traditional institutions of Hinduism.<sup>151</sup> It used to publish violent attacks on the liberal Hindus. But it lasted for less than six months.<sup>152</sup>

On the 29th September, 1831, one Benīmādhav De published a paper called the Sambād Sārsamgraha.<sup>153</sup> It was a weekly journal, printed in Bengali and English. The paper survived only a few numbers<sup>154</sup> presumably because at Rs.2/- monthly it was too expensive for the general reading public. The Sambād Sārsamgraha contained 'a summary of news published in the other newspapers',<sup>155</sup> presumably in the hope that by so doing the public would

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147. Ibid., p.42.

148. The Bengal Hurkaru, the 16th April, 1832.

149. B.S.P., p.43.

150. Ibid., p.43.

151. Ibid., p.43.

152. Ibid., p.43.

153. Ibid., p.44.

154. S.S.K., p.44.

155. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.98.

subscribe to it to the exclusion of other papers whose news it reproduced. The hope was apparently not realized.

For the purposes of this thesis we may regard the history of printing in Bengali as beginning in 1800.<sup>156</sup> Under the leadership of Carey the Serampore Mission Press was for a time solely occupied with producing text books, first for use in Fort William College and later for use in schools which sprang up in and around Calcutta. As we have seen many of these text books were translations from Sanskrit or other non-Bengali languages.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless some original writing did appear during this spell of time, namely, Pratāpādityacaritra of Rām Rām Basu and the Dialogues of Carey. These were the first original printed works in Bengali and it is clear that the opportunity for their production and publication was provided by the printing press. When in 1818 the Serampore Mission Press was used for the production of the Samācār Darpan, the literary opportunities so far restricted to the writers of text books were opened to contributors to the newspapers. It was not long as

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156. Though in 1778 Sir Charles Wilkins prepared punches for printing Halhed's Bengali grammar, it was not until 1800 that an organised effort was made to print Bengali works.

157. Chapter I. pp 28-31.

will be seen in the next chapter before they began to avail of the opportunities which existed.

## Chapter III

THE BEGINNINGS OF SATIRE

The first contributions to the early Bengali newspaper which have literary quality and in which some literary purpose can be discerned are two short, unsigned pieces of prose narrative, which appeared in the Samācār Darpaṇ on the 24th February, 1821,<sup>1</sup> and on the 9th June, 1821<sup>2</sup> respectively. They both bear the title Bābur Upākhyān (The Story of a Bābu), though they are separate contributions based on different stories. The author of them who is the same in each case has not yet been identified with certainty, though, as will be discussed in a later chapter,<sup>3</sup> some critics are of the opinion that he was Bhabānīcaraṇ Bandyopādhyāy; but whoever he was, he was the first to realise the opportunities the press offered for original writing and to find his subjects in the life of the city in which he lived. As Srīkumār Bandyopādhyāy observes 'the advent of the Bengali Press (1818) provided an opportunity for and an incentive to the expression of the satirical tendencies that had been accumulated for some time in the Bengali mind'<sup>4</sup>; and '.... it was the first attempt to bring together fragmentary aspects of the life of

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1. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth S.S.K., vol. I., pp. 108-112.
  2. Ibid., pp. 112-114.
  3. See chapter VIII of this thesis, pp. 289-291.
  4. Bandyopādhyāy, Srīkumār, Bāṅga Sāhitye Upanyāser Dhārā, 5th ed., 1965, p. 22.

a particular class by creating a fictitious character, Tilakcandra, in the Bābu episode published in the Samācār Darpan!<sup>5</sup> The two stories are so told as to hold up to ridicule the behaviour of a section of contemporary urban society, the excesses of which had already achieved some notoriety; and though they are immature in both style and technique they are not lacking in an awareness of the possibilities of satirical writing for entertainment, moral and polemical purposes. They have historical importance also for two reasons: they are the first in a long line of social satires in Bengal; and, being narrative in presentation they represent an early stage in the development of prose fiction.

The first of the two upākhyān may be summarized as follows.

Rājcakrabartī, a kulīn Brahmin in the city of Amarābati, was a wealthy man. He held important positions in Government service and the estates of zamindars. His reputation for wisdom, intelligence, legal adroitness and executive ability was so widely publicised that Sultān Ahmad Khalipā, a rich Indian merchant, appointed him Deoṃān of one of his opium estates. It was a highly lucrative post. Sultān Ahmad Khalipā exported his opium, which cost little to produce, to China, where it earned him vast profits. In order to get rich quickly, Rājcakrabartī Deoṃān began adulterating the opium. By so doing, he

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5. Ibid., p.22.

acquired a fabulous fortune.

Being childless, Rājcakrabartī Deoyān performed various religious rites to obtain a son. Eventually a son as handsome as the moon was born to him.<sup>6</sup> To celebrate this event, Rājcakrabartī Deoyān held a number of auspicious ceremonies such as the dancing of lizards and the singing of frogs. In time his son attained the age of six months.

It was now time for the boy's annaprāśan,<sup>7</sup> the ceremony at which he was to receive his name. There was a group of pandits who adulated Rājcakrabartī Deoyān. When asked to suggest a name for the boy, one of them pretended to see in him "the nine qualities of a kulīn".<sup>8</sup> He accordingly recommended name Kulīncandra Tilak i.e., ornament of the kulīns. The second pandit observed that the boy would be a "most felicitous mahābābu".<sup>9</sup> The third pandit went a little further. He maintained that he had by astrological calculations ascertained the characteristics of a bābu and assured Rājcakrabartī Deoyān that his son possessed all those characteristics.

In consequence Rājcakrabartī Deoyān's son was named Tilakcandra Bābu. Since there was no one referred to him as Tilak candra, he came to be known as Bābu. Bābu was brought up in great luxury. "The Deoyān adorned his son with as many golden ornaments as his little body could endure. He even wanted to suspend a gold brick from his neck as a sign of his

6. Text: Pare ek candratulya uttamputra janmila.

7. The ceremony of putting rice into an infant's mouth for the first time.

8. Text: Kulīner nabaguner lakṣan āche.

9. Text: Ini atibara sukhī mahābābu haiben.

opulence.<sup>10</sup>

Rājcakrabartī Deoṃān afforded his son every description of indulgence but no education. 'To know the gāyatri is sufficient for a Brahmin boy. He may of course acquire knowledge, if it is so ordained. Provided he looks after the fortune he will inherit from me, he will never want for anything. What becomes of him is up to Destiny. After I am dead, I shall not be able to come back to fend for him.<sup>11</sup>

Consequently the Bābu frittered away his boyhood flying kites and playing bulbuli. 'Though there was an education shop in the house, he gave no thought to reading or writing.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Bābu was held in high esteem by the paid flatterers of his father. They feigned to discern rare academic distinctions in the boy. According to them there was nobody wiser than he was. 'He is well-versed in all the sāstras, such as English, Persian, Arabic, Nāgarī, Phiringī and Armenian. He studied English for a month and after that he could understand letters in English at a glance and reply to them without hesitation.<sup>13</sup> Despite having had no elementary education, Bābu was induced by these flatterers to believe that 'I am forgetful of self. Everbody calls me wise and learned,

10. Text: Deoṃānjī putrer śarīre yata dhare tata svarnānkāre tāhāke bhūṣita karilen deoṃānjīr icchā ye svarner iṣṭak putrer gale dolāyṃān karata āpan aiśvaryya prakāś karen.
11. Text: Brāhmaṇer chelyā gāyitri śikhilei hay kapāle thāke bidyā habe āmi yāhā rākhiyā yāiba yadi rakṣā kariyā khaite pāren kakhana dukkha pāibennā putrer adrṣṭe yāhā thāke tāhā habe āmi dekhite āsibanā.
12. Text: Lekhāparār dokān āche kintu karennā.
13. Text: Imrājī pārsī ārbī nāgarī phiringī ārmāni tabat sāstre tatpar imrājī bābu ekmasdekhiyāchilen ihāte cithigulan dekhībāmatrei bujhite pāren o tāhar uttar car car kariyā likhiyā den.

and I also feel that I am indeed a scholar.<sup>14</sup>

By the time of Rājcakrabartī's death, Bābu had become a perfect hedonist, whose philosophy was summed up in the following words: 'The world is transitory, and in it physical gratification is the only reality.'<sup>15</sup> Bābu inherited the property, but not the industry of his father. Rājcakrabartī Deoṃān had known how to earn money: Bābu knew only how to spend it. His father had accumulated his fortune little by little; Bābu dissipated it, left, right and centre. Nevertheless, the Bābu realised that he owed his social position to the fortune his father had acquired in his various positions. He therefore began to make enquiries about the possibilities of securing employment, which led some of his flatterers to speculate that he was perhaps going to obtain some high office. These speculations brought the Bābu a new group of flatterers, who attended him from morning till night in the expectation of getting employment.

But Bābu had nothing to commend him but money. His very vanity presented an insuperable obstacle to his securing employment. In his heart of hearts he knew that this was so and there was no likelihood of his being able to secure employment for others, but to admit as much would disillusion his flatterers and cause them to desert him. 'Unless he kept up this

14. Text: Ami āpta biśmrta sakalā āmāke bijñā o pandit kahe ār āmar āpnā apnio bodh hay ye āmi pandit bāṭi.

15. Text: Ē anitya samsāre kebal saririk sukhbhogi satya.



pretence no one would come and he would have to look out for people to fill out his court.<sup>16</sup> Thus in order to maintain his court, Bābu held out false hopes to his admirers.

All those seeking preferment from him used to attend his drawing room at dawn and dusk. They received Bābu on each occasion with great respect and courtesy and when he was seated amongst them on his throne-like chair, he listened with enormous satisfaction their fulsome praise. Some would remark: 'Bābu has been made Nabāb of Golānagar' and others would add: 'Bābu has concluded an important transaction; he has leased the entire Sundarbans.'

One day, as he entered his assembly, Bābu commanded his valet to prepare his shirt and pāg (a large headgear) in readiness for the Darbār (office) the following morning. This gave rise to widespread speculation amongst his admirers. They dreamt of Bābu holding an important appointment, saying to themselves: 'Then my assumption has come true.' Some promised to sacrifice at Kālighāt,<sup>17</sup> others to offer śirṇī at the shrine of Satyapīr.<sup>18</sup> Bābu did not divulge his plans. He kept his assembly in suspense until the following day.

Since Bābu was going to the Darbār, not a single member of the household had a moment to lose.

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16. Text: Eirūp pratāvanā nā karile kona lok āsibeknā ataeb śobhābardhak lok saṅgraha ābaśyak.

17. Kālighāt: A famous shrine or fane to the south of Calcutta, sacred to the goddess Kālī.

18. Satyapīr: A modern deity, an incarnation of the god Viṣṇu as a Musalman Fakir or mendicant, called by the Muslims Satyapīr.

The following morning Bābu bathed, breakfasted sparingly and spent ages donning his finest clothes, before finally boarding his splendid carriage. He had no time for lunch.

Escorted by four red-turbaned footmen, Bābu arrived at the shop of his friend, Hājī Hādī Sāheb, a rich Muslim date merchant. "They conversed in another language. Though far from being a gifted conversationalist, Bābu went on talking with an affected accent, as befitted his station."<sup>19</sup> For a while they discussed such topics as the current value of money, the origins of war, the appointment of the new Kājī and so forth. Then Bābu commanded one of his footmen to go and see whether Mollā Phiroj was at home and whether or not Mr. Antoni Badrigu was lunching at home today. He commanded a second man to see if Mr. Iago was free, in which case he would go. So saying, Bābu boarded his carriage and returned home via the auction market.

Meanwhile the entire household silently awaited his return. He had left for the office without taking lunch, and no one knew whether he had had anything to eat. Bābu seemed to have worked very hard and now had a headache. It spoilt his appetite. After a mere grain or two of rice, he retired to bed.

His admirers arrived on time. Everyone awaited the glad tidings in silence. Into the drawing room strode Bābu, dispelling the silence with the pronouncement that he had worked hard that day. 'I was late

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19. Text: Pare ubhayē anya bhāṣāy ālāp haila bābur bākyaśakti tādṛk nai tathāca baralok gātmit kariya kahilen. SSK., vol.I., p.III.

leaving the Darbār. I had a headache and went straight to bed.' General conversation then commenced. Bābu did not talk of business. And so he went on holding court every day. Meanwhile, his unfortunate petitioners had exhausted their money and were now borrowing to maintain themselves. They moved in with relatives, but continued eulogising Bābu as before. Bābu was unable to offer them any preferment, but concealed his inability from them. On the contrary, whenever anyone failed to attend his court, Bābu greeted him with: 'And where have you been all this time, my dear Sir? A vacancy came up, but since you were absent, another candidate filled it.' And thus it was that the Bābu passed his time.

That the subject matter of this upākhyān reflects aspects of social behaviour in early 19th century Calcutta is confirmed by Śibanāth Śāstrī.

'There appeared at this time a group of people popularly known as babus. They generally belonged to the well-to-do, urban middle class. They knew Persian and had a smattering of English and on the strength of this knowledge they despised their native religion. Without any higher end in view, they lived for themselves alone, pleasure being the be-all and end-all of their existence. With faces bearing marks of debauchery, heads covered with a profusion of waving curls, tinged teeth like so many pieces of jet, pieces of thin black-bordered muslin round their waists, cambric banians so made as to

show their figures to the best advantage, neatly folded scarves thrown over their shoulders and shoes ornamented with broad buckles, they strolled along the streets humming or whistling a favourite tune. Their chief enjoyments during the day were sleeping, flying kites, watching bul-bul fights, and music; and the night brought other less reputable amusements.<sup>20</sup>

The details of Sāstrī's statement do not fully fit the bābu in Bābur Upākhyān. Tilakcandra was without question silly, foppish, vain and pretentious, but he was not debauched and vicious. Nevertheless it is true that he and his father belong in the main to that section of society to which Sāstrī alludes. The father Rājcakrabartī is a rich man who becomes fabulously wealthy by joining the opium trade. His son Tilakcandra spends his boyhood flying kites and playing bulbuli. Though he never studies, he is yet said to know a number of languages. His philosophy of life is hedonistic. He lives like a nabāb, holding a regular assembly of asycophants. When he goes out he wears a huge turban like a nabāb, and covers his body with jāmā-jorā. He then boards a beautiful carriage and is

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20. Lethbridge, Sir Roper, Ramtanu Lahiri - Brahman and Reformer, London, 1907, p.171. This is a translation of the Bengali original Rāmtanu Lāhirī o Tatkālin Bangasamāj by Sāstrī.

escorted by guards clad in red turbans. He has a wide range of acquaintances. His friends include HĀJĪ HĀDĪ Sāheb, a Muslim, Antoni Badrigu, an Armenian, Mr. Iago - an Englishman - probably all of them merchants. He is not good at conversation, but he is aware of his social rank and so speaks 'a different language' probably Hindusthānī, with Hādi Sāheb, with an affected accent. He is held in high esteem by the sycophants of his court. They include Hindus as well as Muslims. Some of them worship the deity of Kālī and the others Satyapir.

The rich father and spoilt son theme was to become popular in 19th century literature, reaching its highest peak of expression in Pyārīcāḍ Mitra's Alāler Gharer Dulāl, which was published in 1858. The theme stated is simply as follows. A man born poor amasses a great fortune by hard work. He is astute, quick to realise and take advantage of any opportunity that comes his way, and not above sharp practice. His success begets flatterers who when a son is born to him find in the child all the traditional marks of perfection, like those associated with the prince in fairy tales. He sees no reason why his son should have to work for his living as he himself had done, and spoils him outrageously. He makes no provision for the boy's education and proper religious upbringing, and is gulled by his

flatterers into believing that the boy is a genius who without effort will become a great man. The boy, accepting as his right the indulgence of his father and the flattery of his sycophants, proceeds to squander his inherited wealth. This upākhyān stops short before the inevitable end; but in Alāler Gharer Dulāl the young prodigal exhausts his patrimony and is reduced to hardship and poverty. The moral purpose underlying this presentation of the theme is not hard to see, namely that neglect of the code of conduct prescribed for both fathers and sons in the śāstras can only lead to disaster.

It will be noticed that the style of life which the bābu imitates is that associated with the courts of the Nabābs of Bengal. That such a style should still continue to influence life in Calcutta is a matter of history. Since the dawn of the 18th century, when the Nabāb of Bengal had virtually become independent of the control of the central government of Delhi, the affluent families in the townships on the Hooghly district started an indiscriminate imitation of the extravagant way of life that prevailed in the court of the Nabāb.<sup>21</sup> It was soon followed by the emergence of a number of Bengali families who became wealthy

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21. Sen, Sukumār, Bāngalā Sāhityer Itihās, vol.II., 3rd ed., 1955, p.157.

either by trading with the European merchants or by cooperating with the East India Company.<sup>22</sup> This class mainly consisted of the native agents of the Company popularly known as banian or gomastā. Thus Kānta Bābu, the founder of the Kāśimbājār estate was a banian to Mr. Sykes, a servant of the East India Company,<sup>23</sup> and Mahārāj Nabakṛṣṇa, the founder of the Sobhābājār estate, was munsī to Warren Hastings.<sup>24</sup> Two further examples of rich men who owed their fortunes to cooperation with the Company are Rāmmohan Rāy and Dvārakānāth Thākur. A contemporary of theirs, Rājā Rādhākānta Deb, was grandson of Mahārāj Nabakṛṣṇa of Sobhābājār.

Nabakṛṣṇa had started life as 'Persian munsī to Warren Hastings'. Later he entered the service of Laksmikānta alias Naku Dhar, banian to Lord Clive, and subsequently himself became munsī to Lord Clive. In 1780 Nabakṛṣṇa was appointed by Warren Hastings as manager of Burdwan zamindari.<sup>25</sup> Rājā Baidyanāth Rāy, another of Rāmmohan's contemporaries, was the third son of Mahārājā Sukhamay Rāy, who was himself

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22. Ibid., p.157.

23. Datta, K.K. Survey of India's Social Life and Economic Condition in the 18th century, (1707-1813), Calcutta., 1961, p.124.

24. Buckland, C.E., Dictionary of Indian Biography, London, 1906, p.310.

25. Ibid., p.310.

the grandson of Lakṣmikānta alias Naku Dhar, the founder of the Postā Rāj family of Calcutta.

Naku Dhar, as he was popularly known, came of very humble origins. It is said that he was once muttering his prayers on the Ganges embankment when he spotted an Englishman floating down the river. Naku Dhar rescued the man, who turned out to be the sole survivor of a boating accident. Naku Dhar revived the man and allowed him to stay as his house-guest during his convalescence. Through association with this chance acquaintance, Naku Dhar picked up a smattering of English and was later engaged as an interpreter in the service of the Company. There is a tradition that Naku Dhar's loyalty to the Company was instrumental in helping lay the foundation of its power in India.<sup>26</sup>

In short almost all the rich families of Calcutta in the early 19th century, such as the Debs, the Rāys, the Thākurs and the Ghoṣāls, owed their positions in society to cooperation with the Company.<sup>27</sup>

For obvious commercial reasons these people learnt

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26. S.S.K., vol.I., p.416.

27. Bāgāl, Yogeścandra, Unabiṃśa Satābdīr Bāmlā, (enlarged edition), 1963, p.1.



English and for the same reason again they were prompted to adopt certain English practices as well. But it should be remembered that British rule had only recently commenced and at this period Britishers were actually adopting, or at least observing, prevailing indigenous customs and institutions, rather than introducing their own. Persian was still the official language, and the culture of high society was still predominantly Muslim. Purdah was observed by Hindu and Muslim ladies alike.<sup>28</sup> The only women to be seen in public were either prostitutes or lowcaste. The last vestiges of the nabābī tradition of maintaining a private hārem still persisted in the practice of keeping a paid concubine. The Samācār Darpan of the 16th October, 1819, for example, reports that 'Nikī, the famous Calcutta courtesan, has been appointed by a rich bābu on a salary of Rs.1,000 per month.'<sup>29</sup> Rich Calcutta bābūs used at this time to celebrate the Dūrgā Pūjā with lavish parties

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28. In a party held at his residence on the 21st April, 1824, Lord Bishop Heber reminded Harimohan Thākur, a conservative Hindu, 'that the introduction of women into society was an ancient Hindoo custom, and only discontinued in consequence of the Mussulman conquest.' Harimohan assented to it with a laugh, adding however, "It is too late for us to go back to the old custom now." Some Account of the Life of Reginald Heber, D.D., London, 1829, p.138.

29. S.S.K., vol.I., p.136.

at which Muslim courtesans were engaged to sing and dance. In 1820 no such party could be held, since the Hindu Dūrgā Pūjā clashed that year with the Muslim Muharram out of respect for which no courtesan would consent to sing or dance.<sup>30</sup> Europeans are reported to have attended such Pūjā celebrations, at which alcoholic refreshments were served.<sup>31</sup> Inebriation amongst Europeans on such occasions was commonplace. John Bull deprecated such excesses.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, so sumptuous were these pūjā festivities that not a few families reduced themselves to penury celebrating them. By 1829, however, the Samācār Darpan was reporting that much of the pristine glamour had faded from such festivities and John Bull also observed that Europeans had ceased attending them.<sup>33</sup>

The bābu's linguistic pretensions are an interesting reflection on the language situation in contemporary Calcutta. Tilakcandra is said to have conversed with an affected accent and in another tongue when visiting his friend, Hājī Hādī Sāheb. It may have been noticed that

30. The Samācār Darpan, 21st October, 1820; S.S.K., vol. I, p. 259.

30. The Samācār Darpan, the 17th October, 1829; S.S.K., vol. I., p. 137.

32. Ibid., S.S.K., vol. I., p. 137.

33. Ibid., S.S.K., vol. I., p. 137.

in outlining the rise of the rich Calcutta families, the word munsī was frequently used. They were the Persian-speaking secretaries. In the early days of Company rule, and also during Mogal rule of course, Persian was the official language of Bengal. During that period any Hindu or Muslim wishing to advance professionally had to learn Persian.<sup>34</sup> Since this was the case, it was probable that Persian was then spoken in Bengal, much as English is today and that those who could not converse entirely in Persian conversed in it as much as they could, making up the deficit with Bengali; as is done in the case of English today. This practice is obviously the origin of the bastard Hindī now current in the markets of Calcutta. Such a mixed language was undoubtedly current in the time of Bhāratcandra who refers to it as bhāsā yābanī mūṣāl<sup>35</sup> i.e., Persianised Bengali. It was probably this language that Tilakcandra is alleged to have used with Hājī Hādī Sāheb. At a time when Persian was still the official language, it is natural

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34. In June 1824, when Bishop Heber, on his way to the upper provinces of India reached Sibnibas, a few miles off Kṛṣṇanagar, he was received by the great grandsons of Rājā Kṛṣṇacandra who 'invited us very courteously, in Persian, to enter their father's dwelling.' Some Account of the Life of Reginald Heber, D.D., London, 1829, p.145.
35. Dās, Sajani Kānta and Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth, Bhāratcandra Granthābalī, Calcutta, 1950, p.339.

that such a mixed language should have been resorted to by those desiring status, but lacking education, as was the case with Tilakcandra.

There are also religious undertones in this upākhyān which suggest disquiet on the part of the author at the changes he observed in the contemporary situation in Calcutta, changes which were exposed with greater vehemence in later writings. Here they are present by implication, but later as religious controversy waxed hotter they are described in terms of virulent invective.

Rāmmohan Rāy caused a section of the opulent society of Calcutta to break away from the traditional practices of Hinduism, when he settled in Calcutta in 1814. The following year in his Māniktalā residence, he founded his Atmīya Sabhā (Society of Friends) to propagate the worship of the formless Brahma.<sup>36</sup> He argued that the Vedas did not sanction idolatry and to publicise this view he published in 1815 his first theological treatise Vedānta Grantha.<sup>37</sup> At the weekly meetings of his Atmīya Sabhā, readings of the Vedas were held and hymns in praise of Brahma sung.<sup>38</sup> Even before these meetings commenced, society had harboured feelings of

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36. Cattopādhyāy, Nagendranāth, Mahātma Rājā Rāmmohan Rāy, 5th ed., 1928, p.299.

37. Ibid., pp. 44-54.

38. Ibid., p.299.

resentment against the conduct of these rich Calcutta families. These meetings fanned this resentment to a fury, which, however, failed to find expression until 1818, when the first indigenous journal Samācār Darpan appeared on the news-stands.

Tilakcandra Bābu the central figure of the upākhyān symbolises the characteristics of his class. By ridiculing him, the author, obviously an orthodox Hindu, attacks and ridicules the entire class. In other words, the victims of the present satire are those members of early 19th century Calcutta society whose wealth permitted them to flout Hindu traditions. Rājcaḡrabartī was a kulīn Brahmin, yet he cared not two straws for his caste and creed. The gāyatrī alone was sufficient religious instruction for a rich son of the merchantile classes, provided he had sense enough to safeguard his inheritance. As far as Rājcaḡrabartī's 'perverted' sense of religion went, the dancing of frogs and the singing of lizards constituted 'auspicious ceremonies'. Like Rājcaḡrabartī, Rāmmohan Rāy was also a kulīn Brahmin. Like Rājcaḡrabartī too, Rāmmohan and Dvārakānāth had amassed their fortunes by trading with, or working under, the East India Company. Both had, like Rājcaḡrabartī, a wide circle of influential Muslim and European friends. And both also wore huge turbans and travelled about in horse-drawn carriages.

Rāmmohan is also reputed to have had, like Tilakcandra, a wide circle of admirers, of whom it could be said that:

‘there were some men there who joined him from the selfish motive of having their worldly interests promoted by so clever and businesslike a man as he.’<sup>39</sup>

Dvārakānāth Thākur enjoyed a similar reputation for his astute business sense; and he had also, like Tilakcandra, a reputation for lavish spending. On his first visit to Europe in 1842 his extravagance earned him the unofficial sobriquet of Prince.<sup>40</sup>

The characteristics which the author of this upākhyān is holding up to ridicule can be summarized in the changes which the word bābu was undergoing. Earlier the word had been a title of respect, corresponding in large measure to the English word ‘gentleman’. In some circles it was still used as the equivalent of the abbreviated form of address ‘Mr’. The Samācār Darpan of the 1st May, 1824, while reporting on a function held in the residence of the Lord Bishop of Calcutta, stated that

“among the Bengali guests present on this occasion were Bābu Rādhākānta Deb, Bābu Kāśīnāth Mallik,

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39. Lethbridge, Sir Roper, op.cit., p.171.

40. Bāgal, Yogeścandra, op.cit., p.16.

Bābu Gurucaraṇ Mallik, Bābu Harimohan Thākur,  
 Bābu Umānandan Thākur, Bābu Syāmlāl Thākur and  
 Bābu Biśvambhar Pāni etc."<sup>41</sup>

Quite clearly however in the age of which we are writing the term had begun to acquire a new connotation. Its employment in the title of this upākhyān and as part of the hero's name is proof of the derogatory direction of the change. The bābu in this context is not a respectable Hindu gentleman, but a Hindu who has become tainted by customs alien to those of his own society, in this case by the licentious and luxurious habits associated with the courts of the local nabābs. He and his father still pay lip service to the orthodox code while indulging in practices which were abhorrent to those who still adhered to the traditional Hindu way of life. The ridicule which the Hindu author - for there is no doubt that he was a Hindu even though we are not sure of his name - poured upon his nabābī bābu, is also indicative of the attitude of some members of Hindu society towards their Muslim fellow-countrymen. The bābu's characteristics which are pilloried are allegedly nabābī characteristics, and the nabābs were Muslim. Yet nabābī ways of life were not the only temptations to which

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41. S.S.K., vol.I., p.239.

young men were exposed. It was clear that many of them were adopting the dress, eating habits and ways of life generally of the British residents, the sāhebs. So, as can be seen in the second Bābur Upākhyān, the word bābu had also come to mean 'westernised'. As early therefore as 1821, bābu had ceased to be an epithet of respect applied to a Hindu of good position, but had been transferred as a pejorative term to that class of men who had accepted nabābī or Sāhebi ways of life as their own.

## (ii)

The second Bābur Upākhyān which, as has been stated above,<sup>42</sup> appeared in the Samācār Darpan on the 9th June, 1821, was according to the editor's note the work of the same man as the former. The following is an abridged translation of it.

As a result of the pandit's flattery, Bābu imagined that he knew all there was to know of Bengali traditions and culture. Then he determined to live like the sāhebs (Europeans), modelling his behaviour on theirs in every particular.

For instance the sāhebs generally go for a ride in the mornings and evenings, either in a

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42. v. supra, sec.I, p. 78 .



carriage or on horseback. Babu gave instructions to his servant to wake him before the gun so that he could go for a ride on horseback early in the morning. Unfortunately he spent most of the night in a brothel and arriving home in the early hours went off to bed. Soon the servant came and woke him. He was still feeling sleepy, when he got up and by the time he was mounted and ready to go, it was well past sunrise. He felt ashamed to ride along the same road the sāhebs go at that time of the day. So he went a different way. Horses have a knack of recognising inexperienced riders. This one soon recognised the Bābu and flung him off. He was sent sprawling on to the cinder track, the cinders lacerated his face and hands. He returned home half-carried along by the groom. The horse had bolted.

When a European gives his word to anyone, he keeps it; i.e. he does not lie. This is European ethics. Bābu's ethics were manifested in his intercourse with the many people who came to see him. If some beggar came to see him and told him the troubles of his father and mother, Bābu straightway refused to give anything. When, hearing this, gentlemen interceded on the beggar's behalf, Bābu replied, 'Do you want me to turn into a Bengali? If, after having once refused him, I were to give him something, my word would become a lie. As long as I live, I shall prevent that. A man's word is final.'

When a European quarrels with anyone, he virtually makes war. He attacks him with fist, pistols and so forth. By way of imitating that, Bābu punched his dependent relatives and also threatened to shoot them whenever his anger was aroused. Bābu considered this a mark of virility.

Europeans go to church on Sundays and attend to business on the other days. In view of this, Bābu abandoned all daily and evening ceremonies, and went into the garden on Sundays when he sometimes listened to kheur (vulgar ditties) from sakher yātrā (amateur yātrā).

Europeans express courtesy by going to the homes of people in need and trying in various ways to remove their difficulties. Bābu also went to see the distressed families in their homes, but his main interest was to discover the women of the families concerned and establish illicit relations with them.

Europeans act as arbitrators. Bābu became an arbitrator. He consulted English books of law. But his judgement was far from impartial.

When Europeans speak Hindī, they pronounce 't' and 'd' as 'ṭ' and 'ḍ'. So when anyone asked Bābu his name, he replied, 'Ḍāṭārām Gos'; i.e. Dātārām Ghos.

The editor's note on this upākhyān, yāhā pūrbe chāpāna giyāchila tāhār dvitiyā paricched, (the second chapter of

the article which was printed previously), suggests that it is a continuation of the first upākhyān.

It is clearly not so. It is a separate and independent sketch about a different bābu. The bābu's name in this case is Dātārām Ghoṣ not Tilakcandra. He is of a different caste too: he is a Kāyastha whereas Tilakcandra was a Brahmin. Tilakcandra is a nabābī bābu. He imitates the Muslim nabābs. He holds courts in his assembly of sycophants; he wears a pāg. Dātārām Ghoṣ on the other hand has adopted the habits of the sāhebs. He goes for a ride in the morning. He pretends to fight duels. He abandons the traditional Hindu ceremonies such as āhnik, sandhyā and pūjā, for the simple reason that sāhebs do not observe them; but every Sunday he goes to his garden house in imitation of the sāhebs who go to church on Sunday. He reads law books in the hope of becoming an advocate like them.

That the writer does not approve of such behaviour is evident from the fact that every attempt of the bābu to adopt western ways is made to end in disaster and humiliation. One feels that he is more severe in his satire on Dātārām Ghoṣ than he was on Tilakcandra. He has aligned himself with that growing number of orthodox Hindus who were becoming alarmed at the number of the

Calcutta Hindus who were imitating the sāhebs, and who in a changing society wished still to preserve the old which they felt to be increasingly under challenge. Westernisation was a danger. Many of the rich families of Calcutta, as we have said before,<sup>43</sup> owed their affluence to the East India Company and the commercial houses in the city, and sought to stabilize their economic positions by developing intimate social relations with the sāhebs. Many of them, even among the conservatives, used to invite European residents to parties in their houses, some of which are described in the newspapers. References to some such parties are mentioned in the press.

'1823, May. - The other evening we went to a party given by Rammohun Roy, a rich Bengalee Baboo; the grounds which were extensive, were well-illuminated, and excellent fireworks displayed. In various rooms at the house nauch girls were dancing and singing ... The style of singing was curious; ... one of the women was Nickee, the Catalani of the East.'<sup>44</sup>

Nikī, as stated earlier,<sup>45</sup> was a notorious Muslim courtesan.

On the 11th December, 1823, Dvārakānāth Thākur threw

43. v. supra, section I, p. 69.

44. Parkes, Fanny, Wanderings of a Pilgrim in search of Picturesque during four and twenty years in the east with Revelations of life in the Zenana, London, 1850, vol. I. pp. 29-30.

45. v. supra, section I, Chapter III, p. 91.

a house-warming party which was attended by distinguished members of the European community of Calcutta.<sup>46</sup> Their wives were also present. The guests were entertained to a sumptuous dinner, and afterwards songs, dances and western music were performed to their satisfaction. That the conservative members of Hindu society did not hesitate to ingratiate themselves with their European benefactors is evident from reports, published in contemporary journals, of functions held in their homes. The Samācār Darpan of the 4th October, 1823, reports that a farewell dinner was given in honour of Mr. Ferguson, a Counsel of the Supreme Court, Calcutta, at the residence of Bābu Kāśīnāth Mallik.<sup>47</sup> It was attended by a number of English lawyers of the Supreme Court. The function comprised two parts: the first being dinner, followed by speeches in appreciation of the services of Mr. Ferguson; and the second in the ballroom being a dance in honour of the guests, all of whom were European. They were charmed by the dancing of the beautiful Muslim girls. On the 17th November, 1823, Bābu Rūplāl Mallik held a resplendent reception on the

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46. The Samācār Darpan, the 20th December, 1823, S.S.K., vol.I, pp. 138-139.

47. S.S.K., vol.I., p.236.

occasion of the Rāsa festival (festival of Lord Kṛṣṇa's circular dance).<sup>48</sup> Invitations were extended to the European community of Calcutta. Professional dancing girls (tāyāphā nartakī) performed dances in the ornate ball-room, and dinner was served in a room downstairs. The European guests were reported to have enjoyed the rich food and wine. They were then entertained to music played by members of the Bādsāhī Palṭan (Royal Army?) Orchestra. The report ends by saying that never before had such a dance been held in the home of a bābu. The occasion for holding such functions was not always religious. The Samācār Darpan reports that on the 18th March, 1824, Bābu Gurucaraṅ Mallik gave a dinner in his residence at Barabājār Calcutta to entertain his European friends.<sup>49</sup> Once more the guests were served with rich food and wine, and afterwards there were dances by courtesans.

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48. Ibid., p.137. Lady Heber has given an interesting account of this function which, according to her was arranged by 'a rich native, Roupall Mullich, on the opening of his new house.' She also noticed 'a crowd collected round a songstress of great reputation, named Viiki, the Catalan of the East, who was singing in a low but sweet voice some Hindoostanee songs...' The songstress here referred to is apparently none other than Niki whom we have already spoken of. Lady Heber however did not seem to enjoy the party. She felt that 'the whole exhibition was fatiguing and stupid, - nearly every charm but that of novelty wanting.' Heber, Reginald, Lord Bishop of Calcutta, Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-1825. vol. I., 4th ed., London, 1829, pp. 47-48.

49. S.S.K., vol. I., p. 239.

There were some Hindus who went further in their association with the sāhebs and in their neglect of orthodox practices than the body of the conservatives were prepared to accept. One of these was Rāmmohan Rāy who was already attacking certain Hindu practices and beliefs, and who was shortly to become the object of virulent attacks from the protagonists of Hinduism. It may be that some of this antagonism to Rāmmohan Rāy is reflected in this second Bābur Upākyañ. He had accepted some western habits which appeared to him agreeable and healthy. His house at Māniktalā was decorated in the English style.<sup>50</sup> He had abandoned the traditional forms of morning and evening worship, and instead used to take a morning walk, returning 'home before the sunrise'.<sup>51</sup> The misfortune which befell Dātārām Ghoṣ is reminiscent of a similar experience of Rāmmohan Rāy's. Debendranāth Thākur (1817-1905) reveals:

'Rājā (i.e. Rāmmohan) possessed an ordinary old carriage. The horse did not have a proper halter, and often, for want of a rein, a rope was used. It sometimes happened that the horse

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50. Caṭṭopādhyāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., p.38.

51. Ibid., appendix, p.728.

would manage to slip his bridle and run away, leaving the Rājā seated in his immobile carriage. After one of these mishaps, the Rājā had once to walk all the way home. He observed to me afterwards: "That horse and carriage made a proper fool of me." 52

If therefore we are right in assuming that this upākhyān contains references to Rāmmohan Rāy, it will be observed that they are of two kinds: his neglect of accepted Hindu forms of worship and an allegedly excessive degree of westernization. Of course if this attack was intended to be personal it was unjust: Dātārām Ghoṣ was a fool, Rāmmohan Rāy was a thinker and scholar, as well as a great leader in Indian society; Dātārām Ghoṣ imitated slavishly, without any reason except the enhancement of his personal reputation in his own circle, whereas Rāmmohan Rāy imitated only what he thought to be worth-while and healthy. The satirist however, when he is personally involved, is not always concerned with justice.

(iii)

A third bābu satire followed shortly. It appeared

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52. Ibid., p.734.



in the Samācār Darpaṇ on the 23rd June, 1821.<sup>53</sup> It bore the title Saukīn Bābu (A foppish Bābu), and was published over the pseudonym Ajñātakulaśīl (one whose family and character are not known). It goes as follows:

The Snānyātrā (the Bathing Festival of Lord Jagannāth) attracts each year from town and city a host of wealthy bābus, who, either as participants or as spectators, attend, bringing along with them such things as afford them entertainment, some preferring singers and musicians, some prostitutes, some jesters and some dancing girls; and all, according to the means, hiring pleasure craft.

Hearing of this annual event, this year one of this new-fangled fops impetuously hired a hāp-bajrā (a minor pleasure craft) and set out to attend the Bathing Festival, accompanied by his wife. When they were about to board the boat, the boatmen eyed the lady and desiring to sport with her, as they did with all the Bābus' women, said: 'The way to the boat is muddy, bābu. Allow the two of us to put the lady aboard';<sup>54</sup> and the Bābu assented.

Later, going on deck and surveying the nautical

53. S.S.K., vol.I., pp. 115-116.

54. Text: Bābujī naukāy yāite bara kādā ataeb bibiṭhākuraṇīke āmrā duijan mājhi laiṃā naukārohan karāi. S.S.K., I, p.115.

scene, the bābu observed that aboard the other craft almost all the other 'nymphs' were either singing, drinking or indulging in amorous sulks. Grieved by his lady's lack of such amorous graces, the bābu said: 'Do something. Just sing a kheur (vulgar ditty) and I will accompany you on the tablā, and you can dance as you sing.'<sup>55</sup> Chaste wife that she was, the lady complied with his every whim the whole night through, completely dispelling his displeasure.

In the morning, the boat arrived at its destination, which was the Māheś Stairs; and this foppish mine of virtue betook himself to watch the bathing. Meanwhile his wife descended from the boat on that auspicious full-moon day into the Ganges to bathe. Here the tide itself, like god incarnate, rushed to protect her chastity. The profusion of craft created confusion. Unable to tell which was her own, the talented lady's purifying feet trod the deck of some other mine of virtue. Whether she had an assignation or not, there is no knowing, but never again was she seen by that foppish mine of virtue. The poor fellow enquired after her from door to door throughout the town, but without success. And so, the author concludes, 'I beg of you, foppish gentlemen, Do not do likewise. Such whims end only in disgust.'<sup>56</sup>

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55. Text: Tumi ek karma kara kebal sojā kheur gīt gāo āmi khemtā bādya bājāi ar sei tāle nr̥tya kara.  
 56. Text: Ataeb nibedan he saukin mahāsayerā eimata śauk suniyā bami uthe emata karma ar keha nā karen. S.S.K., I.,p.116.

This piece is brilliant, both as satire and as literature. To appreciate it, however, knowledge of contemporary society is needed. As in the case of the two earlier satires, much of the background detail is probably authentic, though in this case the central event is unlikely. At this period purdah was strictly observed. The only married women seen in public were either European or low-caste and immoral Indians. This remained so until the 6th decade of the 19th century, when Satyendranāth Thākur, grandson of Dvārakānāth, Rāmmohan's associate, achieved the double distinction of being the first Indian to enter the Indian Civil Service and, when posted to Bombay, to take with him his wife. It is impossible to say which event excited more comment in contemporary society: the entrance of Satyendranāth into the I.C.S. or his taking his wife out of purdah.<sup>57</sup>

The breaking of purdah in itself constituted an important event. Singing and dancing were activities reserved for professionals, bāijī or bāi: no respectable Hindu lady would sing a note or dance a step,<sup>58</sup> let alone spend the

57. Thākur, Rabīndranāth, Chelebelā, Calcutta, 1944, p.50. also Mukhopādhyāy, Prabhātkumār, Rabīndrajābanī, vol.I., 1933, pp.25-26.

58. Caudhurānī, Saralā Debī, Jībaner Jharāpātā, 1957, p.73.

whole night swinging her hips to the tablā and singing kheur.

The central event of this piece is therefore highly improbable, which explains why it constituted such hilarious satire. In effect, the foppish bābu had invited his wife on a naughty nautical weekend, where a mistress would have been more appropriate, and allowed her to be suggestively manhandled by the boatmen, who mistook her for a whore and addressed her as such; and then induced her to sing and dance like a prostitute in a brothel. In consequence he lost her for ever; which in this piece is deemed a fitting punishment for such a naive idiot.

An interesting feature of this satire is that the saukin bābu is obviously an upstart, who has only recently acquired sufficient fortune to enter high society with whose manners he is not acquainted. One deduces from this satire that there was already in existence a bābu class for this upstart to enter, and that it was to some extent at any rate profligate. Its enjoyment of religious

festivals such as the snānyātrā of Māheś<sup>59</sup> was almost entirely irreligious; the occasion being merely a pretext for carrying their Calcutta capers into the countryside via the waterways of riverine Bengal. Surprisingly, this profligacy does not occasion any comment from the author, who accepts it as normal upperclass behaviour: the only abnormal and reprehensible event is to introduce a lawfully wedded wife into such a licentious setting.

This satire indicates that the author does not disapprove of bābu's attending the snānyātrā accompanied by prostitutes. Actually in early 19th century Bengal recourse to prostitutes was commonplace. No stigma was

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59. 'Māheś is a quarter of the Serampore town (in the district of Hooghly, now in West Bengal) lying between Risra and Ballabhpur. Situated on the bank of the river Hooghly Māheś is famous for its temple of Jagannāth, and for the annual festivals of Snānyātrā (Bathing festival), Ratha Yātrā (car festival) and Uṭṭāyātrā (return festival), which attract immense crowds to the town. As to the origin of the temple of Jagannath, there exist at least two legends. It is however assumed that the worship of Jagannath is several centuries old and not improbably began in the middle of the 16th century when Telinga Mukunda Harichandan, the last independent Hindu King of Orissa, conquered south western Bengal up to Tribani. Snānyātrā or the bathing festival of Jagannāth takes place at full moon of the month of Jaiṣṭha which corresponds to the latter end of May and the first part of June. It lasts one day, but is attended by a large concourse of people from the neighbouring villages and from Calcutta. The ceremony simply consists in bringing the god out of his temple on to a platform, and bathing him in the presence of the multitude, who make offerings to the deity. Nowhere

attached to it: indeed, it might even enhance a man's social status. Śibanāth Śāstrī writes:

'Since it was in those days out of practice to go abroad with wife and family, and fornication also was not considered as a vicious act by society, almost every government servant, lawyer and mukhtear used to keep mistress. Consequently brothels sprang up around their places of residence ... It is reported about conditions prevailing in the district of Jessore that it was customary there to introduce influential members of society such as pleaders and mukhtears to a newcomer by saying that "He has erected a brickbuilt house for his mistress". It was a matter of great prestige on one's part to present one's mistress with a brickbuilt house. Not only in Jessore was the moral atmosphere deplorable, it was so all over the country.<sup>60</sup>

The moral atmosphere of Bengal in the preceding century was no better. Kṛṣṇacandra of Nadiyā, now noted as a great patron of art and culture, deserves no less a reputation as a libertine.<sup>61</sup> Despite his adherence to orthodox

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(Footnote continued from previous page ...)

except in Purī of Orissa is this function observed with such pomp and splendour as in Māheś.' O'Malley, L.S.S., and Chakravarti, Monmohan, Bengal District Gazetteers, Hooghly. Calcutta, 1912, pp. 29, 103, 105, 287, 317; also S.S.K., vol.I., p.256.

60. Śāstrī, Śibanāth, Rāmtanu Lāhirī o Tatkālīn Baṅgasamāi, Calcutta, p.41.

61. S.S.K., vol.I., p.464.

Hinduism,<sup>62</sup> his love of erotic verse impelled his court poet Bhāratcandra to compose a poem on the Vidyā Sundar theme. So widespread was immorality in the late 18th century Bengal that 'the great bulk of Europeans, both in and out of the service (of the Company) lived unmarried with native females, and their leisure was spent in the most debasing associations.'<sup>63</sup> This state of affairs existed, according to J.C.Marshman, 'for a quarter of a century after the Battle of Plassey'<sup>64</sup> and to use his phrase, 'England had subdued Bengal, and Bengal had subdued the morals of its conquerors'.<sup>65</sup>

## (iv)

The next contribution to the press on the bābu theme was a letter published in Samācār Candrikā. The name of the correspondent and the date of publication are unknown. The summary given below is based on a reprint which appeared

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62. 'When Raja Rajballabh of Dacca in 1756 wanted to get his widowed daughter remarried he referred the matter to the learned pandits of Dravida, Tailanga, Banaras, Mithila and some other places who unanimously decided in favour of remarriage. But his efforts bore no fruit owing to the strong opposition of Maharaja Krsnacandra of Nadia.' Datta, K.K., op.cit., p.36.

63. Marshman, J.C., op.cit., vol.I., p.41.

64. Ibid., p.41.

65. Ibid., p.41.

in the Samācār Darpan on the 22nd January, 1825, under the heading: Bālaker Imrāji Poṣāk (Children in Western Dress).<sup>66</sup> The letter reads like a narration of an actual incident. It is not satire and therefore strictly speaking falls outside the purview of the present chapter. It is included because it has a direct bearing on the bābu theme, and because, being a sincere expression of doubt on the part of a conservative Hindu about the wisdom of clothing Bengali children in foreign dress, it provides a touchstone of truth against which to evaluate satirical writings on the same theme. It is as follows:

The author used each day to go to the Ganges to bathe. Every morning he would see on the new road skirting the Ganges embankment a number of boys riding either on pony-back or in carriages, accompanied by beautifully-turbaned footmen. This led him to suppose that the boys were European children. One day however to his surprise he saw them heading towards Bāngālīṭolā, an exclusively Bengali residential area. Puzzled, he asked the footmen to which European families the children belonged. This question set the footmen laughing in derision. 'What a foolish and ignorant Brahmin! They are the children of bābus.' They exclaimed in Hindī.

The author remained sceptical. Admittedly,

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66. S.S.K., vol.I., p.129.



the children's complexions were on the dark side, but on the other hand their clothing was almost completely European. Presuming them to be of mixed parentage, he asked the children their names. The author's doubts were completely removed, when one of them replied that his name was Śrī Adhāman Bābu and that his father was a Bengali Hindu.

Having narrated this incident, the author then goes on to argue against the practice of clothing children in western dress on the grounds that if children were accustomed to foreign clothes from infancy, they might come to feel uncomfortable in traditional Bengali dress and decline to wear it. Admittedly, close relatives might not see harm in such a boy, when a grown man, entering their homes, dressed as an imitation sāheb, but strangers on the other hand might well be alarmed at such an eventuality since it might be mistaken by others for a visit from a genuine sāheb, which would naturally bring the house into disrepute.

This letter contains the first explicit reference to aversion to western dress. The accounts of bābu behaviour have so far referred, if anything, only to bābus being clothed in Muslim dress, principally the voluminous shirt and the large pāg. Even the bābu in the second Bābur Upākhyān<sup>67</sup> who modelled his behaviour in other respects on

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67. See section (ii) of the present chapter, p. 98.

that of the sāhebs did not, so far as we know, abandon 'traditional Bengali dress', a form of clothing that by then may well have included the Muslim shirt and turban.

That the author's fears were not groundless is shown in the aversion to traditional dress expressed by a young Hindu College student some five years later. 'I am not a jagajhampoyāla or a member of a kīrtan party that I should wear such clothes,' he indignantly declared when offered such clothes by his father.<sup>68</sup> Instead he demanded socks, shoes, trousers and so forth, which were beyond his father's means. When his father said he could not afford such clothes, the boy refused to go anywhere: in other words, it was beneath his dignity to be seen in Bengali dress.

(v)

The fifth extract from the newspapers of the period under review was published in the Samācār Candrikā on the 30th December, 1830.<sup>69</sup> It differs from all the other extracts which have been cited in that it is in verse. The

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68. The Samācār Candrikā, the 1st November, 1830.

69. A complete volume of the Samācār Candrikā for the Bengali year 1237 (nos. 476 to 580) i.e. 1830-1831, is located in the British Museum, London. See Blumhardt, J.F., Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books in the Library of the British Museum, London, 1886, p.78.

following is a summary.

The city of Kṣōddhā<sup>70</sup> lying north of Kāśīpur had a mixed population of well-off, middle class and poor families. There lived many kulīns belonging to the Brahmin and Kāyastha castes. Some of them were rich, some poor. There were three rich men, one in each of the three parts of the village. The leader of the middle part, Kalirāj by name, was continually engaged in 'heroic activities'.<sup>71</sup> His deeds were always admired by his flatterers. When a few of the villagers disapproved of his ways of living, all the sycophants of Kalirāj decided that they should be ostracised by being refused all invitations. Thereupon the poor Brahmins lamented, 'For what sin have we been ostracised? If subjects are loyal to the King, they enjoy many amenities and command respect in society. We did not agree with the ideas of the Kalirāj, and so we have been

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70. The city of Kṣōddhā in the present satire is probably a corruption of Khardah, a 'village in Barrackpore sub-division of the district of the Twenty-four Parganas, Bengal, situated in 22° 44' N. and 88° 22' E, on the left bank of the Hooghly river', whereas Kāśīpur is the 'northern suburb of Calcutta, in the district of the Twenty-four Parganas, Bengal, situated in 22° 37' N. and 88° 22' E, on the left bank of the Hooghly river'. The Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol.xi and vol.xy, Oxford, 1908, p.53 and p.251 respectively. It is apparent from the locations given above that Khardah is situated at the north of Kāśīpur.

71. Text: Kāl base bīr bhābe rata katajan.

outcaste. Since we have not acquired a liking for brandy, we have been plunged into misery.

None of us has a Muslim wife and we never eat the meat that is sold in the market and this is imputed to us as a sin, and we are suffering for it.<sup>72</sup>

In the poem the Kalirāj is a rich man. He is always surrounded and flattered by a number of sycophants. He drinks brandy, eats the meat that is sold in the market and also has a Muslim wife. Most of the villagers approve of his deeds, because he is rich. But a few kulīn members of the Brahmin and Kāyastha castes do not. Consequently they are boycotted.

This passage, which comes towards the end of our period, is far more bitter and direct than those which preceded it. It is written by a man who feels that the cause of orthodox Hinduism is lost. The age of wickedness, kali yuga, has indeed come, for those who adhere to the most solemn requirements of their creed, i.e. not to eat meat, not to drink alcohol, and to marry within their own caste, are now being

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72. Text: Eirupe kata khed kare dvijagan / Sthagita hailām pāpe śunaha karan // Nṛpatir baśibhūta hale prajāgan / Nānā sukh bhūñje hay mānya seijan // Kalirājer mat haite amarā amat / Sei pāpe ekghare hailām tāhat // Kakhana nā hala sabhar brāndite mati / Sei janve pāi sabe etek dūrgati // Kahar yabanī bhārya itimadhye nāi / Bājārer māṃsa morā kakhana nā khāi // Sei pāpe hala sabhar etek etek dūrgati / Ihār adhik ar ki likhiba iti //

boycotted and treated as outcastes. The king of wickedness, Kalirāj, is in control and his supporters were in the majority. What were the virtues of the Hindu have now become crimes. The Samācār Candrikā published a significant letter, reprinted in the Samācār Darpan of the 22nd August, 1829:

'In the city of Calcutta, instead of being denounced for practising such things as eating meat from the butcher, consorting with Muslim prostitutes, and drinking alcohol and so forth, people are actually being respected.'<sup>73</sup>

This was the time when Derozio's disciples at the Hindu College were openly challenging the values of orthodox Hinduism. In violation of śāstric injunctions, they not only ate meat and bread prepared by Muslims, but arrogantly publicised the fact. Śibanāth Śāstrī writes:

'On the 23rd of August 1831, his (Derozio's) favourite pupils got into a scrape. They used to meet in Krishna Mohan's house; and on the day in question they came there as usual. Having feasted on loaves from a Muhammedan bakery, and on roast meat from the butcher, they threw the refuse of the dishes into the court of an adjoining house, and bawled "This is beef, nothing but beef."<sup>74</sup>

73. S.S.K., I.p.135.

74. Lethbridge, Sir Roper, op.cit., p.86.

The identity of Kalirāj is not unknown to us. The King of Kali who drinks brandy, eats meat from the market, and is married to a Muslim woman is, of course, Rāmmohan Rāy. The satirist sees him as the source of the values of the modern age and regards his sycophantic followers as the source of mischief in the satire. The most ardent advocates of 'modernism' were in fact, not Rāmmohan Rāy and his associates, but the products of Derozio at the Hindu College, amongst whom drinking was regarded 'as one of the chief indications of the superiority of a young Bengali to old-fashioned Hindu prejudices, and one of the chief characteristics of an enlightened mind.'<sup>75</sup> Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831), who joined the Hindu College in 1826<sup>76</sup> and was dismissed for his radical opinions in 1831,<sup>77</sup> created a tremendous stir amongst the younger generation. They opposed anything, however beneficial, associated with Hinduism. 'If there is anything that we hate from the bottom of our hearts,' one of them wrote, 'it is Hinduism.'<sup>78</sup>

Thus in effect there were amongst liberal Hindus at this

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75. Ibid., p.67.

76. The Samācār Darpan, the 13th May, 1826; S.S.K., I, p.32.

77. Bāgal, Yogeścandra, op.cit., p.48.

78. Lethbridge, Sir Roper, op.cit., p.69.

time two factions, divided partly by age and partly by attitude: the first were the middle-aged moderates of Rāmmohan's generation who still wore Muslim dress and who respected parts of Muslim, Hindu and Western culture; and the second were the younger generation, who saw good only in western culture, who spoke English and wore western clothes, and who were in all probability the sons of the moderate, middle-aged faction, some of whom seem to have encouraged the 'modernism' of their sons. Śibanāth Śāstrī writes:

'Once it came to the knowledge of ... Nandakisor Bose, a disciple of Rammohan Roy's, that his son had drunk too much and had showed signs of intoxication.

The young man being called into his father's presence and asked if the report were correct said it was. On this the father, taking from his almira, a full bottle and a glass, poured out a little wine, drank it himself and then offered an equal quantity to his son saying "Whenever you drink, drink with me in this way." This was one of the many instances showing how drinking was countenanced by men who had come into touch with the English.'<sup>79</sup>

The present satire indicates that the tide of modernism was not confined to the city of Calcutta: it had even reached

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79. Ibid., p.68.

the small village of Kharḍāh (Kṣḍdhā) to its north. While Rāmmohan, in his efforts to protect Hinduism from missionary propaganda on the one hand and to emancipate it from age-old superstitions on the other, was questioning the value of certain Hindu practices, the disciples of Derozio were attempting to shake their religion to its very foundations: "Down with idolatry, down with superstition" became the general cry of young Bengalis.<sup>80</sup> Conservative Hindu society in Bengal was beginning to crack under this fierce, if not united attack. The ostracism of the Kulīns by the flatterers of Kalirāj in this satire symbolises the growing popularity of modernism in early 19th century Bengal.

(vi)

The Samācār Candrikā published another bābu episode on the 10th March, 1831. It appeared in the correspondence column of the paper and was claimed by the writer, whose name we do not know, to be based on an actual incident. That the ridiculous situation in which the bābu finds himself is intended to inculcate a moral lesson is clear from the

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80. Ibid., p.86.



short verse passage which precedes the story. It reads as follows:

None can escape the consequences of their evil deeds  
 God gives man his due today or tomorrow.  
 Hold this saying in firm belief, for  
 You will now hear positive proof of it.<sup>81</sup>

The actual episode is as follows:

A strange gentleman who had come to Calcutta for business purposes was living in rented accommodation somewhere in Syāmbājār. He fell in love with a married woman. As she was willing, he enjoyed himself and accomplished his evil designs for some time without the knowledge of the woman's husband. When however the latter learned of his wife's misconduct, he resolved to mete out proper punishment to her lover. He concealed his knowledge of the affair from his spouse and bided his opportunity. A few days later when for some reason his mistress failed to meet him at the appointed place at the appointed hour, the paramour fell into a great passion. Pale and sad of face, he rushed to the house of his beloved and rattled the fence near the room in which she slept. The woman was asleep and did not hear, but the noise he was making reached the ears of her husband who cunningly put on female clothing and came to the front door. The sight

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81. Text: Duṣkarmer pratiphal nā hay erāna / Bilambe bā den bhagabān // Etad bacane sābe kara drrha jñān / Biṣeṣatah śuna tār prātyakṣa pramān //

of 'her' dispelled the paramour's gloom. He became ecstatic and frenzied with lust and deceived by the darkness of the night, he attempted to embrace the 'woman'. Then the husband attacked this 'mine of virtues' violently. He seized him and threw him to the ground. Then he thrashed him beating him with the palms of his hands and punching him with his fists, and kicking him with his feet and hammering him with his slippers. This fourfold beating put an end to the anticipated pleasure of that Adonis. The husband then began to pour abuse upon the woman. Meanwhile the bābu lover who had been strutting like an elephant, now made off like a crippled gnat, bruised and naked.

The writer of this letter signs himself yathārthānusan-  
dhāyinaḥ a Sanskrit compound meaning 'seeker after the truth'. What is the truth that the recounter of this farcical incident is seeking? It is surely not that the visiting bābu should seek to enjoy himself in the evening. There were brothels in plenty in the city, and enough has been said above<sup>82</sup> to show that it was not regarded as a sin to frequent them. The sin for which he was punished lay in his obtaining his enjoyment in the company of a married woman. There were limits to permitted vice, and he was transgressing those limits.

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82. v. supra, p. 112.

Chapter IV

PERSONAL SATIRE

In this chapter four satires are considered. They all appeared in the Samācār Candrikā towards the end of 1830. They differ markedly from the satires examined in the previous chapter, which, apart possibly from that on the sāhebī bābu, were directed not against individuals but against the behaviour of a certain section of Calcutta society. The satires outlined in this chapter are without any doubt personal attacks on Rāmmohan Rāy, who had by this time provoked the animosity of the orthodox Hindus by his liberal and reforming activity, and chiefly by his advocacy of the abolition of Satī; and they must therefore be judged against a background of bitter religious controversy. The virulence of the attacks against Rāmmohan Rāy was increased by the fact that Satī was declared illegal in 1829.

(i)

On the 13th September, 1830, there appeared in the correspondence columns of the Samācār Candrikā a letter signed candrikā pāthak (a Candrikā reader).<sup>1</sup> It is introduced by a single couplet in the traditional payār metre, which may be translated as follows:

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1. The Samācār Candrikā for the Bengali year 1237 i.e. 1830-31 A.D., pp. 367-368.

'If a man of repute becomes addicted to hemp,  
He loses his name and becomes known as Bird.'<sup>2</sup>

The body of the letter may be summarized as follows:

This is about a man-like bird who was opposed to Sati. On emerging from the shell, he had scarcely grown his wings when his parents died. Greatly dejected and unable to procure sufficient food in the city, he resolved to fly to the north. He settled where his fluttering wings took him, and stayed on out of loyalty to a European bird. Then gradually he fell into the habit of pecking innocent people, even though they were not harming him. Because of the pain occasioned them by this habit, the villagers grew annoyed with him; but because he was under the patronage of the European bird, they were powerless to peck back at him. United, these small birds could have killed him, but fear of the European bird kept them in check. This new bird became like the God of Death himself. His education had been limited to how to torment others. Finally, however, the small birds managed to sow in the mind of the European bird doubts about the loyal bird, with the result that the European bird beat him severely, and, withdrawing his protection, drove him away. Whereupon the loyal bird went to the King of Birds; but, because of his annoying other birds with his habitual pecking, he failed to regain his former position with the European bird, despite much supplication. Disappointed, he returned to the city, where he somehow secured the patronage of another King of Birds. Even so, his conduct remained unchanged and he continued to consume things that

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2. Text: Biśiṣṭa santān yaśi haṃ gāñjākhora/ svanām  
ghuciya tāra haṃ paksibar//

were forbidden and to engage constantly in opposition to Sati.

The author then urges his readers to take appropriate action to humiliate the said bird.

The opening couplet sets the scene for the presentation of this satirical story as an allegory in which the characters are birds. Sibanāth Sāstri explains that it had become a custom in Calcutta to refer to hemp-addicts as birds.

'There were in the city of Calcutta houses where hemp-smokers met, and passed hours, and even days, together, with no other motive than to inhale the exhilarating fumes of ganja. One house at Bowbazar was the most famous among these. The company that met here were each named after a bird, and so the name given to the association was "Birds' Association". A member on his admission received as a rule the name of a tiny bird, which, with his progress in hemp smoking would be changed into that of a larger one, and it was compulsory that he should imitate the sounds and movements of the feathered biped the name of which he bore.'<sup>3</sup>

Apparently the author of the letter failed to realise that in making all his characters birds, he was implying that they were all hemp-addicts, and this he could hardly have intended. The slanderous

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3. Lethbridge, Sir Roper, op.cit., p.51.

appellation, which there is no evidence to justify, could only have been intended for Rāmmohan Rāy.

The episodes in the story do bear a specious resemblance to events in Rāmmohan Rāy's life, though the interpretation the writer puts on them is uniformly hostile and unjust.

- i. The Bird is opposed to the practice of Satī. The historical accuracy of this statement is beyond doubt. Rammohan Rāy's sponsorship of the anti-Satī campaign was the main cause of the estrangement which developed between him and the conservative Hindus, whose chief spokesman at this time was Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy.

Rāmmohan's opposition to Satī dates from 1812,<sup>4</sup> though his campaign against it was not launched till after his return to Calcutta in 1814. His first tract on the subject, Sahamaran bisayé prabarttak o nibarttaker sambād, appeared in 1818. That same year witnessed the publication of an English version of it, A Conference between an Advocate and an Opponent of the practice of

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4. There is an anecdote that Rāmmohan took the vow to eradicate Satī in 1812 when in spite of his persuasion the wife of his elder brother Jagamohan burnt herself with her husband. Collet, S. D., Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy, London, 1900, p.15. The authenticity of this story has been challenged by recent critics who have established that at the time of Jagamohan's death, Rāmmohan was in fact staying at Rangpur. Moreover, none of Jagamohan's wives probably became a Satī. S.S.C., 16, pp.34-35; also De, S. K., Bengali Literature in the 19th century, p.502.

burning widows alive.<sup>5</sup> A further pamphlet on the same theme, Sahamaran bisaye prabarttak nibarttaker dvitiya sambād, was published in 1819. It was a bilingual publication, the English title being Second Conference between an Advocate and an Opponent of the practice of burning widows alive. It was dedicated to Lady Hastings.<sup>6</sup> His final work on this theme, Sahamaran bisaye, appeared in 1829<sup>7</sup> and English version of it, An Abstract of the Arguments regarding the burning of widows considered as a religious rite, in 1830,<sup>8</sup> after the practice had already (the 4th December, 1829) been declared by Lord Bentinck, the Governor General of Bengal, to be an illegal and punishable offence.<sup>9</sup> On the 16th January, 1830, Rāmmohan amidst an assembly of 300 citizens of Calcutta, presented to Lord Bentinck an address of honour acknowledging 'his act of benevolence to us'.<sup>10</sup> In reaction to this, the following day the editor of Samācār Candrikā, Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy, in a meeting held in Sanskrit College, formed an association of orthodox Hindus, the Dharma Sabhā, to mount a counter-

5. De, S. K., op.cit., p.522.

6. S.S.C., 16, pp.85-86.

7. Ibid., p.89.

8. De, S. K., op.cit., p.522.

9. Caṭṭopādhyāy, Nagendranāth, Mahātmā Rājā Rāmmohan Rāy, p.365.

10. Ibid., pp.366-367.

campaign to legalise Satī.<sup>11</sup> At the same meeting it was unanimously resolved to ostracise Hindus embracing opinions hostile to Hinduism or abandoning Hindu religious practices.<sup>12</sup> The meeting decided to appeal to the Privy Council against the abolition of Satī. At a later meeting of the Dharma Sabhā it was re-affirmed that any Hindu opposing Satī would be excommunicated;<sup>13</sup> and at that meeting Rāmmohan was in fact expelled from Hindu society.<sup>14</sup> It was even rumoured that Rāmmohan would be assassinated.<sup>15</sup> It was at about this time that Rāmmohan made public his intention of sailing to England.<sup>16</sup> This announcement provoked loud protests from orthodox society, to whom a sea-going voyage was tantamount to taking food from the son of an adulteress.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Rāmmohan divulged his intention of being present in the Privy Council, when the appeal against the abolition of Satī was heard.<sup>18</sup> This revelation infuriated the Samācār

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11. Samācār Candrikā, reprinted in Samācār Darpan, 23rd January, 1830, S.S.K., I., p.300.

12. Ibid., S.S.K., I., p.303.

13. Samācār Candrikā, reprinted in Samācār Darpan, 13th February, 1830, S.S.K., I., p.306.

14. Cattopadhyāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., p.366.

15. Ibid., p.366.

16. Ibid., pp.426-427.

17. 'Manu (III, 158) declares a Brahmana who has gone to sea to be unworthy of entertainment at a Sraddha.' In the same śloka (verse), a sea-going Brahmin has been ranked with 'an incendiary, he who eats the food given by the son of an adulteress, a seller of soma, a bard, an ūblman, and a suborner to perjury.' Mookerji, R. K., A History of Indian Shipping, a second edition, (revised), 1957, p.42.

18. Cattopadhyāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., p.424.



Candrikā: firstly, because Rāmmohan's sea voyage constituted a violation of the Hindu code; and secondly, because Rāmmohan was plainly intending to scotch orthodox hopes of a repeal of the Satī legislation.

ii. The Bird lost its parents while it was still a fledgling. This statement is exaggerated. Rāmmohan Rāy's father did not die until he was 29.<sup>19</sup> It is difficult to understand why the writer included this piece of information. It adds little to the attack on Rāmmohan Rāy, except possibly an implication that his life went to the bad because he had been deprived of proper parental discipline.

iii. The Bird left Calcutta and settled in the north where it secured the patronage of a European 'bird'.

Shortly after his father's death, Rāmmohan gained employment under a Civilian, named Woodforde, who took up his appointment in Murshidabad in February, 1804,<sup>20</sup> Rāmmohan went with him. Murshidabad is, needless to say, north of Calcutta. Some time later Rāmmohan came to be associated with another Civilian, John Digby, and 'did not leave his side as long as he felt himself in need of employment. For nine years (1805-1814) he followed Digby from Ramgarh to

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19. Banerji, Brajendranath, Rammohun Roy: The First Phase, article published in the Calcutta Review, vol.49, No.3. December, 1933, p.251.

20. Banerji, Brajendranath, Rammohun Roy, article published in the Calcutta Review, vol.50, No.1. January, 1934, p.60.

Jessore, Jessore to Bhagalpur, from Bhagalpur to Rangpur;...<sup>21</sup>

All these places are also north of Calcutta.<sup>22</sup>

iv. The Bird 'pecked at' the 'local small birds', who therefore prevailed upon the European 'bird' to cease to espouse his cause. The Bird then petitioned a higher authority (King of Birds) to regain his former privileged position, but, in view of his 'pecking habits', his petition failed, despite strenuous pleadings on his own behalf. At this point Rāmmohan's career, though retaining in broad outline a marked similarity to that of the 'man-like bird' of the satire, differs from it in detail. The European 'bird' is most probably John Digby. The 'local small birds' were most probably the orthodox Hindu communities in the locality of Digby's various postings north of Calcutta, though possibly they may have been the orthodox Hindu community of the whole of Bengal. The 'King of Birds' was probably the East India Company. The 'pecking habits' were probably Rāmmohan's pronouncements about Hinduism.

While in Murshidabad, Rāmmohan published his first theological tract, a work in Arabic and Persian on monotheism, entitled Tuhfatul Muwahiddin (A Gift to Deists).<sup>23</sup> There

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21. Ibid., p.60.

22. Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol.viii., 1908, p.25; vol.ix., 1908, p.260; vol.xiii, 1908, pp.85, 88-89; vol.xiv, 1908, p.90; vol.xviii, 1908, p.153; vol.xxi, 1908, pp.175, 222.

23. Banerji, Brajendranath, Calcutta Review, vol.49, No.3. December 1933, p.252.

is no known evidence of the reaction of the people of Murshidabad to this publication of Rāmmohan's, but it may be taken for granted that it did not elicit enthusiasm from orthodox Hindus. While in Rangpur, Rāmmohan 'wrote Persian tracts and translated parts of the Vedānta'.<sup>24</sup> Also whilst in Rangpur, Rāmmohan, so Nagendranāth Caṭṭopādhyāy maintains, used to hold in his own home symposia on religious topics, which included monotheism and the absence of sāstric support for polytheism and idolatry as practised at the time.<sup>25</sup> These 'peckings' antagonised a section of the Rangpur community, notably a śeristādār of the local court, Gaurikānta Bhaṭṭācārya,<sup>26</sup> who replied to them in a tract entitled Jñānāñjan, castigating Rāmmohan's opinions.<sup>27</sup> Gaurikānta also tried to ignite his own followers against Rāmmohan, though without success,<sup>28</sup> possibly because of Rāmmohan's enjoyment of 'the patronage of the European bird', Digby. Rāmmohan was however dismissed from the Company's service in 1811.<sup>29</sup> It is at this point that

24. English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy, vol.I., Calcutta, 1885, p.v.

25. Caṭṭopādhyāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., p.31; also Collet, S. D., op.cit., p.12.

26. De, S. K., op.cit., pp.13-14; but according to Caṭṭopādhyāy, Gaurikānta was the Deoṃān of the Judge's Court at Rangpur. Op.cit., p.31.

27. De, S. K., op.cit., p.513; also Caṭṭopādhyāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., p.31.

28. Caṭṭopādhyāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., p.31.

29. Rāmmohan was actually removed from the office of the

Rāmmohan's career deviates from that of the satire.

Digby never turned against Rāmmohan. It was the Board of Revenue which became hostile towards him, while Digby, out of admiration for Rāmmohan,

'made strenuous efforts to get the temporary nomination of Rammohan as his dewan confirmed by the Board of Revenue'.<sup>30</sup>

The Board refused.

'When in spite of their refusal Digby pleaded for his protege with some warmth, they wrote back that they "would certainly feel themselves compelled to take very serious notice of any repetition of similar disrespect towards them".<sup>31</sup>

It was Digby therefore, not Rāmmohan, who made representations to the 'King of Birds', with regard to Rāmmohan's reinstatement in the Company's service. Digby even pleaded with the Board of Revenue to allow Rāmmohan to continue for a few months longer in a temporary capacity

'by which means the Board will be enabled to judge of his real qualifications and of the propriety or impropriety of confirming him in the office of Dewan.'<sup>32</sup>

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(... continued from the previous page)

Deoṃān to the Collector of Rangpur in March, 1811, but the Board of Revenue expressed its disapproval of Rāmmohan's confirmation for the first time in January, 1810. Banerji, Brajendranath, Calcutta Review, vol.50., No.I., January, 1934, p.62.

30. Ibid., p.61.

31. Ibid., p.61.

32. Ibid., p.61.

The Board, however, turned a deaf ear to these entreaties. Finally relinquishing hope of influencing the Board, Digby appointed a certain 'Munshi Hemayetullah to the post (28th March, 1811), to which the Board agreed'.<sup>33</sup> Why the Board was so opposed to Rāmmohan's appointment is unknown. The only evidence to hand bearing on this matter is a cryptic reference by Mr. Burrish Crisp, then acting President and Senior Member of the Board of Revenue, who, in rejection of Digby's advocacy of Rāmmohan, wrote that he 'had heard unfavourable mention of his' (Rāmmohan's) conduct as Sheristadar of Ramghur.<sup>34</sup> Precisely why Rāmmohan's conduct was deemed 'unfavourable' is not stated, but one infers that it may have been due to Rāmmohan's theological activities.

Incidentally there is a popular but apparently erroneous tradition that Rāmmohan was in the service of the East India Company from 1805 to 1814. In regard to this, an authority on Rāmmohan, Brajendranath Banerji, writes:

'As a matter of fact, he was employed directly under the Company only for two short periods, first, as the sheristadar of the Faujdari court at Ramgarh from August to October, 1806, while Digby was officiating as the Magistrate of the Zilla Court of Ramgarh, and, secondly, as temporary Dewan to the collector of Rangpur - again under Digby - for some months from December, 1809, onwards.'<sup>35</sup>

v. The Bird returned to Calcutta and there managed

33. Ibid., p.61.

34. Ibid., p.62.

35. Ibid., p.61.

to gain the patronage of a second King of birds.

At this point Rāmmohan's career again slightly deviates from that of the 'man-like bird'. After losing his temporary post in the Company's service, Rāmmohan did not, as the satire implies, return immediately to Calcutta: on the contrary, he remained in Digby's service as his private Persian secretary, (for which reason he was popularly known as 'Digby's Deoyān') until 1814, when Digby went on long leave.

Rāmmohan returned to Calcutta in 1814 a wealthy man. K. S. Macdonald writes:

'During the ten years he was a Dewan, he is said to have saved so much money as to enable him to purchase an estate worth £1,000 a year or 1,000 Rs. a month.'<sup>36</sup>

Another estimate of Rāmmohan's income at this period sets it at ten thousand rupees a year.<sup>37</sup> After his return to Calcutta Rāmmohan accepted no employment, with the exception of a 'secret diplomatic mission on behalf of Government to Bhutan and Rangpur'<sup>38</sup> some time between 1814 and 1816, and an appointment in 1830 as special

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36. Macdonald, The Rev. K. S., Rajah Rammohun Roy, the Bengali Religious Reformer, Calcutta, 1879, p.5.

37. De, S. K., op.cit., pp.508-509.

38. Ibid., p.514.

envoy to the Emperor of Delhi, by whom he was commissioned to ventilate his grievances to the government in England. As special envoy, Rāmmohan was granted Rs.70,000 and the title of Rājā, which the British authorities refused to recognise.<sup>39</sup>

The remaining allegations contained in the satire are true. Rāmmohan's character remained unchanged and he continued to consume things, that, in orthodox opinion, he ought not to have consumed, namely Muslim dishes and British alcohol; and he persisted in his humane opposition to the practice of burning unwanted widows. It was of course the fury roused by Rāmmohan's successful campaign against Satī which released the venom in this tortuous snake of a satire. Rāmmohan's sacriligious voyage to England would have raised far less of an outcry from the orthodox, had it not also been linked with an opportunity to scotch their attempts to revoke the legislation on Satī.

(ii)

On the 4th November, 1830, there was published in the Samācār Candrikā a poem entitled Dvijarājer Khedokti (The Lament of a Royal Brahmin). The metre of the poem is paṅṅar. The Brahmin referred to is undoubtedly Rāmmohan Rāy, and his lament covers the story of his life. Rāmmohan Rāy was a Brahmin (dvija) by birth, and he had

39. Ibid., p.545.

received from the Emperor in Delhi the title rājā.

The two together form the first word in the title of the poem, dvijarāj. As can be seen in the following summary the life falls into various phases, as the dvijarāj changed from one religion to another.

Dvijarāj's life falls into four distinct phases. In the first phase he is a disciple of Hari; then he discards Hari or Vaiṣṇavism and accepts Islam. In the third phase, he takes to Christianity and abandons Islam. In the final phase he turns against trinitarian Christianity, and swings to Vedāntic religion, i.e. monotheism. His search for knowledge is allegedly motivated by worldly interests. He learns Persian to earn money. When that proves to be of no avail, he studies English and is handsomely rewarded. Though he belongs to the Brahmin caste, he has a Muslim beloved by whom he had a son called Rājā; and his love for Muslim food and dress does not disappear when he forsakes Islam and begins to follow Christianity. He gets a pāñjā from the Emperor of Delhi and wants to become the King of his country in order to convert everybody to his own religion.<sup>40</sup> To achieve that end he finally decides to go to England.

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40. Text: Edeṣer rājā haye prajāre pālība/āpan mater madhye tabāte āniba.



Dvijarājer Khedokti is another landmark in the battle between Rāmmohan Rāy and the Samācār Candrikā which had been in conflict with him since 1821. Rāmmohan had been retaliating strenuously, refuting in published rejoinders the allegations raised against him by orthodox Hindus. On the 6th April, 1822, for example, a person describing himself as 'a well-wisher of all desirous of establishing true religion' (Dharmasamsthāpanākāṅkhī sakaljan hitaiṣī) sent a letter, called 'Four Questions' (cāri praśna) to Samācār Darpan.<sup>41</sup> These 'Four Questions' were undoubtedly aimed at Rāmmohan, who the following May issued an anonymous 26 page pamphlet, called 'In Reply to the Four Questions' (cāri praśner uttar).<sup>42</sup> In 1823 a rejoinder to cāri praśner uttar, called A Torment to the Irreligious (pāṣaṇḍa pīran) 'prepared and published with the assistance of a pundit, by a person wishing to defend and disseminate religious principles', was published from the Samācār Candrikā press.<sup>43</sup> In December of that year Rāmmohan replied in A Remedy for

41. S.S.K., I., p.326.

42. S.S.C., 16, p.87.

43. S.S.C., 14, p.46.

the Sick (pathya pradān), an elaborate regimen of 261 pages.<sup>44</sup>

Thus the interchanges between Rāmmohan and his orthodox Hindu opponents had been frequent and spirited; and towards the 1830s were approaching their climax. Rāmmohan's successful advocacy of the abolition of Satī had added fuel to these long-standing interchanges and the announcement of his forthcoming voyage to England was the final insult. Hindu society flared up at him in censure and derision. The present satire is but a single flame in the final flare-up. The detailed allegations against him are as follows:

- a) The allegation that Rāmmohan was once a Vaiṣṇavā mendicant.

Rāmmohan's father, Rāmkānta, was a Vaiṣṇava, but his mother, Tāriṇī Devī was probably a Śākta.<sup>45</sup> According to Nagendranāth Caṭṭopādhyāy, Rāmmohan was in his boyhood so ardently devoted to Viṣṇu (Hari) that he would not allow mānbhañjan yātrā to be performed in his home.<sup>46</sup> In this yātrā, Kṛṣṇa, an incarnation of Hari (Viṣṇu), prostrates himself at the feet of Rādhā, the incarnation of Viṣṇu's consort Lakṣmī. Rāmmohan's objection to this

44. De, S. K., op.cit., pp.426-427.

45. Singh, Iqbal, Rammohan Roy, vol.I., 1958, p.19.

46. Caṭṭopādhyāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., pp.15-16; 'it is also claimed that as a child he was so impressed and affected by the religious scruples of his parents..... that at one time "he would not take even a draught of water" without first reciting the appropriate formula from the Vaishnavite sacred text, the Bhagavat Purana, to sanctify the operation.' Singh; Iqbal, op.cit., p.23.

yātrā may perhaps have signified merely his unwillingness to witness the abasement of his god. It may however have had the deeper implication of foreshadowing Rāmmohan's later rejection of polytheism. According to William Adam, at the age of 14 Rāmmohan resolved to leave home as a Vaiṣṇava mendicant, but was restrained from doing so by his mother.<sup>47</sup> Thus the references in the satire to Rāmmohan's wearing tilak, tulsī and kaṇṭhi may well be correct, though the further allegation that he actually became a mendicant is not corroborated by other available evidence.

b) The allegation that Rāmmohan studied Persian for financial reasons.

This allegation against Rāmmohan Rāy is deliberately unfair. 'Persian was at that time the language of law-courts and business transactions and therefore constituted a requisite qualification of a man of the world.'<sup>48</sup> Rāmmohan Rāy was not the only young man whose father urged him to learn Persian and provided him with the opportunities to do so. It is not unusual for a father to be ambitious on his son's account. Persian was at the time a gateway to senior appointments and though the gaining of a senior

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47. Quoted by Caṭṭopādihāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., p.16.

48. De, S. K., op.cit., p.511.

appointment would automatically carry a higher salary, to see Rāmmohan studying Persian for purely financial reasons is an unjustified slur both on his father and himself.

c) The allegation that failing to find fortune through Persian Rāmmohan forsook the language for English.

This is untrue. It was, one should remember, as Persian secretary (munsī) that Rāmmohan served both Woodforde and Digby. Thus, though it may be admitted that in serving Englishmen Rāmmohan's knowledge of English may have been an advantage, his brief, though lucrative career from 1804 to 1814 was founded on his intimate knowledge of Persian, which remained throughout that period and for at least two decades thereafter Bengal's official language. It would also, one presumes, have been partly Rāmmohan's knowledge of Persian that prompted the Emperor of Delhi to grant him the pāñjā: a Muslim Emperor would, one imagines, select only such a man as he could trust and understand. What better man could the Emperor have found than one who understood and respected his own culture, yet who also seemed conversant with the culture of the alien British?

It is therefore a travesty of the truth to claim that Rāmmohan abandoned the study of Persian because there was no money in it. Or indeed that he ever

abandoned it. In fact, it would appear likely that Rāmmohan retained and utilised his considerable knowledge of Persian throughout the whole of his life. He may have championed the cause of English in India, but he did not live to see it completely oust Persian.

There may be considerable uncertainty about the precise details of Rāmmohan's study of Persian, but there is no uncertainty about his mastery of the language. Some writers claim that Rāmmohan commenced his study of Persian at home and at the age of 9 was sent to Pāṭnā for higher studies in Persian and Arabic.<sup>49</sup> Others deny that he ever visited Pāṭnā for any such purpose.<sup>50</sup> Despite the controversy about how and where he acquired his proficiency in Persian and Arabic, Tuhfatul Muwahiddin clearly indicates that by 1803-04 Rāmmohan's proficiency in both languages was considerable. The Serampore Missionaries, commenting on Rāmmohan in 1816, state that he is 'so well-versed in Persian that he is called Mouluee Rama-Mohuna-Raya'.<sup>51</sup> Seven years earlier (April, 1809), Rāmmohan in a petition to Lord Minto wrote:

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49. Caṭṭopadhyāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., p.15.

50. De, S. K., op.cit., pp.505-06.

51. Quoted by Carpenter, Mary, The Last Days in England of the Rajah Rammohun Roy, 1866, p.19.

'the education which your petitioner received, as well as particulars of his birth and parentage, will be made known to your Lordship by reference to the principal officers of the Sudder Dewani Adalat and the College of Fort William, and many of the gentlemen of respectability and character.'

<sup>52</sup>

This statement indicates that Rāmmohan's knowledge of Persian and English were probably progressing side by side, as he was at one and the same time intimately acquainted with scholars of Persian as well as native speakers of English. Rāmmohan's claim to intimate association with such people is substantiated by John Digby, who, in recommending Rāmmohan to the Board of Revenue, wrote:

'I now beg leave to refer the Board to the Qaziul-Quzat in the Sadar Dewani Adalat, to the Head Persian Munshi in the College of Fort William, and to other principal officers of these Departments for the character and qualifications of the man I have proposed.'

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All this evidence tends to suggest that

'Rammohan was indebted in some way for his education to these Muhammedan officials.'

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and that, as Brajendranath Banerji claims,

52. S.S.C., 16, p.29.

53. Banerji, Brajendranath, Calcutta Review, vol.49., No.3., December, 1933, p.250.

54. Ibid., p.249.

'it is not unlikely that Rammohan carried on his Islamic studies with these officials.'<sup>55</sup>

Since by all accounts Rāmmohan started learning Persian in childhood and continued to use the language at least until 1814, by which time he was 39 years of age, and since his proficiency is admitted to have been considerable, it is unlikely that he could ever have forgotten the language or abandoned it as lightly as the satirist suggests.

d) The allegation that Rāmmohan adopted Muslim fashions and manners.

This is true not only of Rāmmohan but, to a greater or lesser extent, of almost all the educated young men of his generation. Rāmmohan was born at a time when throughout the whole of North India Muslim culture predominated. In high society fashions in architecture, dress, speech, literature, etiquette and even religion were, at the time of his birth, deeply influenced, if not indeed determined by Muslim culture. Entertainments, even at the Hindu Durgā Pūjā celebrations, included Muslim music and dancing. This according to press reports was also true of the entertainments at the spectacular parties organised by some orthodox Hindus.<sup>56</sup>

55. Ibid., p.249.

56. V. Supra, Chapter III, p.103.

So in adopting Muslim fashions and manners Rāmmohan was only conforming to current habits. Later however when English education became available many educated young men turned to English and western manners rather than to Muslim culture and manners, though even so many of them still continued to dress according to Muslim fashion. This is true to a certain extent even today.

The real point at issue is not so much fashions in dress but food. A number of 'free thinking' Hindus were even at this time beginning to demonstrate their liberation from 'outmoded' ways of life by eating food prepared by Muslims, especially meat. It is doubtful however whether this can be regarded as the adoption of Muslim ways of life. The European residents of Calcutta regularly ate meat which they were able to obtain only from Muslims. It is more probable therefore that in eating meat and drinking alcohol the fashionable young men were imitating the Europeans rather than the Muslims.

e) The allegation that Rāmmohan had a Muslim wife.

This is correct, though one is tempted to call it not an allegation, but a compliment, for it discredits the man who made it and enhances the reputation of Rāmmohan. At a time when men of his generation and class were honoured for providing brick-built homes for



their mistresses, when prostitution was rife and public morals deplorable, Rāmmohan married his Muslim 'beloved' according to śaivite rites, and justified the marriage in print. 'A wife wedded according to śaivite rites is no less legitimate than one wedded according to vedic.'<sup>57</sup>

When at such a time and against such a man, attacks like the following are launched:

'Certain well-known persons, whom youth, wealth, prestige and indiscretion have led into bad company, have thrown off fear of religion and public opinion, cut their tufts and now drink wine and consort with Muslim women'.<sup>58</sup>

One wonders whether these attacks were inspired, not by religious indignation, but by sheer envy: for here was a man, whose marriages had apparently failed,<sup>59</sup> and who had dared to extricate himself from them not only to find

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57. Text: Tantroкта śaiba bibāher dvārā bibāhitā ye strī se baidik bibāher strīr nyāy abāśya gamyā hay.

58. Text: Anek biśiṣṭa santān yauban dhan prabhutva abibekata prayukta kusamsargagrasta haiya loklajja dharmabhay parityag kariya brtha keschedan surāpan yabanyādigamane prabrta haiyāchen.

59. Rāmmohan was married thrice in his boyhood, but none of these marriages appear to have been satisfactory. Caṭṭopathyāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., p.21.

happiness and contentment elsewhere, but to enjoy a new relationship without hypocrisy and furtiveness.

f) The allegation that Rāmmohan had a son by his Muslim wife.

This too is a compliment rather than a condemnation. Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy writes:

'A child born out of formal wedlock is generally compelled to live unknown and unacknowledged. That Rāmmohan not only did not push Rājārām aside, but also afforded him appropriate education and respect, is indicative of his strength of character and greatness.'<sup>60</sup>

The confusion surrounding Rājārām's parentage seems due to the squeamishness of Rāmmohan's contemporaries, who misled his biographers. In 1835 an anonymous correspondent requested Lant Carpenter to record that Rājārām was Rāmmohan's foster son.<sup>61</sup> Rāmmohan's first Bengali biographer also describes Rājārām as Rāmmohan's foster son, and makes no mention of Rāmmohan's Muslim wife.<sup>62</sup> That Rājārām was in fact Rāmmohan's son by his Muslim wife is indicated by Rāmmohan's silence in regard to the allegation in this satire which was published while

60. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth, Rāmmohan o Rājārām, article published in the Prabāsi (a Bengali monthly), Magh, 1342, Bengali year i.e. 1935 A.D., p.549.

61. S.S.K., vol.II. p.765.

62. Ġaṭṭopādhyāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., pp.435-436, 212.

Rāmmohan was still in Bengal. Rāmmohan was always punctilious in refuting opponents' allegations, but he only sought to correct distortions of the truth, not to suppress the truth itself. Rāmmohan always acknowledged Rājārām openly as his son. In letters from England, where Rājārām accompanied him, Rāmmohan refers to the boy as 'son', 'my youngster', and 'my little youngster'.<sup>63</sup>

- g) The allegation that Rāmmohan referred to Muhammad as a camel-driver and to the maulavis and maulānās as hypocrites.

This allegation deserves to be closely examined, since the evidence regarding Rāmmohan's later attitude to Islam is conflicting. There is some evidence which tends to support this allegation. Firstly, there is a passage in the Church of England's Missionary Register for September, 1816, which reads:

'His own statement is, that the religion of Mahomed at first made some impression on him; but when he found that the prophet carried off the beautiful wife of his slave, and attempted to establish his religion by sword, he became convinced that it could not be from God.'<sup>64</sup>

Secondly, Lant Carpenter writes:

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63. Carpenter, Mary, op.cit., p.120 - Rāmmohān's letter to Miss. Castle; p.123 - Rāmmohan's letter to Miss Ann Kiddell; p.123 - Rāmmohan's letter to Miss Ann Kiddell.  
64. The Missionary Register, September, 1816, p.370.

'He now quitted Burdwan and removed to Moorshedabad where he published in Persian, with an Arabic Preface, a work entitled "Against the Idolatry of All Religions". No one undertook to refute this book; but it raised up against him a host of enemies, and in 1814 he retired to Calcutta.'<sup>65</sup>

Thirdly, Collet writes:

'It must have been in one of these that Rammohun made some rather sarcastic remarks on Mahomet, to which reference is made by several of his biographers as having excited an amount of anger against him among the Mahomedans which was a chief cause of his removing to Calcutta.'<sup>66</sup>

Clearly, as is indicated by the first and third extracts, and by the allegation in the satire, a tradition has been established that Rāmmohan made sarcastic remarks about Muhammad. Lant Carpenter seems also to have unwittingly lent weight to this tradition.

The tradition is due to a gradual accumulation of error. Firstly, the statement recorded by the Missionary Register sounds plausible, but its authenticity is doubtful, since its source is not cited; and furthermore, it is contrary to the testimony of an intimate acquaintance of Rāmmohan, namely William Adam, who in 1826 wrote that Rāmmohan 'seemed always pleased to have an opportunity of

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65. Carpenter, Lant, A Review of the Labours, Opinions, and Character, of Rajah Rammohun Roy; Bristol, 1833, p.103.  
66. Collet, S. D., op.cit., p.10.

defending the character and teachings of Mahomet'.<sup>67</sup>

Secondly, Lant Carpenter's account is misleading: it gives the impression that Rāmmohan's move to Murshidabad, his composition of a work in Persian and Arabic, his host of enemies, and his removal to Calcutta in 1814 were all closely consecutive and causally linked events; which in fact they were not. Firstly, as regards consecutiveness in time, Rāmmohan went to Murshidabad in 1804 and he returned to Calcutta in 1814, a good ten years later. Secondly, as regards causal linkage, Rāmmohan's movements between 1804 and 1814 were determined not by such factors as the animosity raised against him by his treatise in Persian and Arabic, but by the movements of his two English employers, Woodforde and Digby. Even the sequence of events, though correct, is misleading, but other events intervened. It is incorrect for example, to assume, as any reader of Carpenter was bound to, that it was from Murshidabad that Rāmmohan moved to Calcutta in 1814. The fact is Rāmmohan went to Murshidabad with Woodforde in 1804, but left in August, 1805, when Woodforde fell ill and went to the

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67. Quoted by Collet, S. D., op.cit., p.10.

seaside to recuperate.<sup>68</sup> From then until 1814, when Digby left on long leave and Rāmmohan, then unemployed, returned to Calcutta, Rāmmohan moved about from one of Digby's stations to another.<sup>69</sup> Even the name of the treatise supplied by Carpenter proved misleading, for it obviously gave rise in Collet's mind that the work was not the Tuhfatul Muwahiddin.

Understandably, Collet misunderstood Carpenter. She presumed that the events he described were closely consecutive and causally linked. On the basis of this presumption, she reasoned that since Murshidabad is a Muslim name, the place must be predominantly inhabited by Muslims. Furthermore, since the treatise Rāmmohan wrote there 'raised up a host of enemies against him', these enemies must have been Muslim. Moreover, since the enemies were Muslim, their enmity must have been excited by 'sarcastic remarks on Mahomet'. Consequently, since Rāmmohan went to Calcutta in 1814, he must have gone there because of the enmity of the Muslims of Murshidabad.

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68. Banerji, Brajendranath, Calcutta Review, vol.50. No.I. January, 1934, p.60; also Chanda, Ramaprasad and Majumdar, Jatindra Kumar, Selections from Official Letters and Documents Relating to the life of Raja Rammohun Roy, Calcutta, 1938, p.xxxvii.

69. Banerji, Brajendranath, ibid., p.60; also S.S.C., 16, p.35.

Collet's reasoning is plausible, but her incorrect premises led inevitably to incorrect conclusions. In no known biography of Rāmmohan do there occur the references to 'sarcastic remarks on Mahomet' that she declares to have been made by 'several of his biographers'. The only hints of such remarks are to be found in the Missionary Register and the present satire. Collet herself failed to find them, though she attempted to trace them in Tuhfatul Muwahiddin. Her failure to find them there led her to assume that they were 'in one of these', meaning some such work as the Manazaratul Adyan referred to in the concluding paragraph of Tuhfat:

'I have left the detail of it to another work of mine entitled Manazaratul Adyan (Discussion of Various Religions).'<sup>70</sup>

It is however doubtful whether the Manazaratul Adyan was ever written, let alone published. Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy believes that such a book was possibly in Rāmmohan's mind, and that parts of it may even have been completed, though not the whole of it.<sup>71</sup> That the work was certainly not completed, even if commenced, before

70. The English Works of Rammohun Roy, Panini edition, Allahabad, 1906, p.958.

71. S.S.C., 16, p.81.

1820 is evident from the following extract from An Appeal to the Christian Public, which was published in 1820:

'who, although he (Rāmmohan) was born a Brahmun not only renounced idolatry at a very early period of his life, but published at that time a treatise in Arabic and Persian against that system.'<sup>72</sup>

Only one treatise is here referred to; and since only one such treatise survives, which is known to have been written prior to 1820, it is safe to assume that that treatise was the Tuhfatul Muwahiddin, where even Collet failed to find her alleged 'sarcastic remarks on Mahomet'.

Having examined the evidence, we conclude that the tradition is apocryphal. It is contrary to the testimony of a reliable witness, William Adam, and to the known facts of Rāmmohan's life. At no time were Rāmmohan's relations with the Muslim community of Bengal anything less than cordial; this in itself was one of the chief causes of the animosity directed against him by his orthodox Hindu detractors. The truth is, as S. K. De states, Rāmmohan's belief

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72. The English Works of Rammohun Roy, Panini edn., p.548.



'in the unity of God and opposition to idolatrous forms of worship first attracted his attention to Muhammedan religion, but he could not accept its doctrines in their entirety.'<sup>73</sup>

This is a far cry indeed from the satirist's imputation that Rāmmohan abused both Islam and the Prophet, when he perceived what to him appeared imperfections in Islamic belief.

h) The allegation that Rāmmohan studied Christianity and became a Christian for personal gain and financial advantage.

Rāmmohan studied Christianity with the same detachment and sincerity with which he studied Islam. In 1817, he wrote to Digby:

'The consequence of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and more adapted for the use of rational beings, than any other which have come to my knowledge.'<sup>74</sup>

In 1820, he compiled the Precepts of Jesus, The Guide to Peace and Happiness extracted from the Books of the New Testament ascribed to the Four Evangelists with translations into Sungscrit and Bengalee.<sup>75</sup> In the

73. De, S. K., op.cit., p.524.

74. Quoted by Collet, S. D., op.cit., p.36.

75. The English Works of Rammohun Roy, Panini edn., p.481;

introduction he expressed his admiration for the  
'moral doctrines' contained in the New Testament as

'tending evidently to the maintenance of  
the peace and harmony of mankind at large'.

He did not however conceal his doubts about 'historical  
and some other passages' and

'especially miraculous relations which are  
much less wonderful than the fabricated tales  
handed down to the native of Asia';

and he therefore excluded them from his compilation.

The Serampore Missionaries received the Precepts  
of Jesus with indignation. They considered the work  
an encroachment upon Christianity by an 'Heathen'. A  
reviewer of the Precepts in the Friend of India  
considered the work might 'greatly injure the cause of  
truth'.<sup>76</sup> There ensued a long and arduous debate  
between Rāmmohan on the one hand and the missionaries on

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(continued from the previous page)

Collet tells us that 'before he had had time to make  
the translation into Sanskrit and Bengali which he  
had somewhat prematurely announced on his titlepage,  
the book was attacked by the Chief missionaries of  
the day in their periodical The Friend of India and  
Rammohun was at once immersed in a sea of controversy  
which lasted for years'. Collet, S. D., op.cit., p.38.  
The Bengali and the Sanskrit version of the Precepts  
probably never came out.

76. Quoted by Collet, op.cit., p.39.

the other. In reply to the review in Friend of India, Rāmmohan published An Appeal to the Christian Public in defence of the 'Precepts of Jesus' by a Friend of Truth. The epithet 'heathen' rankled with Rāmmohan most, who wrote:

'No one, who has the least pretension to truth, would venture to apply the designation of heathen to him!'<sup>77</sup>

Dr. Marshman replied in the Friend of India for May, 1820, that he could not call anyone a Christian who did not accept

'the Divinity and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and the Divine Authority of the Whole of the Holy Scriptures.'<sup>78</sup>

Marshman later published a further article substantiating his views with citations from the sayings of Jesus. To this Rāmmohan replied in a Second Appeal, published in 1821.<sup>79</sup>

In his second article Marshman had endeavoured to establish two points: one, the truth and excellence of the miracles and of the doctrines in the scriptures; and two, the inadequacy of the Precepts of Jesus as a guide to salvation. He maintained that without a belief in the godhead of Christ and in His atonement, no salvation was possible. In his Second Appeal, Rāmmohan also

77. The English Works of Rammohun Roy, Panini edn., p.549.

78. Quoted by Collet, op.cit., p.42.

79. The English Works of Rammohun Roy, Panini edn., p.565.

sought to establish two points: firstly,

'that the Precepts of Jesus, which teach that love of God is manifested in beneficence towards our fellow-creatures, are a sufficient Guide to Peace and Happiness; and 2ndly, the omnipotent God, who is the only proper object of religious veneration, is one and undivided in person.'<sup>80</sup>

At about this time Bishop Middleton (Lord Bishop of Calcutta)<sup>81</sup> tried to persuade Rammohan to accept Christianity. He offered the blandishments of a 'grand career which would open to him by a change of faith' and argued that 'he would be honoured in life and lamented in death, - honoured in England as well as in India.'<sup>82</sup> But, William Adam declares:

'This was utterly abhorrent to Rammohun's mind. It alienated, repelled, and disgusted him.'<sup>83</sup>

It is therefore a travesty of truth to say that Rāmmohan ever became a Christian. Christian moral principles attracted him, but the conception of Christ's divinity was unacceptable to him. He was a staunch monotheist: to him the Trinity was a form of polytheism.

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80. Ibid., p.566.

81. V. *Supra*, chapter V, p.174.

82. Collet, *op.cit.*, pp.45-46.

83. Ibid., p.46.

Rāmmohan's Final Appeal in defence of the Precepts appeared in 1823, by which time his relations with the missionaries had been further embittered by their refusal in 1821 to publish his rejoinder to an attack on Hinduism, which had appeared in the Samācār Darpan of the 14th July, 1821.<sup>84</sup> It was this refusal that had prompted Rāmmohan to bring out his Brāhman Sebadhi or Brahmunical Magazine, a Bengali-English publication, as

'a Vindication of the Hindu religion against the attacks of Christian missionaries'.

It is interesting to note, however, that even while Rāmmohan's controversy with the Serampore missionaries over the divinity of Christ was approaching its climax, his relations with Christian Unitarians were deepening into intimacy. Under Rāmmohan's influence, William Adam, a former Baptist Missionary, renounced his faith and declared himself a Unitarian. In September, 1821, Rāmmohan formed the Unitarian Committee with the following members: William Adam, Theodore Dickens, George James Gordon, William Tate, B. S. Mcleod, Norman Kerr, Dvārakānāth Thākur, Rādhāprasād Ray.<sup>85</sup> The group's doctrine derived from Christianity and its services approximated those of

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84. See chapter II, p.55.

85. Collet, op.cit., p.49.

Christian Unitarians.<sup>86</sup> Rāmmohan continued to attend the meetings of the Committee until August, 1828, when he formed his Brāhma Samāj.<sup>87</sup>

Rāmmohan's promptness to defend Hinduism, though seemingly paradoxical, is not inconsistent with his declared beliefs. He writes:

'the ground which I took in all my controversies was, not that in opposition to Brahminism, but to a perversion of it; and I endeavoured to show that the idolatry of the Brahmins was contrary to the practice of their ancestors, and the principles of the ancient books and authorities which they profess to revere and obey.'<sup>88</sup>

That Rāmmohan was not a Christian is confirmed by Bishop Heber who in 1824 wrote:

'Rāmmohun Roy, a learned native, who has sometimes been called, though I fear without reason, a Christian.....'<sup>89</sup>

In order to emphasise the distinctness from Christianity that members of the Unitarian Committee felt, it should perhaps be pointed out that one of its members, namely Prasannakumār Thākur, a close disciple of Rāmmohan,

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86. S.S.C., 16, p.54.

87. Ibid., p.55.

88. The English Works of Rammohun Roy, Panini edn., p.224.

89. Heber, Reginald, Narrative of a Journey etc., vol.III. p.360.

disinherited his son, Jñānendramohan when the latter was converted to Christianity.<sup>90</sup>

Rāmmohan's relationship to the Unitarians can be thus explained: he admired the 'essential characteristics of Christian religion', its tendency to promote 'peace and harmony of mankind at large'; but he was opposed to the Baptist Missionaries, because they claimed Christ to be divine and because of their support of the Trinity which to Rāmmohan appeared as polytheistic and perverted as Hinduism. That Rāmmohan retained his membership of his caste and of the Hindu community at large is evidenced by that fact that

'after his death the thread of his caste was seen round him, passing over his left shoulder and under his right.'<sup>91</sup>

The allegation in this satire that Rāmmohan became a Christian is therefore untrue.

Rāmmohan is, in the following couplet of the satire, alleged to have become a Vedantist.

'A Brahmin scholar meanwhile came to join me. I was obliged to listen to his interpretation of The Vedanta. After listening for some time, I grew furious with

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90. Bāgal, Yogescandra, Unabimśa Satābdir Bāmlā, 1963, pp.129-130.

91. Carpenter, Lant, op.cit., p.101. This sacred cord, known as paitā is suspended from the left shoulder, and falls under the right arm. It consists of six or more threads of cotton and is a distinctive badge of a Brahmin.

Christ. From reading the Hebrew Scriptures,  
I learned of his birth and deeds.<sup>92</sup>

The meeting with a Vedantist and the learning of Hebrew  
are corroborated by contemporary evidence.

Rāmmohan studied the Vedānta at the feet of a  
Brahmin scholar Nandakumār Vidyālankār, who 'subsequently  
renounced the world and became a peripatetic Kaul Tantrik  
Abadhuta under the name of Hariharanandanatha Tirthasvami.<sup>93</sup>  
Rāmmohan first met Tirthasvāmī at the age of 14, (in 1788).<sup>94</sup>  
There is evidence that in 1812 Tirthasvāmī was with  
Rāmmohan in Rangpur<sup>95</sup> and that in 1814 he followed  
Rāmmohan to Calcutta.<sup>96</sup> There is further evidence that  
Tirthasvāmī initiated Rāmmohan into tantricism.<sup>97</sup> During  
his stay in Calcutta Tirthasvāmī is reported to have

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92. Text: āsiyā milila ek dviḥja supandit/vedānter byākhyā  
śuni hainu bādhit//kichukāi tār kache śuniyā  
biṣeṣ/kraīṣṭ prati atīśay haila dves//parete  
hibru śāstre pāilam marma/yemane haila janma  
ār tār karma//

93. S.S.C., 9, p.89.

94. Ibid., p.89.

95. A document connected with Rāmmohan's property,  
executed in January, 1812, in Rangpur, bears the  
signature of Hariharānanda as one of the witnesses,  
S.S.C., 9, p.90.

96. S.S.C., 9, p.90.

97. Debendranāth Thākur states that he met one Sukhānandanāth  
Svāmī a disciple of Tirthasvāmī, at Delhi, who told him  
that Rāmmohan like Sukhānanda himself, was a 'Tantrik  
abadhuta' and disciple of the same spiritual guide.  
Quoted by De, S. K., op.cit., p.513.



attended the meetings of the Ātmīya Sabhā.

Rāmmohan learnt Hebrew to acquire a firsthand knowledge of the Bible. Collet writes:

'With his habitual thoroughness, he took the trouble to acquire the Greek and Hebrew languages (the latter he learned, it is said, from a Jew, in six months) that he might gain a full understanding of both the Old and the New Testaments and the remarkable mastery of the contents of which is shown in his later writings bears witness to the success of his study.'<sup>98</sup>

Thus to conclude, in 1812 Rāmmohan studied Hindu scriptures in Rangpur with Tīrthasvāmī. In 1815 he founded his Ātmīya Sabhā in Calcutta, where readings from the Vedas were given. In the same year his Vedānta Grantha, quickly followed by Vedānta Sāra, was published. In 1817 he wrote to Digby that he found 'the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and more adapted for the use of rational beings, than any other which have come to my knowledge.'<sup>99</sup> It is therefore untrue to say, as the satirist does, that Rāmmohan 'grew furious with Christ'. Admittedly, Rāmmohan questioned the divinity of Christ, but his admiration for the moral principles of Christ was honest and unreserved; for he

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98. Collet, op.cit., p.36.

99. V. Supra, p.155.

found in them a 'rational' approach. This is why, though he antagonised the Serampore missionaries, he was able to reach deeper understanding with the Unitarians. It is therefore a perversion of the truth to describe Rāmmohan as swinging from one religion to another, motivated by personal gain.

(iii)

Later in 1830, namely on the 8th November and the 20th December, the Samācār Candrikā published two further contributions on the subject of dvijarāj. They are not, strictly speaking, continuations of the satire presented above, but they do relate to the same subject. The former of the two which is entitled Dvijarājer Khedoktir Śeṣ<sup>100</sup> (The Last Part of the Lament of a Royal Brahmin) is translated below. The translation follows the lines of the original which is in paṣār verse.

This is the last chapter of the tale of my sorrows.

I will enlighten everybody about the story of the  
griefs I have suffered.

Fortunately I obtained a Muslim woman.

She was exquisitely beautiful and sweet-spoken.

I got a daughter by her who was endowed with  
auspicious marks.

She is the light of my eyes, a girl commendable  
for her beauty and attainments.

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100. The Samācār Candrikā, 1830-1831, p.496.

I placed her under the care of the son by  
my first wife.

And asked him to make her accomplished by  
imparting education.

He was a good-natured boy and he obeyed his  
father's instructions.

He taught her many things which he knew.

Hearing about the virtues of both of them

I feel delighted every moment.

When children are so virtuous

You may guess what their mother was like.

Now I must go and leave them all of them behind.

Only Rāj, my good son, is accompanying me.

There is no happiness on the ocean even if  
regal amenities are provided.

Those who are clever will understand the significance  
of what I say.

I am always afraid because of the evil way that  
I have taken

This is why only Hosen and Āli can accompany me.

The faults which caused this agony

Are now being briefly narrated.

I have borne grudge against gods and Brahmins

Now I may have to pay for that according to the  
scriptures.

It is not a trifling matter to go far away from  
home

And change my life completely.

Only violent sinners travel by sea.

It is a very dangerous thing for a Hindu to travel  
overseas in a ship.

People will of course say that these are the  
consequences of sinful acts.

I admit that they are so,  
 And that this is the upshot of my very great sins.  
 It is not that I want to go, but that my karma  
 compels me to.

Why was I not moved to go to Bārāṇasī?  
 Why did I have no desire to go to Br̥ndāban?  
 If I had worn ḍor-kaupīn and made a grove around me  
 If I had spent my life in happiness, singing  
 hymns in praise of Hari,  
 If I had shaved my head and become a religious  
 mendicant,  
 Then I should not have had to be punished for all  
 those sins.

I must therefore say that they are the results  
 of my sinful acts.

This is the way my karma works. How shall I  
 resist it?

So bear in mind, my friends,  
 That a man who has caused you so much trouble  
 has left the country though very  
 late in life.

I have however one desire in my mind.  
 From the man who owes me money in his will  
 I shall require full settlement of my account  
 with him to the last farthing.  
 This is the only benefit I shall receive from  
 the pāñjā.

You should know for certain that this is a  
 dream-story.

Dvijarāj narrates his own sorrows.

There is some inconsistency between the accounts of  
dvijarāj's family in this essay and that in the former one.

Here it is clear that he had a daughter by his second wife who was a Muslim and a son by his first wife whereas in the former story we are given to understand that he had a son by his Muslim wife. The difficulty is to bring these two statements into line with the known facts about his family. Rāmmohan Rāy actually had only two sons by his formal marriages<sup>101</sup> and it is not clear to which of them reference is made here. Nevertheless the author gives us to understand that he was very fond of the daughter who is mentioned here and the son into whose care he entrusted her. Whether this son was the eldest or not, we are not told. It may be that he was, as the name of the son who accompanied him to England was Rāj whereas the name of the eldest son was Radhāprasād Rāy.<sup>102</sup>

The second half of this lament suggests that Rāmmohan was sorry that he had forsaken the religion of his ancestors and had turned against the Hindu gods and the Brahmins. The sin of forsaking Hinduism he attributes to his karma as he does the further sin of travelling overseas in a ship which was also against the orthodox Hindu code. He

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101. Caṭṭopadhyāy, Nagendranāth, op.cit., p.694.

102. It was this Rādhāprasād whom we have mentioned before as a founder member of the Unitarian Committee. Supra, p.159.

is made to ask with grief why he did not go to the Holy places of Hindus, Bārānāsī (Benaras) and Br̄ndāban, for then he would not have been punished for so many sins.

Finally it appears so the author says that Rāmmohan Rāy did not even receive financial reward for his desertion of his religion. It is made to appear that the Emperor of Delhi at whose request he was proceeding to England had promised him a title (a pāñjā) and also a sum of money. The pāñjā was apparently granted but not the money as Rāmmohan Rāy is shown by the author to be concerned that it should be paid in time. This part of the account is far from clear. It does however contain some truth as we know from other sources<sup>103</sup> that after Rāmmohan's death, his son, Rādhāprasād, went to Delhi to plead with the Emperor that he should honour the contract made with his father.

The satire here is to be found in the allegation that at the end of his life Rāmmohan saw the error of his ways and repented. There is no evidence to support such an allegation.

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103. S.S.K., vol.II., p.769.

(iv)

The final article, as has been stated above, was published in the Samācār Candrikā on the 20th December, 1830, is entitled Dvijarajer Mrtyu (The Death of Dvijarāj).<sup>104</sup> It is as follows:

'Many of you are aware that a Brahmin known as dvijarāj, with a pātsāi pāñjā (a royal title) under his arm, used to frequent the places of almost all the gentlemen in the city and he used to engage himself very often in discussion of subjects such as marriage and the inheritance of a fortune. His original name was Prāṅkr̥ṣṇa Mukhopādhyāy and he was an inhabitant of Mansāpotā, a village in Pājnur Parganā in the district of Nadiyā. He used to stay here in the rented house belonging to Bābu Debīprasād Nāg Caudhurī which is situated to the east of the garden of Sarti. Recently, some four days ago, he breathed his last. As none of his relations were near him, Nāg Caudhurī and others summoned some Brahmins of the same caste as his and got funeral services performed. It is heard that they are also arranging for the śrāddha. The deceased was not less than 75 years old. He has died at a very old age, and there is no point in lamenting over his death. But it is a matter of regret because he was a man of uncommon ability.

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104. The Samācār Candrikā, 1830-1831, pp.589-590.





You used to inveigh against the gods of  
 Hinduism with all your skill.  
 Where is your fortune now, and where is that  
 pretty woman?

When you left, your face showed signs of disgrace.

The prose part of this article as it appears is an account of the death of a Brahmin who was known as Dvijarāj. It is difficult to find any reference here to Rāmmohan except that this Dvijarāj also had a pāñjā and that early in life he studied Persian and that he did not receive the land which should have accompanied the granting of the pāñjā. The only reasonable conclusion that one can reach from this very confused piece of reporting is that the Brahmin whose death is mentioned, namely Prāṅkṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāy did in certain respects resemble Rāmmohan Rāy and that the author has emphasised these resemblances in order to continue satire on Rāmmohan Rāy.

The Dvijarāj of the verse portion could however be Rāmmohan Rāy, though such an argument would compel us to interpret the phrase Dvijarājer Mrtyu (the Death of Dvijarāj) as implying Rāmmohan's departure for England, not his physical death. The first six ślokas are a vague slur on Rāmmohan Rāy. They refer to his failure to collect the money that he expected to receive and to his fondness for pretty women which is an indirect attack on his marriage with a Muslim woman. The satire here

rests upon ironical references to 'virtues' and 'lamentation'. The last two ślokas though difficult to understand seem to be a condemnation of Rāmmohan Rāy's life, his attack on polytheism is here mentioned and once more we are told that the money he hoped for has not come to him and that by leaving (for England) he has lost his pretty Muslim wife; and fallen into complete disgrace.

## Chapter V

BHABANICARAN BANDYOPADHYAY : KALIKATA KAMALALAY

(i)

We noticed in the previous chapters (III and IV) that during the period of our study a series of satirical writings appeared in the newspapers. Written anonymously, these satires portrayed, as well as criticised, the behaviour of the new bābus, who emerged in the city of Calcutta in the early 19th century. In the present and following chapter we will dwell upon the writings of Bhabānicaran Bandyopādhyāy, who wrote four books satirising the same class of persons as did the newspaper satires. As compared to the newspaper writing, Bhabānicaran may be said to have taken a broader view of the theme and dealt with the problem more elaborately. Of his four works, the first two came out in his own name, but the other works were published under pseudonyms.

Bhabānicaran is best remembered today 'as a contemporary and antagonist of Rammohan Ray'<sup>1</sup> and for want of proper assessment, his place in, and contribution to, Bengali

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1. De, S.K., op.cit., p.555.

literature have been overlooked.

Bhabānīcaran was born in the Paraganā Ukhṛā in 1787 A.D.<sup>2</sup> His father Rāmjaý Bandyopādhyāy was an employee in the Calcutta mint. In early boyhood Bhabānīcaran was brought to Calcutta, where he received some education in Sanskrit, Persian, and English.<sup>3</sup> At the age of sixteen (i.e. in 1803 A.D.) he joined Messrs. J. Duckett and Co., as a sircar and served them in that capacity for eleven years.<sup>4</sup> Thereafter in 1814 he went on pilgrimage to upper India<sup>5</sup> and after spending four years out of Bengal he came back in 1818 to take employment under Major General William Kerr of the Calcutta Fort as his mucchaddi i.e., agent. Later Bhabānīcaran served various distinguished European officials including Herbert Compton (subsequently Chief Justice of Bombay), Bishop Middleton and Bishop Heber,<sup>6</sup> and Sir Christopher Fuller (Chief Justice of

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2. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth, Sāhitye Sādhak Caritmālā (hereafter referred to as S.S.C.), book 4, 3rd edition., 1943, p.6.
  3. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
  4. Ibid., p.7.
  5. Ibid., p.7.
  6. Heber, Reginald, Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, vol.I., London, 1829, pp.25, 26; also vol.III., p.226.

the Calcutta Supreme Court). On the establishment of Bishop's College, Bhabānīcaran 'is said to have acted as its Secretary'.<sup>7</sup> He also worked for some time as a Khājāncī i.e., accountant to the Hooghly Collectorate and then he was appointed manager of the Englishman under the editorship of J.H.Stocqueler. Later he was appointed Deoyān of Calcutta Tax Office, a job from which he resigned in order to join Messrs. Hickey, Baillie Co. as banian. He died on the 10th February, 1848, while still in the service of the above company.<sup>8</sup>

In 1821 in collaboration with Tārācād Datta of Kaluṭolā, Bhabānīcaran brought out the Sambād Kaumudī. We have indicated elsewhere in this thesis<sup>9</sup> that the guiding force behind the Kaumudī was Rāmmohan Rāy who was at this time engaged in a controversy with the Serampore missionaries. Bhabānīcaran, essentially a conservative Hindu,<sup>10</sup> joined Rāmmohan to repulse through the Sambād Kaumudī the attacks on Hinduism which were then being made by Christian

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7. De, S.K., op.cit., p.555. The foundation stone of the Bishop's College was laid on the 15th December, 1820. The Samācār Darpan, the 23rd December, 1820; S.S.K., I.p.38.
8. Biographical data has been largely drawn from the biography of Bhabānīcaran, written by his son Rājkr̥ṣṇa Bandyopādhyāy and published in 1849, which again has been partly reproduced by Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy in his work S.S.C., book 4, pp. 6-19.
9. Chapter II, p.60.
10. Text: Bhabānīcaran rakṣaṁśīl hindu chilēn. S.S.C. book 4, p.13.

missionaries, but when it became clear that Rāmmohan was planning an attack on the practice of Satī, Bhabānīcaran severed his connection with the Kaumudī and brought out in March, 1822, a separate journal named Samācār Candrikā.<sup>11</sup>

In the Calcutta Journal of the 15th March, 1822, he published an advertisement to the effect that the first 13 numbers of the Kaumudī had been edited by him.<sup>12</sup> In response to the above advertisement Harihar Datta, the editor of the Kaumudī, published a letter in the Calcutta Journal of the 23rd March, 1822, in which he described Bhabānīcaran's declaration as 'a wicked and malicious fabrication of falsehood, advanced through sinister motives'.<sup>13</sup> According to him, Bhabānīcaran was 'no more than the real Editor's Assistant'.<sup>14</sup> It is evident from the above observations that Bhabānīcaran's relations with the Kaumudī were far from good even before he left as well as afterwards. Despite the divergence of views about the main editorship of the Sambād Kaumudī, there is no denying the fact that Bhabānīcaran had some part in the production

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11. Chapter II, pp. 56, 61.

12. B.S.P., p. 22; a similar notice was also published in the Darpan of the 23rd March, 1822. S.S.K., I, p. 98.

13. B.S.P., p. 22.

14. Ibid., p. 22.

of that important journal, until he quarrelled with Rāmmohan over the latter's advocacy in the Kaumudī of the abolition of Sati. From then until Rāmmohan's departure for England in 1830, Bhabānīcaran remained engaged in controversy with the Kaumudī. In 1830, after Sati had been declared illegal he founded the Dharma Sabhā with a view to revoking the ban and restoring the old order in society. With him as the secretary, the Dharma Sabhā organized orthodox Hindu opinion with considerable initiative and even managed to send an appeal to the Privy Council, asking for the abolition of the law that declared Sati illegal.<sup>15</sup>

Bhabānīcaran's flair for banter in verse as well as in prose was so great that even his bitterest attacks never lacked literary charm.<sup>16</sup> It is said that even his opponent Rāmmohan Rāy, who was himself immensely erudite in the various śāstras, nevertheless felt obliged to give unreserved acclaim to Bhabānīcaran's compositions.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from his journalism Bhabānīcaran had a number

15. Chapter IV, p.

16. Text: Ukta mahāśayer gadya padya racanāy o uttar praty-uttar lekhane emata patutā chila ye kona kathā katutārūpe likhitā haileo māduryārasrahitā haitā nā. S.S.C., 4, pp. 18-19.

17. Text: Eke samsāye tāhār ... pratipakṣa rāmmohan rāy bahūśāstrajña haiyāo tirobhūta haiyā muktakanthe tāhār prati sādhubād kariten. S.S.C., 4, p.19.

of other publications to his credit. These may be classified under three broad headings:-

1. Satirical writings.
2. Sanskrit works.
3. Eulogy of sacred places and people.

1. In 1823 Bhabānīcaran seems to have brought out two works, both of them written in Bengali prose. They are Kalikātā Kamalālay and Hitopadeś. While the first one is an original work, the second one is a Bengali translation of the Sanskrit original of Viṣṇu Sarmā and as such falls outside the purview of this thesis. Both works were however published in his own name. 1825 saw the publication of two further works, Nababābubilās and Dūtībilās. Dūtībilās, written in verse, was published under his own name, whereas Nababābubilās, written in prose and verse, bore the pseudonym of Pramathanāth Sarmā. In 1832 Bhabānīcaran brought out his last satirical work, also written in prose and verse, entitled Nababibibilas under the pseudonym of Gobindacandra Mukhopādhyāy.

2. Being a conservative, Bhabānīcaran published for the orthodox a number of religious works, printed on Indian-made paper and bound in puthi form. All of these were in fact in Sanskrit. One of them was the Srīmadbhāgavat which



came out in 1830, financed by Rājā Śibcandra Rāy of Joṛāsāko Rāj family. It was followed in 1833 by Śrīkr̥ṣṇa Miśra's Prabodhcandrodayā nāṭak, which was published under the patronage of Bābu Rādhācaraṇ Rāy of Naṛāil (Jessore). In the same year were issued two further works, namely Manusamhitā and Unabimśa Samhitā (the nineteen Smṛti works). Manusamhitā was published under the patronage of Prāṇanāth Caudhurī, a zamindar of Sātksīrā (Khulna). In 1835 there came out the Śrībhāgavat-gītā. Bhabānīcaraṇ also published Aṣṭābimśati tattva nabyasmṛti (twenty-eight tattvas of Raghunandan) in 1848.

3. Bhabānīcaraṇ thrice went on pilgrimage travelling extensively in upper and southern India.<sup>18</sup> His experiences on his second tour were recounted in Śrīśrīgayātīrthabistār (1831), and those on his last in Puruṣottamcandrikā (1844). The first work, written in Bengali verse<sup>19</sup> gives a detailed account of Gayā, a Holy place of the Hindus. Puruṣottamcandr-

18. S.S.C., 4, p.12.

19. It is difficult to understand why S.K.De maintains that it was composed in prose (De, S.K., op.cit., p.556) while an intelligence published in the Samācār Candrikā on the 22nd April, 1831, runs as follows: 'Śrīśrīgayātīrthabistār, written in paṛ verse has become popular amongst all.' S.S.C., 4, pp.29-30. Another report published after the appearance of the second edition of Gayātīrthabistār claimed that 'it has been composed in Bengali paṛ verse'. The Samācār Candrikā, 7th December, 1843; S.S.C., 4, p.30.

ikā, also written in verse, gives a description of Srikṣetradhām i.e. Puri of Orissa. In 1835 Bhabānīcaran wrote another book in Bengali verse entitled Aścarya Upākhyān (A Wonderful Tale). It consists of only 20 pages and is essentially a study of the character and achievement of Kālīśankar Rāy, a zamindar of Narāil (in the district of Jessore).<sup>20</sup>

(ii)

In this section it is proposed to examine the first original prose work of Bhabānīcaran, namely Kalikātā Kamalālay, which S.K.De describes as Bhabānīcaran's 'most important work'.<sup>21</sup> Published in 1823, it is principally a study of the urban life of Calcutta in the second decade of the 19th century. It was written in the form of dialogues between a city-dweller and a provincial, and it 'professes to be a manual of etiquette for country people who come for the first time to Calcutta and find themselves bewildered by its strange manners, customs and speech'.<sup>22</sup> This dialogue device provided Bhabānīcaran with a framework

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20. S.S.C., 4, p.30.

21. De, S.K., op.cit., p.557.

22. Ibid., p.557.

within which he could set forth differing views on Hinduism and on the practices which were permissible to Hindus. The dialogue purports to be between a 'rural' Hindu and an 'urban' Hindu. It appears from the nature of what follows that the debate was actually between an ultra-orthodox Hindu, who was unwilling to admit any concession to social change, and a Hindu who, though orthodox, was prepared to allow some adjustment of Hindu practices to the political, social and economic changes which marked the history of Calcutta at this time. At the beginning of the book, Bhabānīcaran explained the significance of the title: 'Calcutta resembles an ocean. This is why the title Kalikātā Kamalālay has been chosen. The word Kamalālay means 'ocean', the residence of Kamalā Lakṣmī, the Hindu goddess of Fortune.<sup>23</sup> In keeping with the title, Kalikātā Kamalālay was designed to be completed in four 'waves' i.e. four volumes.<sup>24</sup> The only part which is available and known to have been written is the present

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23. Text: Kalikātār sāgarer sahit sādṛśya āche tatprayukta kalikātā kamalālay nām sthir haila, kamalā lakṣmi tāhār ālay ei arthā dvārā kamalālay śabde yeman samudrer upasthiti haiteche teman kalikātār upasthiti haite pāre. Bandyopādhyāy, Bhabānīcaran, Kalikātā Kamalālay, Rañjan Publishing House, 1936, p.3.
24. Text: Ei granthe cāri tarānga haibek. Ibid., p.2.

volume i.e. the 'first wave' (pratham tarāṅga), and 'it is doubtful whether the book was ever completed in 'four waves' as the author contemplated and set forth in his preface'.<sup>25</sup>

The title Kalikātā Kamalālay implying as it does a survey of the whole of Calcutta society is to some extent misleading. Bhabānīcaran was clearly concerned only with Hindu society. Muslims and other religious communities in Calcutta were excluded from consideration.<sup>26</sup>

In setting out to describe Calcutta Bengali Hindu society, Bhabānīcaran seems to be both posing and answering one question: how far could social changes be admitted without forcing Hindus to violate accepted beliefs and practices?

That Bhabānīcaran should have felt it necessary to pose such a question as early as 1823 (the date of publication

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25. De, S.K., op.cit., p.558

26. Calcutta had a mixed population of 179,917 according to the returns of the population given for the four divisions in 1822. (Hamilton, Walter, The East India Gazetteer, 2nd ed., vol. I., London, 1828, p.320). A later account places the population at 229,714. (Stocqueler, J.H., The Handbook of India, London, 1844, p.260.) While speaking about the Calcutta people Bhabānīcaran concentrates only on Bengali Hindus, but Calcutta in those days, as has been stated above, was a place inhabited by mixed population. In 1822 when Kalikātā Kamalālay was yet to come out, the Muslim population of Calcutta was, according to Hamilton, 48,162 while the Hindu population was placed at 118,203. (Hamilton, op.cit., p.320). It hardly needs any interpretation to establish that Bhabānīcaran implies the Bengali Hindus alone when he refers to the urban society of Calcutta.

of Kalikātā Kamalālay) is historically important: it implies a certain disquiet in his own mind about differences which were already developing within Bengali Hindu society. One infers that to his mind at least Bengali Hindu society was tending to drift into two camps, the rural and the urban; and that within the city of Calcutta disunity had begun to appear in the form of various opposing factions. It was therefore, we would suggest, in order to demonstrate the desirability and possibility of maintaining unity in Bengali Hindu society, both in town and country, and to foster mutual understanding between the ultra-orthodox and moderate orthodox that Bhabānīcaran composed his Kalikātā Kamalālay. It will be noted that whilst drawing attention to certain economic and professional divisions within urban Bengali Hindu society, Bhabānīcaran nevertheless stressed the fundamental uniformity of their daily routines, based on traditional Hindu practices, and showed how the various classes were related one to another and came together for social functions organized under the auspices of their respective faction leaders.

By seizing upon the device of a dialogue, Bhabānīcaran displayed subtlety, for it permitted him to attack the un-orthodox, whilst at the same time maintaining a central position, orthodox yet enlightened. S.K.De speaks of

Bhabānīcaran keeping in this work 'a fairly open and balanced mind'.<sup>27</sup> In Kalikātā Kamalālay there are two voices, that of a conservative provincial, and the other, of an urban Calcutta-ite. In refuting some of the allegations of the provincial while yet feeling sympathy towards them, the urban Hindu, with whom one naturally identifies Bhabānīcaran, was able to indicate that there was no fundamental disagreement between the more flexible modern point of view and the traditional point of view represented by the 'rural' Hindu. By achieving a reconciliation, however tenuous, Bhabānīcaran arrived at a position in which he could argue that within Bengali society there were two schools of thought, that of the orthodox and that of the radical reformers. By indicating that the differences of emphasis in the orthodox school of thought could be satisfactorily accounted for, Bhabānīcaran was free to emphasise his disagreement with the teaching of the radicals, who of course included Rāmmohan Rāy.

At this point of the debate the provincial raised the language issue. He argued that the urban Hindus, who in his view no longer performed Hindu ceremonies or observed

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27. De, S.K., op.cit., p.561.

Hindu practices, no longer studied either Sanskrit or Bengali. The urban Hindu claimed that these were misconceptions and attempted to correct them. He maintained that the Bengali language was studied in Calcutta, that Bengali books were being bought and that the Sanskrit language was respected now as it had always been.

The next point to be considered by the disputants was the economic situation in Calcutta. Bhabānicaraṇ divided Bengali Hindu society of Calcutta into two broad economic sections, namely the leisured class (asādharaṇ bhāgyabān lok) and the working class (biṣayī bhadrālok). The people who lived off inherited fortunes belonged to the first category. They led an indolent life.

'They usually stayed at home, perform necessary religious rites before having lunch and take a siesta in the afternoon. Waking up at 4 or 6 p.m. some of them look after business, while others listen to the readings of the Purān.'<sup>28</sup>

Bhabānicaraṇ's explanation of the origin of these people is simple. They had come into fortune, the author observes,

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28. Text: Tāhārā prāy āpan ālaye thākiyā pūrbokta rītyānusāre sandhyābandanādipūrbak madhyāhna kāle bhojan kariyā prāy anekei nidrā yān cāri bā chāy danda belā satve āpan biṣay dr̥ṣṭi karen kehābā purānādi śrabān kariyā thāken.  
Kālikātā Kamalālay, p.10.

through the blessings of God (bhagabāner kṛpāte).

But he seems to know that their money had come either from the annual interest of their invested patrimony or from the revenue of their zamindari property.<sup>29</sup> The 'working class', according to Bhabānīcaran, was subdivided into three distinct sections, viz. upper, middle, and lower class. They consisted nevertheless, to use his own expression, of people who were 'poor yet gentlemen' (daridra athaca bhadrālok). People belonging to the upper section

'rise in the morning, wash their faces, gossip with people of various denominations, then go for a bath anointing their bodies with such oil as bring them comfort. Then they perform their daily prayers and other religious rites (pūjā, hom, dān, bali, baiśva). After lunch they rest for a while, and then getting dressed in excellent clothes they go to their

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29. In other words they belonged to the landed aristocracy which emerged in Bengal consequent upon the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis. Bengali traders, who had already earned big fortunes by trading with the East India Company, turned their attention to zamindari interests with a view to acquiring aristocratic status. It is interesting to note that almost all the rich native families of Calcutta - Rāmnohan Rāy and Dvārakānāth Thākur not excepted - finally abandoned trade and bought zamindaries. Though their financial interests lay in the villages, these rich zamindars, however, had their permanent place of residence in Calcutta. It is probably about them that Hamilton wrote in 1828 that 'some of the native traders have made or inherited large fortunes, and the public apartments of a few are furnished after the European fashions, with elegant chandeliers, pier glasses, coaches, chests of drawers, writing desks, and two or three hundred chairs.' Hamilton, Walter, op.cit., p.324.



places of work either in a palanquin or in a beautiful carriage. Their office hours, which are determined by themselves according to the nature of work, being over they come home, change, wash, touch the Ganges water to purify themselves, perform evening prayers and have some refreshments after which they hold a session of gossip. These sessions are usually well-attended. Some of those present are there for a particular purpose, others are merely paying a social call. Sometimes the bābu himself goes out to visit someone etc.<sup>30</sup>

The only difference between these people and those of the leisured classes seems to be that these did a little work. People belonging to the middle section of the working class 'do almost the same except for the fact that they spend and gossip less, and work harder'.<sup>31</sup> Many people in the lower section also

'follow the same way of life, except that they spend and eat much less and work much harder, for each day they have a long way to walk. Every evening they are obliged to report to their master, the dēoyān and flatter him if they wish to keep body and soul together.'<sup>32</sup>

30. Text: Appendix, p. 312.

31. Text: Tāhādiger prāy ai rīti kebal dāu baithaki ātāper alpata ar pariśramer bāhulya. Kalikātā Kamalālay, p.9.

32. Text: Appendix, p. 312.

Here we have satire by understatement. The lower section clearly lived a difficult life and lacked the independence which the other classes enjoyed to a greater or less degree.

The next topic debated was the performance of prescribed religious duties. When the provincial accused the urban of negligence in regard to karma-kāṇḍa (religious ceremonies prescribed by the śāstras), the urban replied:

"You are absolutely wrong to allow such rumours as these to enter your ears. There is rather too much karma-kāṇḍa in this city than too little. Bhattacharya pandits well-versed in smṛti works are present here with all their shining brilliance. It is in accordance with their prescriptions that the affluent people observe their occasional or regular duties, such as the ceremonies of establishing the image of a deity, building a new tank, celebrating Dūrgā pūjā, Ratha (car festival of Lord Jagannāth) etc. On the occasion of śrāddha (funeral ceremonies) of their parents the rich people of Calcutta hold colourful functions to which they invite their relatives, friends, priests and professors. At these functions, some of them make precious gifts of gold and silver. Some give to deserving persons such useful articles as beautiful bedsteads. Their tradition of making farewell gifts to professors is unprecedented. In accordance with this tradition, a pandit well-versed in Nyāy (logic) gets from Rs80/- to Rs100/- in addition to gharā, gāru (various kinds of waterpots made of white brass), and a pandit of

Smṛti gets from Rs30/- to Rs50/- apart from gāru (waterpot), thālā (metallic flat dish) and bāṭā (betel-box) etc. Distribution of alms to the poor on the day or night of śrāddha forms a special feature of these functions. Each of the poor people assembled gets from Rs2/- to one anna, but none goes back empty handed. The bābus, in keeping with their means, distribute alms to all the poor."<sup>33</sup>

But this did not appease the provincial who brought a further allegation against the urban, complaining that

"(most of them) have renounced the study of the śāstras and they study only Persian and English. They cannot read or write Bengali, nor do they study Bengali but consider it despicable. In the event of their parents' death, they assume the funeral rites to be an unpleasant task, and send somebody else as their representative to cremate the body, while they themselves make only oblations of water to the gods. At that time they offer a handful of water more than usual, which means that they simultaneously wash their hands of the responsibilities of śrāddha etc. As a mark of mourning (during the pre-śrāddha period) they retain the hair on their heads, but, under the pretext of having to attend office they shave off their beards."<sup>34</sup>

The provincial ironically called such people 'extremely

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33. Text: Appendix, p. 313.

34. Text: Appendix, pp. 313-314.

charming and well-mannered gentlemen' (atyanta apūrba śiṣṭa śānta mahāśayrā) and alleged that they,

'when hungry, consume bread, made by Muslims, and various kinds of wine together with meats and sweets prepared in the market-place; and they wear voluminous shirts and trousers (of the Muslim) in preference to the dhuti of the Hindu.'<sup>35</sup>

Thus the provincial divided contemporary Bengali Hindu society into two sections, conservative and reformist; but he regarded the Calcutta Bengalis as belonging to the latter. The urban did not accept the provincial's allegation and argued that the orthodox section of Calcutta society to which he regarded himself as belonging performed its religious duties (karma-kāṇḍa) with due propriety. He stated that the charges made by the provincial were warranted in the case of the radical section of Calcutta society. And he agreed that the manners of these people were not 'the manners of a gentleman'.<sup>36</sup>

By 1823 Calcutta was an affluent city with a huge population and it was in Calcutta that the Europeans and the natives came into close contact with each other through their participation in trade and commerce.<sup>37</sup> There was also

35. Text: Appendix, p.314.

36. Text: Bhadraloker amata byabahār nahe. Kalikātā Kamalālay. p.12.

37. The effect of such intercourse was not always commendable. In 1828 Hamilton wrote that 'whenever, in the behaviour of

some social intercourse between both the parties.<sup>38</sup> It has been stated in a previous chapter<sup>39</sup> that during the period of our study such organisations as the Hindu College, the Calcutta School Book Society and the Calcutta School Society were established. All of them were however the products of Europeo-native understanding. Bhabānīcaran<sup>40</sup> while recognising the good work done by these organisations, observed that a section of the wealthy Hindus and their children educated in the Hindu College were drifting away to the European way of life in consequence of their contact with the new values imported by English education. That he felt alarmed at the thought of further degeneration of Hinduism in Bengal is confirmed by the fact that Kalikātā Kamalālay is designed so as to project the old values in all their supposed purity and perfection, while at the same time exposing to criticism the behaviour of the new generation <sup>who were</sup> more and more coming under western influence.

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the natives, insolence, ill-nature, coarseness, brutality, drunkenness (qualities hostile to their national character) are observed, the change may be invariably traced to their intercourse with low Europeans.' Hamilton, Walter, op.cit., p.324.

38. Chapter III, pp.102-104.

39. Chapter I, pp.35-36.

40. Bandyopādhyāy, Bhabānīcaran, Kalikātā Kamalālay, pp.45-46.

But it would be unjust to maintain that Bhanānīcaran condemned indiscriminately all changes that followed English rule and English education. The following dialogues bear testimony to that. The provincial alleged that the city-dwellers did not know how to read and write Bengali and even when they spoke Bengali,

"they speak it by mixing such foreign words with their mother tongue as kam (a little), kabul (agreement), kambeś (more or less), kaḥlā (coal), karja (loan), kaṣākaṣi (haggling) etc. ... It appears that they have not studied Sanskrit and have never conversed with the pandits, or they would not have used such words as the above."<sup>41</sup>

Replying to the first allegation, the urban stated that

'children belonging to many distinguished families learn Sanskritised Bengali first, and subsequently they study English as well as Persian - both being money-producing knowledge ... There is a need to acquire such knowledge. It is also supported by the sāstras. How can a country be administered without a knowledge of the language of those who

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41. Text: Appendix p.314. It is interesting to note that the provincial while furnishing examples of foreign words used by the city-dwellers confuses words of Sanskrit origin with those of Perso-Arabic origin. Thus he takes kaḥlā and kaṣākaṣi for foreign words, but both the words are in fact derived from the Sanskrit origin of kokilā and kaṣ respectively. Basu, Rājśekhara, Calantikā, ed., pp.90, 105. Bhanānīcaran gives a list of 182 words of Perso-Arabic origin which,

(footnote continued over leaf ...)

happen to be ruling it. I can see no harm in it.<sup>42</sup>

As regards the mixed language, the urban put a counter-question to the provincial,

'What would you suggest doing with such words as cannot be translated into Bengali or which do not have any equivalent either in Sanskrit or in the cognate languages?'<sup>43</sup>

Then he commented that

'there is no harm in using such a mixed language. It may be wrong to employ those words during prayers and other religious rites, but while you are executing official duties or having a light discussion, the use of them cannot be regarded as harmful. If one speaks purely in Sanskritised Bengali without recourse to foreign words, it may be difficult for many to follow it.'<sup>44</sup>

The urban also gave a fairly long list of Perso-Arabic and English loan words which had no corresponding synonyms in Bengali or Sanskrit. These were the English

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(footnote continued from previous page ...)

the provincial claims, were invariably used by the city-dwellers of Calcutta, though their Sanskritised synonyms were not unknown at the time. This list has been reproduced in full at the end of this thesis. See Appendix, pp 315-323.

42. Text: Appendix p. 323 .  
 43. Text: Appendix p. 323 .  
 44. Text: Appendix p. 324 .

words he cited:

'nansut (non suit), saman (summon), kāmānlā (common law), kompani (company), kort (court), taement (attachment), ḍabal (double), ḍikri (decree), ḍismis (dismiss), ḍiu (due), primiyam (premium), sarip (sheriff), kālekṭar (collector), kāptān (captain), jai (judge), sapinā (subpoena), oṃarin (warrant), ejent (agent), trejāri (treasury), bil, (bill), sārjan (surgeon), ḍiskaunt (discount) etc.<sup>45</sup>

The following conclusions may be reached from the dialogue.

1. The people of Calcutta used to speak a mixed language, and this was resented by the ultra-orthodox class.
2. Apart from Perso-Arabic elements, a number of English words had also crept into the conversational Bengali of Calcutta.
3. Sanskritised Bengali was not generally understood by Calcutta people.
4. A Calcutta orthodox drew a distinct line of demarcation between his religious life and his working life. He studied Sanskritised Bengali for religious reasons, but for economic reasons he preferred English and retained Persian.

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45. Bandyopādhyāy, Bhabānīcaran, Kalikātā Kamalālay, p.24.



The debate is interesting in that it indicates that a conflict between Sanskritised Bengali and a form of Bengali which permitted the use of Perso-Arabic and English loan words had already begun. The ultra-conservative Hindu clearly regarded it as offensive to Hinduism to permit the use in Bengali of any word which did not trace its origin to Sanskrit. This is the beginning of the movement towards the establishment of sādhu bhāṣā (purified Bengali) i.e. Bengali in which all foreign loan words were replaced by Sanskrit derived words.

The moderate Hindu took the point of view that in Bengali as it was spoken then there were a number of words of foreign origin and that as a number of these words had no Sanskrit equivalents it would be impossible to dispense with them. He also argued that if a completely purified Bengali (sādhu bhāṣā) were adopted the majority of Bengalis would not understand it.

From this it may be assumed, as had been noted by earlier writers, including Bhāratcandra Rāy, that the language used by Bengalis was a language of mixed vocabulary. The moderate was not prepared to admit that it was a breach of Hindu doctrine or practice for a Bengali speaker to use such loan words as had been established in popular usage.

It may be stated in this connection that in 1801 Carey

noticed that 'multitudes of words, originally Persian or Arabic, are constantly employed in common conversation, which perhaps ought to be considered as enriching rather than corrupting the language.'<sup>46</sup> In 1847 the Rev. W. Yates observed that there was a mixed Bengali which borrowed 'too largely from the Hindi and Hindustani and partly also from English'.<sup>47</sup> Yates also recognised that 'this is used by almost all Muhammadans who speak Bengali, by most persons in the employ of Europeans; and by those who are engaged in commerce and in judicial matters'.<sup>48</sup> Yet he almost echoed the urban's language when he commented that 'it would be pedantry to proscribe all foreign words from the Bengali language: because in many cases they are the only terms which exist or which are likely to be understood'.<sup>49</sup> Q.A. Manna, in a recent literary history, maintains that it was after Carey's time that 'criticism

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46. Carey, William, A Grammar of the Bengalee Language, Serampore, 1801, Preface, p. iii.  
 47. Yates, The Rev. W., Introduction to the Bengali Language, Calcutta, 1847, p.121.  
 48. Ibid., p.121.  
 49. Ibid., p.121.

of the mixed vocabulary began to be expressed'.<sup>50</sup> In fact there was already positive resentment against mixed Bengali during Carey's time and this is reflected in Kalikātā Kamalālay.

Though Bhabānīcaraṇ, in the speech of the urban, strongly supported English education,<sup>51</sup> it is revealed in the following statement that Calcutta orthodox circles still patronised Sanskrit learning and the scholars who purveyed it. The urban argued as follows:

'Brahmin pandits pay regular visits to the rich and affluent households of Calcutta, who in their turn, also patronise them in various ways. When a student or scholar (of Sanskrit) comes to Calcutta, he contrives to get himself introduced to some rich gentleman. Through constant courtship he acquires the gentleman's favour, but only after he has succeeded in demonstrating the depth of his erudition, does he acquire recognition, when the generous and good-principled bābu finally sets him up in a ṭol or catuspāthi. Furthermore, the bābu always does his level best to ensure that the scholar attains wide fame and greater fortune. Many ṭols have been established in this manner in the past and are still being established in the present.'<sup>52</sup>

50. Mannan, Q.M.A., The Emergence and Development of Dobhāṣī Literature in Bengal, up to 1855 A.D., University of Dacca, 1966, p.196.

51. v. supra, pp. 192-193.

52. Text: Appendix, p. 324.

Thus it is evident that, in spite of his good words for the Hindu College and David Hare's school, Bhabānīcaran was concerned with the promotion of Sanskrit learning. He seems to have taken pride in the fact that tolis and catuspāthis<sup>53</sup> were still being established under the auspices of affluent families in Calcutta.

But all families in Calcutta were not of this kind. The unorthodox Hindus in the city showed keen appreciation for the new learning, and their attitude to Sanskrit was not as favourable as that of the orthodox faction. Rāmmohan's attitude to Sanskrit learning, which was clearly expressed in his letter to Lord Amherst,<sup>54</sup> was strongly condemnatory.

The provincial however had more to say on the subject of education and learning. He alleged that these bābus

'collect all the best books in a variety of languages: Persian, English and Arabic. They have them arranged so neatly, some in one glass-cabinet and some in two, that not even the most expert book-seller could better the arrangement. And the books are guarded with such care that not even a century hence will anyone suspect that they have been handled. But then, why should one

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53. Tol: a school or college, especially of Sanskrit learning.  
Catuspāthī: a college where the four Vedas are taught.  
 54. English Works of Ram Mohun Roy, Panini edition, 1906, pp. 471-74.

suspect such a thing, when with the exception of the warden who arranged them in the first place, no one else has even touched them, not even the bābu himself. And so far as we are aware, no one ever will ... we presume that these bābus are of the opinion that the more books one has in one's house, the more secure is one's hold on Sarasvatī (the goddess of learning); just as the more cash one keeps in the house, the more Lakṣmī (the goddess of wealth) lingers there. The moment one spends, Lakṣmī grows restless. Presumably also the moment one disturbs the books, Sarasvatī is peeved.<sup>55</sup>

The urban replied,

'A rich man usually collects things which are necessary for his household. He takes good care to maintain them. But he is not required to use all of them at any one time. He uses only those which he needs. People are not required to use all the books in their collection. Is it contended that if they spend their time without reading those books on which they have spent money such time is necessarily wasted? It is not so. And those who can not pass their time without reading the books do in fact read them.'<sup>56</sup>

This is a specious argument but excellent satire, subtle and humorous. It is based on the fact known to be

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55. Text: Appendix, pp. 324-325.

56. Text: Appendix, pp. 325-326.

true that among the educated Hindus of early 19th century Calcutta a number had already begun to collect the 'best books in a variety of languages - Persian, English and Arabic'. The provincial's point was that they did not read these books but saw in them a prestige symbol. The urban in his reply confirmed in a subtle way rather than refuted the provincial's argument. He made two points:

- i) that there were people who read the books they bought;
- and ii) those who bought them and did not read them but nevertheless acquired some merit because they had spent money on their acquisition.

The statement on this subject can be taken to imply that the books collected in these libraries were not Bengali, but Persian, English and Arabic. The inference is that the people who prided themselves on their libraries had equated learning with education in a foreign language.

It is hard to resist the feeling that the author had Rāmmohan Rāy in mind. Rāmmohan Rāy certainly knew Persian, English and Arabic and the author may by this satire be implying that he did not know them or Bengali very well.

That a section of the Calcutta-ites reacted adversely

to Bengali books was expressed in a further allegation by the provincial. It was as follows.

' "Bengali books are no use to me." Some say, "they are intended for the education of children, what use are they to us?" Others say, "these printers plague us to death. They are constantly coming up with, 'a Hitopades is in the press, subscribe now'; or 'the Dāybhāgārthadīpikā (a work on the Hindu law of inheritance) will come out shortly. Put your name down for it.' Some say, 'call round tomorrow'. But I know how to send them packing. So far I have not bought a single book" 57

The urban challenged the truth of this statement and claimed that it was largely the Calcutta-ites who bought the Bengali books that were issued from the Calcutta printing presses. Even more than twenty years after the establishment of the first printing press in Bengal, people in some other regions of the country did not know 'what a printing press was'. It was therefore the patronage of the urban people that helped the press to survive. One infers from the above controversy that a section of the Calcutta Bengalis were averse to Bengali books, yet that there was another section (the orthodox?) who patronised them. There were of course some people who in spite of their considerable wealth were still

illiterate and abhorred all books, not Bengali books alone.

About them, the urban stated,

'If you were to suggest to a carpenter, who has recently come into a little money by the manufacture of desks and cabinets, that he should subscribe for an Anglo-Bengali dictionary, then he would obviously reply, 'I am sorry, sir, but I am having difficulty in even cutting up my wood. I can't afford a sawyer. You know how it is.'<sup>58</sup>

Another aspect of Calcutta society emerges from the discussion namely, that the Calcutta orthodox were divided into a number of opposing factions. Every individual had to identify himself with a particular faction. Though seemingly paradoxical, these groups were, according to the urban, instrumental in maintaining law and order in society. The attention of these factions was directed in the early years of the 19th century towards social and religious, but not political questions. Each faction supported a particular point of view, which was that laid down by the leader whose influence over members of his faction was immense. Here is a description of the behaviour of a faction-leader.

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58. Text: Appendix, p.326.



'When an auspicious ceremony such as the commencement or the completion of the reading of the Purān is to be held in somebody's house, the host first of all informs a faction-leader and acquaints him with his financial position. The leader accordingly prepares a list of persons to be invited, from among those who are favourably disposed to his faction, e.g. kulīn Brahmins, mixed kulīns, professors and so forth, who are then presented with rice and invitation letters. On the day of the function, the guests arrive at the house of the host at the appointed hour with necessary permission from the leader. The leader, however, almost invariably arrives a little later than the rest. While all the guests assemble and wait patiently for the arrival of their leader. The learned professors pass their time discussing the śāstras and certain kulīns and family priests discuss the genealogy of the families they serve. The kulīns sit around the chiefs of their respective clans. The panegyrists eulogise the host's family and forebears. The guards at the gate prevent the entrance of uninvited people by physical force if necessary. At about this time, the leader as distinguished as a king, arrives there, accompanied by relatives and admirers. All members of the assembly promptly rise to their feet and begin to make courteous gestures, and say, 'Do come on in sir, do come on in'. The leader settles himself on a special seat at the centre of the assembly. After a little pause he enquires about the arrival of this or that person etc. Then the host dressed with a piece of

cloth worn round the neck as a mark of deep respect submits to the leader that the hour is already late and that the time has come when the guests assembled may be presented with garlands and sandals, if he permits. The leader says, 'Go to the chief of a certain clan'. When the chief also permits, the Brahmin waiters, bringing the sandal pot and garlands, enquire who is to receive sandal first. There often ensues a controversy at this point if there happen to be more than one clan-chief present, since it is he who gets sandal first. The faction-leader usually settles such disputes. The clan-chief is decorated first, then comes the turn of the Brahmins, after which the leader himself is honoured. Finally everybody in the assembly, without any priority, gets sandal and garland. After this rite is over, everybody retires to his own seat. Thereafter they take their meals, divided in small groups composed of such persons as are allowed (by śāstras) to dine together. The leader then determines the kind of farewell gifts to be given to various kinds of guests according to their rank. The host whereupon presents the guests with gifts with proper respect and honour.<sup>59</sup>

This is how the orthodox Hindus performed karma-kāṇḍa.

An individual hardly enjoyed any freedom in this society. He could not invite anybody, nor could he respond to anybody's

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59. Text: Appendix, pp. 326-328.

invitation of his free will. It was the leader of his faction who determined the course of his social activities. The leader could expel him from his faction if he was found guilty of any 'misconduct'. And once expelled, none would even take a drop of water at his house nor would anybody visit him. Even his friends and relatives would boycott him lest they should expose themselves to similar persecution. The question is, what was the definition of 'misconduct'? The answer is, obviously, anything that defied orthodox Hindu practices.<sup>60</sup> 'People eat and behave properly for fear of such expulsion, and thus the cause of religion is maintained.'<sup>61</sup> But it is not true that this system always successfully worked. In some cases, people, in spite of their being ostracised, used to lead normal lives. Though

'nobody would attend a social function held in his house, nor could he invite any person there, nevertheless he was not completely pre-

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60. It may be remembered in this connection that on the 17th January, 1830, it was unanimously resolved at a meeting of the Dharma Sabhā to ostracise Hindus embracing opinions hostile to Hinduism and/or abandoning Hindu religious practices. v. supra, chapter IV, p. 130 .

61. Text: Ihāte śānkānvita haiyā lok āhār byabahār karen tāhāte dharma rakṣā pāy. Kalikātā Kamalālay, p.31.

cluded from having ceremonies etc., performed in his house. Because there were a certain number of Brahmins such as those who came from Viṣṇupur and Kāśīyoṛā (who could be hired to perform such duties).<sup>62</sup>

It would seem from the above that in spite of the control exercised on orthodox households by the faction system, the orthodox school was beginning to lose its grip on society. It was unable to restrain the increasing demands for individual freedom which the radicals were learning in their English medium schools and colleges. Herein probably lies the reasons which prompted Bhabānicaran to write Kalikātā Kamalālay. He wanted to smooth over the growing differences of opinion within the ranks of Hinduism and to unite the Hindus of Calcutta with the more conservative Hindus who lived in villages of Bengal so that they could both unite in their opposition to radicalism. He stressed that the work was intended to be a manual of etiquette for the guidance of those country people 'who find themselves bewildered' when they first came to Calcutta and to prevent them from identifying social customs in the city with serious defection from Hinduism except in the case of admitted radicals.

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62. Text: Appendix, p.329.

## Chapter VI.

BHABANICARAN'S THREE OTHER WORKS.

In this chapter we will discuss the remaining three important works of Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy, Nababābubilās, Dūtībilās and Nababibibilās. Nababābubilās was published under the name of Pramathanāth Sarmā.<sup>1</sup> Dūtībilās came out in 1825 under Bhabānīcaran's own name.<sup>2</sup> The first edition of Nababibibilās came out under the name of Gobindacandra Mukhopādhyāy.<sup>3</sup> The third edition of Nababibibilās, published in 1840, did not bear any name.<sup>4</sup> Sukumār Sen's description of Nababibibilās as 'an anonymous work'<sup>5</sup> is probably based on this edition. The authorship of two subsequent editions, published in 1852 and 1853 respectively, was attributed to one Bholānāth Bandyopādhyāy.<sup>6</sup> The Rañjan Publishing House brought out an edition of Nababibibilās in

1. S.S.C., (3rd edition), 4, p.22.

2. Ibid., p.28. A copy of the first edition of Dūtībilās is held in the library of the British Museum. Blumhardt, J.F., The British Museum Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books, London, 1886, p.10.

3. S.S.K., vol.II. p.735. I have found a copy of this edition in the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

4. Karim, Munsī Abdul, (Comp.) Bāngālā Prācīn Puthir Bibaran, vol.I. No.1, p.266; quoted in S.S.C., 4. p.28.

5. Sen, Sukumār, Bāngālā Sāhityer Itihās, vol.II., 2nd edn., p.11.

6. S.S.C., 4. pp.28-29.

1937 which was based on the text of the 1852 edition.<sup>7</sup>

The practice of using pseudonyms was not unknown in Bengali literature. In the Middle Bengali poetry, a poet of insignificant reputation would assume the famous name of one of his contemporaries and thus attract popular attention. This is why we have a number of Caṇḍī Dās-es and at least two Vidyāpatis, one Maithilī and the other Bengali. The tradition of anonymity was continued even in the later decades of the 19th century. Pyārīcād Mitra wrote his Ālāler Gharer Dulāl (1858) under the assumed name of Teḱcād Thākur and Kālīprasanna Siṃha wrote his Hutom Pyācār Naksā (1861) giving his name as Hutom.

That all the bilās works, mentioned above, were composed by Bhabānīcaraṇ seems to be confirmed by the following statement of Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy. He wrote in 1851:

'Bhabānīcaraṇ is neither a bad writer nor a good writer; the true picture of the Young Bengal as well as the Old Bengal has been depicted in his works Bābubilās, Bibibilās and Dūtibilās.'<sup>8</sup>

7. S.S.K., II, p.735.

8. Quoted in S.S.K., II, p.735.

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According to the Rev. J. Long, Nababābubilās was first published in 1823.<sup>9</sup> Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy maintains that Long is mistaken.<sup>10</sup> The Friend of India for October, 1825, published a long discussion on the work entitled "The Amusements of the Modern Baboo. A Work in Bengalee, printed in Calcutta, 1825."<sup>11</sup> It is therefore probable that it was not until 1825 that the first edition of Nababābubilās came out. Long recorded in 1855 that 'new editions of the work are constantly issuing from the press'.<sup>12</sup> Munsī Abdul Karim states that the second edition of Nababābubilās was published in 1838.<sup>13</sup> Another edition came out in 1853.<sup>14</sup>

Written mainly in prose Nababābubilās (Sketch of a Modern Bābu) consists of 51 pages. It is divided into four parts entitled ānkur (germ), pallab (blossom), kusum (flower)

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9. Long, The Rev. J., A Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Works etc. (this catalogue has been reproduced in full in D.C. Sen's work Bāngabhāṣā O Sāhitya, 5th edn., Calcutta, 1921), p. 687.
10. S.S.C., 4, p. 23.
11. The Friend of India, (Quarterly Series), October, 1825, p. 289-308.
12. Long, The Rev. J., op. cit., p. 687.
13. Quoted in S.S.C., 4, p. 23.
14. For the present discussion I have made use of this edition, a copy of which is located in the Library of the British Museum. Blumhardt, J. F., op. cit., p. 80. I have also consulted the edition brought out by the Rañjan Publishing House, Calcutta, in 1937. All references to the text however correspond to the 1853 edition.

and phal (fruit) - suggesting the different phases in the growth of a plant. In other words, "the Babu is depicted as germinating, blossoming, in flower, in fruit."<sup>15</sup> The story is as follows:

Jagaddurllabh Bābu, the hero of the episode,<sup>16</sup> was the eldest son of a rich merchant of Calcutta, named Rāmgāngā Nāg. When he was five years old, his father appointed an ill-educated gurumahāśay (private tutor), not to give his children a good education, but to 'earn a good name'<sup>17</sup> in the bābu society. So his children studied the following subjects with their tutor: Bengali handwriting, spelling, a little arithmetic and a few Sanskrit verses. If the tutor for some reason punished any of them, their father, annoyed, warned him: 'Listen sarkār, you must not ever hit the bābus with the rod, nor should you address them in harsh, frightening words as you are accustomed to do with the children of the ordinary people. You should teach only by keeping them in good humour with

15. Long, The Rev.J., op.cit., p.687.

16. Nababābubilās, 1853, pp9, 31. While writing about this work in 1858, Rājendraāl Mitra observed that the hero of Nababābubilās was one Keśābcandra, the son of one Totārām Datta. Bibithārtha Saṅgraha, Śaka 1780, Caitra, p.280. Mitra is obviously mistaken because in the first place there is no character in the present work with the name of Keśābcandra. At least twice Bābu's name has been given as Jagaddurllabh. Secondly, it has been clearly stated in page 31 that the name of Bābu's father is Rāmgāngā Nāg, not Totārām Datta.

17. Text Nāmsambhrmābhilāśī haiyā. Nababābubilās (hereafter referred to as N.B.), pp. 5-6.



soothing words."<sup>18</sup>

The tutor readily agreed to do so. Greatly delighted at the new arrangement, the bābu and his brothers spent most of their time flying kites and at other games.<sup>19</sup> They seldom volunteered to attend a class with the tutor, and consequently in six or seven years time none of them was even able to write his name in Bengali correctly. But on the advice of his flatterers Rāngāngā Nāg resolved that his children had already acquired a good knowledge of Bengali and should now be taught Persian. A Muslim munsī, formerly a boatman in the employ of an English company, was appointed for that purpose. In two years time the bābus completed the study of Karimā i.e. Pāndenāmā of Sekh Sādī and then commenced that of Gulistā and Bostā at the age of 13 or 14. Thereafter they decided to study English. But since the schools of Calcutta were not considered good enough to offer the bābus the necessary coaching, another private tutor, this time a sāheb of low origin, was appointed. The bābus soon adopted his way of life, manner of speech and also his habit of swearing. But their attainment in English was so remarkable that they alone could understand what they wrote. This inspired the sycophants to observe, 'even the scholarly Europeans do not understand the (English) writing of the bābus.'<sup>20</sup> So it was decided that the bābus had

18. Text: See Appendix, p.329.

19. Text: Bābu gane ei kathā śrabane mahā ānanda mān prāy ghuri bal 2 māniya khelaite rati, N.B., p.9.

20. Text: Bābūdigar lekha bijña 2 imraje o bujhite pāren nā. N.B., p.15.

attained enough education to enable them to seek employment in the offices.

Dressed in jāmājorā (voluminous Muslim shirts), cāpkān (loose upper garment), pājamā (trousers), pāgrī (a head-gear) etc. and boarding either a palanquin or a carriage, the bābus began to frequent the Sadar Deoyānī Adālat and the Appeal Court with a view to acquiring legal expertise. Everyday at 3 o'clock in the afternoon they would retire from office. 'Having reached home they would first of all change, then taking some sweets for refreshment they would relax on thick cushions in the drawing room. Some of them had two side pillows, some had four. While relaxing some of them would smoke a brass-bound hubble-bubble, some a silver-bound, some an ordinary one, some an ābolā (a hubble-bubble with a long smoking tube).<sup>21</sup> Having heard of these bābus, various kinds of persons such as sycophants, pimps, singers, musicians, dancing women, swindlers, money-lenders, etc. began to call on them. 'Some said, "Bābus are real match for Indra" (the King of Gods). Some observed, "Bābu is so sober and sound." Some commented, "Bābu is the incarnation of Sarasvatī (the Hindu goddess of learning); what a scholar he is and his speeches are full of significance." Some declared, "Such manners and such a sense of humour are extremely rare."<sup>22</sup> The bābu advised some on legal points, assured

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21. Text: Appendix, p. 329 .

22. Text: Appendix, pp. 329-330.

others of employment. Sometimes he explained the intricate points of the sāstras. The pandits observed, "Bābu is not an ordinary man."<sup>23</sup>

What the bābu could not achieve on his own was eventually accomplished with the assistance of Khalipā, one of the sycophants, who described himself as an old dandy. But though old now, he boasted, "I stay out of doors day and night. I don't have any contact with my family."<sup>24</sup> Having seen the 'pure' character of the bābu, Khalipā took a keen interest in his future development. Jagaddurllabh was already blossoming, Khalipā only helped him to accelerate the process. He gave Bābu four valuable pieces of advice. They were as follows. Bābu, in the first place, must not give any indulgence to the Bhaṭṭācārya pandits. Secondly, he must have some training in music and singing to keep himself always happy. And he must consort with various kinds of prostitutes, but preferences should always be given to Muslim prostitutes known as bāis, because 'you will never get such pleasure from any other prostitute as from those who are in the habit of taking palāo i.e. onion and garlic'.<sup>25</sup> Khalipā justified this un-Hindu like behaviour by quoting from Hindu mythological episodes. "Only those who have a long record of penance in their previous births, enjoy beautiful women. One with a little

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23. Text: Bābū prākṛta manasya nahen. N.B., p.18.

24. Text: Tathāpi dibarātri bāhirei thāki bātīr kona elakā rākhi nā, N.B., p.19.

25. Text: Appendix p.330.

devotion cannot cohabit with an excellent woman. If it were a sin to go to prostitutes, would then such prostitutes as Urbaśī, Menakā, Rāmrambhā and Tilottamā have ever been created?<sup>26</sup> Thirdly, Bābu should go to his garden house every Sunday where he should undertake fishing excursions, listen to Sakher Yātrā,<sup>27</sup> invite the distinguished prostitutes and bāis and present them with such valuable things as clothes, necklace, diamond ring etc. Lastly a bābu having command over the four p-s, as pāsā (dice play), pāyrā (pigeon-fighting), pardār (adultery) and poṣāk (dress) would be regarded only as a half bābu. To become a full bābu he should also possess four kh-s, namely, khushi (happiness), khānkī (mistress), khānā (muslim food) and khayrāt (lit. charity; but here the habit of spending).

Khalipā also advised Bābu to give up all academic pursuits forthwith, because such things as education and wealth were, he claimed, always predestined. He quoted example, 'Look, such and such Brahmin never studied anything; he got employment as a cook in somebody's house. Subsequently he acquired property by working as a broker, and now is immensely happy with fops and friends, while his son and nephews, having been educated, are working at home and abroad.'<sup>28</sup> Bābu recalled his father's

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26. Text: Appendix, p. 330.

27. A kind of dramatic entertainment.

28. Text: Appendix, p. 330.

antecedents and realized that Khalipā was right. From then on Bābu, under the guidance of Khalipā, began to enjoy himself by living with various kinds of prostitutes. Once when he ran short of money, Khalipā assured him, "Bābu, as long as I am with you, you will never have your pleasure interrupted for want of money. All you have to do is to put your signature (on a piece of paper)."<sup>29</sup> In return for 500 rupees Bābu put his signature on a hand-note of 2100 rupees. With this money a great feast was arranged in the garden house which was attended by Hindu as well as Muslim prostitutes. Numerous kinds of foods and alcoholic drinks were served. The guests ate, drank and enjoyed themselves to their hearts' content at Bābu's expense and then they departed in the morning.

"Thus Bābu went on amusing himself, sometimes in his own residence, sometimes in the apartment of a prostitute. Sometimes he went in a boat to watch the snānyātrā of Māheś,<sup>30</sup> sometimes he went in a palanquin to attend office ... Sitting in his drawing room he made purchases of shawls and clothes. Buying a shawl for Rs. 500/- he sold it for Rs. 250/-. He bought a carriage in the auction for Rs. 1000 and sold it off to another person for Rs. 400. Thus he became attached to business. When his father

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29. Text: Bābujī āmi tomār nikāṭe yata dibas Thākiba tata dibas takār nimitta majā bhanga haibe nā; Kebal tumi apan nām sahi kariyā diba. N.B., p.30.

30. See Chapter III, p. 111.

enquired, "How much did you pay for this shawl?" Bābu replied, "A certain sāheh has presented it to me." But the man who gave it to him was, in fact, Dilbāg sāloyāla.<sup>31</sup>

In time Bābu lost his credit in the market. He was over head and ears in debt. Nobody was willing to advance him any further loan. There being no way out Bābu decided to sell off his wife's ornaments. One evening he announced that he would be sleeping that night in his wife's apartment. Never having seen the face of her husband after their wedding-night, she was delighted at the news. Bābu, however, departed with a number of ornaments on the pretext of having them remade on a better design. The money he got by selling these ornaments lasted only for a few days. Soon Bābu was pressed by his mistress to present her a pācnarī (a five stringed gold necklace) in addition to fine clothes on the occasion of pūjā.<sup>32</sup> 'Considering this he went to sleep in his wife's apartment and said, all smiles, "The design of your pācnarī is not good. Give it to me. I will have this one, along with the other ornaments that I took from you earlier, nicely made on the eve of pūjā." She replied, "I know that you are badly in need of money, but I will give you all this only if you declare in the presence of everybody that you have

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31. Text: Appendix p.331.

32. Lit. worship. Here it refers to the festival that usually accompanies pūjā. See also chapter III, p.92.

been sleeping in my room for the last two months." Bābu said, "Why not. Give me the money, I will keep on reciting this to everybody." She said, "You will get it two hours after midnight tomorrow. Don't come in the evening. If you do, you won't get the money. And remember what I asked you to declare."<sup>33</sup>

Waking up the following morning Bābu went on reciting to whoever he met without any rhyme or reason that he had been sleeping in his wife's apartment for the last two months. That chaste woman kept her promise to the last word, but no sooner had Bābu got the money, than he retired to his drawing room. For another two or three days, he amused himself with that money, but soon he had exhausted all his funds. On the advice of Khalipā he even sold off his furniture to provide himself with money for making fun. When the creditors began to press him for payment, Bābu did not know what to do. Khalipā, however, consoled him by saying, 'Don't worry; if anybody gets a warrant issued against you, you can ask for bail. If nobody else is willing to stand surety for you, I shall get you released in a day. Set your mind at rest, enjoy yourself.'<sup>34</sup> Thus assured, Bābu was

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33. Text: Appendix p. 331-332.

34. Text: Cintā ki, yadi keha oṃārin kare jāmin dibā keha nā haṃ ek dibaser madhyei khālās kariba tumi khātirjamāy thāka, maja loṭa. N.B., p.42.

as gay and sportive as before.

Eventually Bābu was arrested and put under detention for non-payment of his debts to the creditors. Khalipā and the other sycophants at once deserted him. Rāmgangā Nāg, when informed of the situation, arranged to pay the creditors' money and had his son released. Bābu finally came out of jail after 2 months; thereafter he lost no time in going to his mistress's house. She, instead of being delighted, abused Bābu in scurrilous language and accused him of being irresponsible towards her: 'You enjoyed yourself in jail for 2 months; and you did not once inquire about me.'<sup>35</sup> So she refused to see him any more. Consequently Bābu went to some other place, but wherever he went he faced almost the same accusation: 'Dear sir, you kept such and such woman, but you did not pay her remuneration. When she had you arrested by lodging a complaint against you, your father got you released by paying off the dues. After this who would like to rely on you, sir.'<sup>36</sup> Every distinguished prostitute echoed the same opinion. Utterly disappointed Bābu appointed a cheap whore as his mistress but he soon contacted two ugly diseases and left her. Later when his father died, his neighbours and

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35. Text: Tumi māsek dūi mās jehēle svacchande basiyā chile, amār ekhāne ki prakāre calē tāhar tatva ekbar karile nā.  
N.B., p.45.

36. Text: Appendix, p.332.



relatives, complaining that he had lost his waste, refused to attend the funeral ceremonies. Bābu, with a piece of cloth around his neck as a mark of respect, went from door to door begging them to come. After the śrāddha, Bābu erected a new house which cost him nearly all that he inherited from his father. What remained of his fortune had to be spent for the marriage of his five daughters. Bābu lamented, 'O God, I never lived with my wife even for a day, yet all troubles are mine. Somebody else enjoyed the fruit, and I have to chew the stone.'<sup>37</sup> He was, however, compelled to give the daughters in marriage for fear of losing caste. Thus the remainder was gone. Bābu became so poor that he was no more able to maintain his own family. He sold off his house to pay off his debt. Finally he took refuge in the family of an affluent man and spent the rest of his life repenting and begging. This was the end of the bābu.

An upshot of the English conquest of Bengal was, as has been outlined in chapter III,<sup>38</sup> the emergence in Calcutta

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37. Text: Hā bidhātā ek dibas strīśahit bās karilām nā tathāpi āmar halo yātana pare kare gela sukh āmar bhāgye chila dahkha, N.B., p.48.

38. Chapter III, pp. 68-90.

of a number of rich native families who had started life, like Naku Dhar,<sup>39</sup> from very humble conditions. Their rise to affluence was so phenomenal that Khalipā's observation 'wealth and education are predestined',<sup>40</sup> sounded very plausible. It is evident from Bhabānicaraṇ's description that by the second decade of the 19th century they became rich either by purchasing stocks and shares or by acquiring zamindaris.<sup>41</sup> Though the episode of Nababābubilās describes the degradation of a Brahmin who attached greater importance to wealth than to morality, it may also be discerned from the story that there was a growing tendency among the rich families of Calcutta to display their love for education as well.

The first part of Nababābubilās gives us a glimpse into the condition of education in Calcutta in the first part of the 19th century. The son of a Bengali Hindu got his first lesson under a Hindu gurumahāśay at the age of 5, when his main subjects of study were Bengali, arithmetic and Sanskrit. After this stage he was placed under a Muslim

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39. Ibid., p. 90.

40. v. supra, p. 214.

41. Text: Kompānir kāgaj kimbā jamidāri krayādhīn bahutara dibasābasāne adhiktara dhanādyā haiyāchen. N.B., p. 5.

munsī, with whom he studied Persian. Having studied Bengali, Sanskrit and Persian he went to English schools. Thereafter he was considered fit to take up employment in government and merchant offices. The chosen places of work included organisations like the Supreme Court of Calcutta, the Court of Appeal etc. but, <sup>some</sup> of the young men, some it seems, went into business. Their association with the English residents of Calcutta was, in some cases, close and cordial. People like David Hare had been able to enjoy the respect and admiration of the Bengali community of Calcutta. <sup>42</sup> The modern Bābu, the hero of the present episode, has been described as aping all these practices of the enlightened section of the Calcutta Hindu society. At one point of the story he was even seen to frequent the watch-shop of David Hare. <sup>43</sup>

But his failure could be attributed to two things, namely, improper education due to his father's indifference and his association with Khalipā. In the first place, Rāmgāṅgā Nāg has been portrayed as a rich but uneducated man.

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42. Mitra, Pyāricād, Debhid Heyār, Calcutta, 1964.

43. Text: Kakhana mem debid her sāheber dokān ghare gamanāgaman karen, pp.39, N.B.

He was believed to know something of the languages current in Calcutta, but his lack of judgment was revealed when he appointed an ill-educated gurumahāśay, a boatman munsī, and a sāheb of low origin to teach his children Bengali, Persian and English respectively.

Probably he himself had only a smattering of these languages which he might have acquired in order to become a successful businessman.

In the second place, Khalipā (an Arabic word meaning representative) represented the extravagant class that flourished by trading with the East India Company in the later part of the 18th century. His advice to Jagaddurllabh clearly indicated that he preferred a return to the kind of life that prevailed in the courts of the Muslim nabābs.<sup>44</sup> He advised Bābu to adopt all the vices of the nabābs. Thus the young man was as a result of his training led to ape two cultures, British and Muslim.

It is interesting to note here that Rāmgāṅgā wanted to elevate himself to the aristocracy by giving his children education, however incomplete it might have been. Khalipā,

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44. Chapter III, p. 86.

on the other hand, also prompted Jagaddurllabh to become a perfect aristocrat, not by pursuing academic habits<sup>45</sup> but by enjoying himself with wealth, wine and women. In fact, Rāmgāṅgā recognised the emergence of a new English educated aristocracy in Calcutta, while Khalipā ruminated the memories of the past. And Bābu, caught in the dilemma, imitated partly the English way of life, partly the nabābī way of life. But it was the influence of Khalipā that accounted most for the fall of Bābu.

The Friend of India, while reviewing Nababābubilās in 1825, commented that 'it is a satirical view of the education and habits of the rich, and more especially of those families which have very recently acquired wealth and risen into notice'.<sup>46</sup> In 1858 Rājendralāl Mitra noted that it reflected the evil consequences that might follow from what may be called profligacy and drunkenness, 'if the education of a boy is hampered owing to his father's indifference'.<sup>47</sup>

While the Friend of India observed that the work

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45. Text: Kena michā ketāb bahi o puthi laiṅā mejāj khārāp karibā. N.B., p.27.

46. The Friend of India (Quarterly Series), October, 1825, p. 289.

47. Bibidhārtha Saṅgraha, Śaka 1780 (1858 A.D.), Caitra, p. 280.

satirised the habits and education of a certain class, Mitra concluded that it was bad education that led Bābu to ruin. He apparently believed that a proper education could have saved him from the troubles that he fell into. This of course is true, but the author makes clear that moral degradation could be brought about by unaccustomed affluence, as was the case with the father, as well as by faulty, ill-planned and undisciplined education, as was the case with the son. When the two came together in one family the plight of the victim was indeed grave.

It may be remembered here that in Bābur Upākhyān,<sup>48</sup> Rājcaḅrabartī Deoḅān, father of Tilakcandra Bābu, thought that 'to know gāyatrī is enough for a Brahmin's son. He may of course acquire knowledge if it is so ordained'.<sup>49</sup> And Tilakcandra himself observed that 'it is physical pleasure that matters'.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, he pretended that he knew many languages and modelled his behaviour partly on that of a sāheb, and partly on that of a nabāb as he wanted to command influence in society.

In the present episode Rāmgāngā Nāg was eager to exhibit

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48. Chapter III, p.79.

49. Ibid., p.81.

50. Ibid., p.82.

in society that his children were well-acquainted with English, Persian and Bengali. In this point Rāmgāṅgā resembled Tilakcandra who had for similar reason pretended that he knew those languages. In fact, Rāmgāṅgā and Tilakcandra held almost identical views with regard to education, while Rājcaḅrabartī Deoḅān represented the viewpoint of the first generation of the native merchants who had suddenly become rich.

Although Tilakcandra, imitating the nabābs, held a court of sycophants, it was, however, he who conducted his affairs. Instead of relying on the flatterers, he caused them to depend on him. Jagaddurllabh, on the contrary, fell under the evil influence of Khalipā, and made a fool of himself. He seemed to be one step ahead of Tilakcandra so far as extravagance and profligacy were concerned.

(ii)

Dūtībilās (the Sketch of a Go-between) is a long erotic poem written at the instance of one Svarūpcandra Mallik, the 7th son of Nimāñicaraan Mallik.<sup>51</sup> It came out

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51. Text: Appendix, p. 332.

in 1825.<sup>52</sup> It was printed at the Samācār Candrikā Press. With regard to the origin of the work Bhabānīcaran stated in a chapter called granther sūcanā (the beginning of the book) that since there had been no erotic poem since Bhāratcandra,<sup>53</sup> his patron Svarūpcandra Mallik felt that a new erotic poem should be composed, depicting the amorous activities of the modern bābus of Calcutta. Such a work would urge them to give up their illicit practices and thus cause happiness to others.<sup>54</sup>

Bhabānīcaran explains that 'since dūtī is the principal character of this work, he has given it the title of Dūtībilās.<sup>55</sup> On the title-page he also described the poem as a work that will delight very witty persons.<sup>56</sup> The purpose of the poem thus appears to be aesthetic as well as didactic.

Composed entirely in verse Dūtībilās consists of viii + 132 pages. Following the pattern of Bhāratcandra's Vidyā Sundar, Bhabānīcaran employed various kinds of metrical forms

52. Supra, p. 207.

53. Text: Ye dekhi bhārat kṛta nabya kichu nāi. Dūtībilās (hereafter referred to as D.B), p.4.

54. Text: Se rās barnile bhālā grantha ek hay / tāhārā kukarma tyaje ithe sukhoday // Ibid., p.4.

55. Text: Pradhānā e granthamadye haibek dūtī / ataeb dūtī-bilāsakhya ei puti // Ibid., p.4.

56. Dūtībilās surasik rasadāyāk pustak.



such as tripadābali, māljhāp paṣār, lalit, ekābali, and totak to embellish the thin outline of the story with literary charm and poetic elegance.<sup>57</sup> Another feature of the first edition of Dūtibilās is that it contains 12 line-engraving illustrations. Their captions are as follows.

- i. Srīdeb nāgar (Srīdeb the hero)
- ii. Mālinī (the flower-woman)
- iii. Anaṅgamañjarī (the heroine)
- iv. Mati nāpitinī (Mati, the manicuress)
- v. Sara urenī (Sara, the Oriya milk-woman)
- vi. Kiśorī neṛī (Kiśorī, the woman mendicant)
- vii. Gopī dāsī (Gopī, the maid)
- viii. Srīdeber Vaiṣṇava beś (Srīdeb in the guise of a Vaiṣṇava mendicant)
- ix. Srīdeber dāsī beś (Srīdeb in the garb of a maid)
- x. Srīdeber dvija beś (Srīdeb in the guise of a Brahmin)
- xi. Srīdeber pallyagrāmastha badhū beś (Srīdeb disguised as a village wife)
- xii. Srīdeber yogī beś (Srīdeb as a saint)

57. The use of these metrical forms by Bhabānicaraṇ has been discussed in chapter VII of this thesis; p.

The poem opens with a fairly long description of the five varieties of women who, with varying degrees of ability, worked as go-betweens in the early 19th century Calcutta. The first of them was a flower-woman, 'who in olden times was notorious as a procuress'.<sup>58</sup> On the pretext of supplying flowers for religious performances she could straightaway get into the female quarters of a house. But with the increasing indifference to religion her effectiveness as a procuress to a great extent diminished. During the period in which the work is set a flower-woman could visit a house only on the occasion of marriage ceremonies. Next in order of effectiveness came the manicuress; but her scope also was limited for she could call on somebody only when invited.<sup>59</sup> From this point of view an Oriya milk-woman enjoyed an advantage. Free from all feminine shyness, she could visit the homes of all and sundry, selling her milk. But a woman, willing to indulge in an illicit affair, needed someone whom she could talk to at all hours; and so a woman-mendicant (nerī) appeared to her more useful as a messenger than the above. Though her

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58. Text: Pūrbete prasiddhā dūtī chilen mālinī. D.B.,p.6.

59. Text: Nā dakile konasthale yāoya tār bhār. Ibid.,p.7.

main occupation was the singing of religious songs to the woman members of the household, she often worked as a cook and thus established close contact with her mistress. On the pretext of reciting religious hymns she murmured amorous suggestions to her listeners and finally succeeded in arousing passion in them. But she was also handicapped by the fact that she could not keep herself attached to her intended victim for 24 hours. A maid was therefore considered the best of all messengers. She lived in the same house as her victim. 'After attending to her usual duties, she went home only to take her meals. At that time she held all secret talks. So if anybody called on her then, she at once understood what he was about.'<sup>60</sup> A woman with such contacts as this was, therefore, the most sought-after go-between in those days.

Srīdeb, the hero of Dūtībilās, was a rich, handsome, sportive and gay young man. He was living in Calcutta in a rented mansion, his intention being in his own words, 'to protect my property in the country'.<sup>61</sup> There he saw Anāṅamañjarī, the young and exquisitely beautiful

60. Text: Ahār karite mātra nij gr̥he yāy / nitya karma kari pare haiyā bidāy // se samay gupta karma kathā kaye thake / sune mane bujhe yāy yadi keha dāke // Ibid., p.10.

61. Text: Tāluk raksār hetu āchi bāsā kari. Ibid., p.58.

wife of a rich neighbour and at once fell desperately in love with her. Frenzied with desire he contacted four women, Mālinī (flower-woman), Mati nāpitinī (a manicuress named Mati), Sara urenī (an Oriya milk-woman named Sara) and Kiśorī nerī (a Vaiṣṇava mendicant woman named Kiśorī) to work for him as a go-between, and entreated all of them to arrange for him to meet Anāṅgamañjarī.

Mālinī took 2 mohars from him, in advance, for the job, but later came back saying that 'I was going to your woman today, but the guard of the house seeing my flowers refused me entry into the female quarters and asked me to go to a chapel. After this it became really difficult for me to go there, but I found that the manicuress went into the house without any obstruction.'<sup>62</sup> So the manicuress named Mati appeared on the scene. She named to Śrīdeb a number of beautiful married women, including a Brahmin one, suggesting that they were in no way inferior to Anāṅgamañjarī. Śrīdeb, in reply, strongly rejected the idea of having an affair with a Brahmin woman because 'you must know that the Brahmin is the highest of all castes, and the Brahmin women are as respectable as mothers'.<sup>63</sup> 'Even if a Brahmin woman becomes unfaithful to her husband, Sudras and others yet should regard her as their mother and

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62. Text: Appendix, p.333.

63. Text: Brahman barner guru jānaha niścaṃ / Brāhmanīrā mātr̥sama sarbhaśāstre kaṃ // D.B., p.25.

they must not consort with her.<sup>64</sup> Mati was therefore commissioned by him to procure Anāṅga and Anāṅga only. She took two expensive pearls from Śrīdeb, but accomplished nothing. So Śrīdeb appointed Sara, the Oriya milk-woman, but she only extorted from him 4 gold mohars on the pretext of buying fine clothes as presentation for Anāṅga, and came back to say that Anāṅga was seriously offended at the proposal to begin with but finally agreed to consider the matter because of her persuasion. Anāṅga wanted to see Śrīdeb, continued Sara, at a convenient moment. But since Sara could not stay in the house for long, she did not know when such a moment would come. So she advised Śrīdeb to appoint a better person, Kiśorī nerī, a Vaiṣṇava mendicant, to have his mission achieved. With his hope gradually ebbing he made a fresh attempt to win Anāṅga through Kiśorī nerī. The mendicant woman was a straight-forward person. She made it clear to Śrīdeb without any hanky-panky that it was Gopī, the maid to Anāṅga, who alone could help Śrīdeb in accomplishing what he was up to. So Śrīdeb contacted Gopī. Gopī described herself as the widow of a reputed Kāyastha family of Māheś. Having fallen on bad times she was compelled to take on the detestable job of a maid. She took a definite fancy to Śrīdeb as the latter paid her 25 gold mohars in advance and promised to provide her

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64. Text: Yadyapio dvijanārī dvicārīnī haṃ / śudrādir mātr  
tūlyā gamanīyā nay // Ibid., p.25.

with a monthly salary of 50 gold mohars if she could persuade Anāṅga to be his mistress. This pleased her to such an extent that when Anāṅga wanted to know about Śrīdeb she said, 'I have met hundreds of bābus through you, but none of them is a patch on him.'<sup>65</sup> Anāṅga was no less delighted at the prospect of having such an accomplished lover. Taking leave of her husband on the pretext of seeing her allegedly ailing aunt she boarded a palanquin, accompanied by Gopī, to go to Śrīdeb's place.

At their first meeting Śrīdeb described himself to Anāṅga as follows. 'My name is Śrīdeb-nāgar. My education talents and virtues are all concerned with merry-making. Having a zamindari in Kāmpur I am always occupied with that. I am staying here in a rented house to protect my property. Belonging to the caste of Kṣatriya as I do, none can overpower me. My father has died leaving me a large fortune. I have neither my mother, nor have I my brother alive. I have no wife, no children. In my own house at Māyāpur live the members of my clan. Having no desire for marriage I live, throughout the year, abroad, and I spend money to live happily. To speak the truth I am subordinate to nothing except your love ...'<sup>66</sup> When asked to say something about

65. Text: Tomāṅ daulate kata, jāni bābu śata śata, er cākarer yogya naṅ. D.B., p.54.

66. Text: Appendix, p.333 ✓

herself Anāṅga replied, 'What will you do, my love, with my name? People tame (women) by tantras, by hook or by crook, but it seems that you would keep me under your control by your virtues alone. Have I to tell you my name? Listen to me. Erstwhile my name was Anāṅgamañjarī, but from now on, my desires being fulfilled, I have changed my name in accordance with yours, to Śrīdeb-nāgarī (the woman of Śrīdeb).'<sup>67</sup>

The first meeting, instead of quelling their urge for each other, further inflamed the spark of their desire and so Anāṅga soon made up another pretext for going out. This time she decided to go to an ākhrā<sup>68</sup> to listen to kīrtan.<sup>69</sup> Her husband readily permitted her to go there as it was considered an act of piety. Anāṅga at once sent Gopī to Śrīdeb instructing him to await her at the ākhrā in the guise of a Vaiṣṇava mendicant which the latter did. Thus they had a second union.

On the next occasion Anāṅga advised Śrīdeb through Gopī to come to her own place in the garb of a maid. So the third union took place in the bed-chamber of Anāṅga. She soon reached a feverish height of desire for Śrīdeb. She told her

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67. Text: Appendix p. 333.

68. A gathering place; here a place where persons of the Vaiṣṇava sect meet for worship or amusement.

69. Musical performance in praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

husband that her aunt was seriously ill and for her quick recovery she must make some offerings in the Kālīghāt. When permitted by her husband she went there accompanied by Gopī and her aunt whom she took into confidence. Śrīdeb appeared there as instructed by Anāṅga, dressed as a Brahmin. The mere sight of Śrīdeb aroused passion in the mind of the aunt. She then sent Anāṅga and Gopī away for a while on a false pretext and offered herself to Śrīdeb. Promising her a future rendezvous, Śrīdeb excused himself for the time being. Thereafter Anāṅga came back and had the fourth union with her lover.

The fifth union was arranged under the aegis of the aunt herself. She advised Anāṅga to get permission from her husband to hold a performance of Sakher Yātra<sup>70</sup> in the house. When permitted to do so Anāṅga chose to invite the Jorāsāko party as she thought that it was the only organization that performed genuine Sakher Yātrā, while the others were imitations.<sup>71</sup> Invitations were extended through Gopī to all woman friends and relatives of Anāṅga. Śrīdeb appeared there disguised as a village wife after the Yātrā had begun. He was introduced to the guests as 'the wife of my aunt's nephew who lives in Halisahar, a place East of Hooghly'.<sup>72</sup> While ex-

70. v. supra, p. 214.

71. Text: Suni bhāla bale jorāsākor āsal / ār yata dal āche sakali nakal // D.B., p. 82.

72. Text: Huglir pūrbā hālisaharete ghar / pisor bhāginā bahu goshīpati ghar // Ibid., p. 85.



plaining 'her', her aunt's nephew's wife's clumsiness Anāṅga stated that 'she' was deeply worried about 'her' husband. Then she took 'her' to the bed-chamber saying that 'she' was feeling very sleepy. This inspired the city wives to resolve that none of the village women were well-mannered.<sup>73</sup> An old woman commented that the village husbands were also far from good. They did not allow any freedom to their wives. At this point the city wives began to describe the qualities of their husbands particularly stressing that they granted them almost absolute freedom of movement. The description, though it is a fairly lengthy one, is being quoted below as it is of substantial interest to this thesis.<sup>74</sup>

'One of them said: My husband is a deoyān in the import house, he knows neither English nor Persian; but he works with a characteristic arrogance and does not care for anybody. He neither understands nor does he listen to what his employer says. Yet he (sāheb) loves him for his qualities. Returning from the office he (my husband) takes slight refreshment in the outhouse, and boarding his carriage goes to the garden-house. He has given a strict order to the guards at the gate that in his absence they will be under my command. You will understand from this how much authority he has

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73. Text: Pārāgēye meyegulā keha bhāla nahe. D.B., p.86.

74. Text: Appendix, pp. 334-335.

delegated to me. So naturally I always praise my husband.

'Hearing her another virtuous woman said: My husband works as a sadar (principal) mate. He goes to his office early yet returns not until night. When back home he speaks to me from outside. After changing he goes to his superior's house and orders the servant to bring him back. The servant can go only when I send him. And under this arrangement there is nothing that I cannot accomplish.'

'Another lady said: My husband is a muhari (writer) and very good at files. He arrives home only at convenient times, consequently all my desires are fulfilled according to plans. If by mistake he comes home untimely, he sits with his papers having his mind fixed on them.'

'Another boasted: My husband is an accountant in a big house. Many people deposit money with him. Returning home at night he checks the accounts. At that time he does not hear anybody, nor does he glance at anyone who may incidentally pass by him. He feels very pleased with himself if the accounts seem all right, but he does not blame anyone even if he finds anything wrong. He moves around the house, all smiles; why one should not praise such a husband as mine?'

'Some said: My husband is a money changer in the bank. Other bankers are subordinate to him. He

can recognise a false note and a counterfeit coin in the twinkling of an eye. Who can cause any fake to pass in his house? It is money that he understands, nothing else. If anybody deposits money with him, he accepts it only after testing.

'Another woman bragged: My husband is a clerk, I don't know how to narrate his talents. Having an English temperament he makes a rattling noise when he speaks. Being a vessel of knowledge he knows numerous pretences. He can copy so accurately that even a dead fly caught between papers cannot escape his notice. He never acts in violation of rules. Always properly dressed he takes bread and porridge for his meals and cannot stand anything dirty and filthy. Always engrossed in happiness, he seldom stays at home and he feels pleased to see a clean home when he comes. He cannot tolerate an ugly, unmannerly person and he as good as suggests to me to live with someone foppish.'

'Lastly the wife of a shop-keeper said: My husband has a shop at Cinebājār. He has decorated his house as well as his shop with equal excellence; but that's all with him. He never looks at what is happening around him.'

Long after the Yātrā was over, the session of the city wives came to an end. At the time of parting, the aunt took the disguised Śrīdeb to her home and fulfilled her desire without the knowledge

of Anāṅga.

Anāṅga soon began to contemplate how she could live with Śrīdeb as his permanent mistress. She even decided to desert her husband and live with Śrīdeb. But the aunt advised her to behave in such a way as would 'make both her husband and her lover dependent upon her.'<sup>75</sup> Following her instruction Anāṅga approached her husband saying 'you are always surrounded by prostitutes. Never do you think the consequences of it. Who will inherit this fortune, buildings and jewellery? You have got none.'<sup>76</sup> She said she intended to go to Tārakeśvar, a sacred place for Hindus, and perform certain religious rites which would enable her to know if she would ever bear any child. The husband was convinced beyond doubt that the purpose of the pilgrimage was as she said, and so he asked her to start for Tārakeśvar at her earliest. The following morning she commenced the journey accompanied by the aunt, Gopī and the guards. Śrīdeb joined them in Tārakeśvar. This time he got round the guards in the guise of a yogī (an ascetic, a saint). In the name of holding a Yajña (oblation of fire) Anāṅga lived with the yogī for three consecutive nights.

Back from the pilgrimage Anāṅga told her husband that she had a dream on the third night of

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75. Text: Dudig thākibe dūhe haibe adhīn. D, B., p.97.

76. Text: Sadā matta haiye thāka laiye barāṅganā / ākhere ki habe tār nāhi bibecānā // e sakal dhan karī bari alankar // ke bhog karibe pare ke achē tomār // Ibid., p.98.

her stay in Tārakeśvar in which a saint appeared and ordered her to take a lover because she would certainly bear a child but 'not to your husband'.<sup>77</sup> And the saint asked her to 'live with somebody with the consent of your husband'.<sup>78</sup> When the husband refused her permission to take a lover, the aunt came to her aid. She quoted right and left from the mythological episodes and current gossip to justify that such practice was neither opposed to sāstra nor was it derogatory to one's prestige. The poor husband, thus persuaded, finally agreed that 'it is certainly the directive of sāstra, only people in modern times do not conform to it'.<sup>79</sup> So he consented to his wife's having a permanent lover, but he suggested that Anaṅga should 'take someone who is rich, accomplished and handsome'.<sup>80</sup> Needless to say that Gopī was at once sent to fetch Śrīdeb. All obstacles removed, Śrīdeb and Anaṅga now lived as man and wife. His relation with the aunt was not affected for that matter. He kept on holding secret meetings with her. When Anaṅga once came to know about it, Śrīdeb appeased her by presenting her with an expensive necklace. Later the aunt advised him to see her only 'at the time of returning from the place of Anaṅga'.<sup>81</sup> Anaṅga

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77. Text: Kintu nā haibe tor svāmī aurase. D.B., p.107.  
 78. Text: Tui tar mat niye anya ghar kar. Ibid., pp.107-8.  
 79. Text: Sāstra ei bate nāhi māne kalikāle. Ibid., p.111.  
 80. Text: Dhani guni supurus dekhiya anibe. Ibid., p.111.  
 81. Text: Ekhane asiba phire yābar samay. Ibid., p.117.

was again infuriated when Śrīdeb made love to Gopī, the maid. This time Śrīdeb skilfully wriggled himself out of the trouble.

In the course of time Anaṅga bore three sons to Śrīdeb. With the birth of each child Śrīdeb was called upon to bear all the expenses as were involved in the rituals held on such occasions. His reckless spending for Anaṅga and her children soon eroded his fortune. At this point Anaṅga demanded of him a precious ornament. When Śrīdeb expressed his inability to meet her demand, she said that 'now I know that you are a hard nut to crack; money is the god you worship'.<sup>82</sup> Deeply shocked at her behaviour Śrīdeb tried his best to convince Anaṅga that 'I shall undo myself if I lose you'.<sup>83</sup> But Anaṅga was determined to get rid of an indigent lover. So she ordered the guards, through Gopī, to refuse Śrīdeb entry into the house any further.

Thus came the final break. Dejected and disillusioned Śrīdeb lamented his inglorious past and lived the rest of his life as a recluse.

It is evident from the above story that in the early 19th century Calcutta it was not the bābus alone who indulged

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82. Text: Etadine bujhilām tumi lok śakta / tākā taba iṣṭadeb tumi tar bhakta // Ibid., p.127.

83. Text: Tomār bicched hale tyajiba jiban. Ibid., p.128.

in immoral practices, their bibis also were equally immoral. While the bābus went to brothels or kept mistresses, the bibis arranged secret unions with their lovers, and sometimes even with the consent of their husbands, as in the case of Anāṅga. It is apparent that there was no free mixing between the opposite sexes in the high castes of Bengali Hindu society. In olden times a man had to approach a woman through a go-between. So did Kṛṣṇa in the Early Middle Bengali<sup>84</sup> work Srīkrṣṇakīrtan where Barāi was the dūtī (go-between) between him and Rādhā. In Vidyā Sundar, the 18th century work of Bhāratcandra,<sup>85</sup> Sundar was required to engage Hirā, a flower-woman for the same purpose. That Śrīdeb also resorted to similar practice is clearly indicative of the fact that Bengali Hindu society, in the early 19th century, still retained certain aspects of the moral code of its by-gone age. The only change that took place is that the effectiveness of the traditional dūtī - a flower-woman - had diminished and her place was taken by women of other professions. In the changed circumstances a milk-woman, a manicuress, a woman mendicant and a maid

84. Rāy, Basanta rañjan, (ed.) Srīkrṣṇa Kīrtana, Calcutta, 1917.

85. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth, and Dās, Sajanī Kānta, (ed) Bhāratcandra-granthabulī, Calcutta, 1950.

enjoyed greater advantage than a flower-woman. In the present episode all of them except Gopī, the maid, belonged to lower castes. Gopī described herself as a woman of the Kāyastha caste, who, so she said, was forced by circumstances to do the job of a maid. This indirectly confirms that the women of lower castes and professions were not subjected to the rigid principle of seclusion. They freely talked to the male members of society, where the higher caste women were apparently kept in Purdah. But the amorous behaviour of Anāṅga shows that there was no effective measure to stop a rich and cunning woman from being immoral.

Srīdeb described himself as a zamindar who had inherited a large fortune from his father. He stayed in Calcutta to protect his property in the country. His subsequent activities showed that he led an indolent and amorous life which eventually reduced him to penury. In other words, he belonged to the same class as has been described by Bhabānīcaran in Kalikātā Kamalālay as asādhāran bhāgyaban.<sup>86</sup>

The husband of Anāṅga also led a luxurious life.

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86. See chapter V, p.185.



Evidently he lived off an inherited fortune. Unlike Srīdeb he was a permanent resident of Calcutta, and like Jagaddurllabh Bābu he was also surrounded by prostitutes.<sup>87</sup> While the wife of Jagaddurllabh took a lover without his knowledge and bore him five daughters, Anāṅga persuaded her husband to her having a permanent lover and also bore three illegitimate sons to him.

Last but not least, though Bhabānicaraṅ expressed in the beginning of his work his desire to portray dūtī as the principal character of Dūtībilā,<sup>88</sup> it was, however, not dūtī but the aunt of Anāṅga who played the principal role. She was a beautiful young widow who by her manoeuvres paved the way for the final degeneration of Srīdeb. In Srīdeb she not only found a permanent lover for Anāṅga, but also an occasional lover for herself. Bhabānicaraṅ, an ardent advocate of Satī, was developing the theory that a young woman, if allowed to live after her husband's death, would in all probability, live a licentious life. Gopī, another widow of the story also had a similar way of life; while working as a messenger for Anāṅga she gave herself to Srīdeb whenever opportunity occurred.

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87. Text: Sadā mattā haiye thāka laiye bārāṅganā. D.B., p.98.

88. v. Supra, p. 226.

But Bhabānicaran, a Brahmin himself, would not allow a Brahmin woman to consort with a non-Brahmin. Even a libertine like Srīdeb was therefore reported to have held Brahmin women in high esteem. When the man-icruess tried to induce him to take a Brahmin mistress, he not only turned down the proposal but also commented that a Brahmin woman, even an unchaste one, should be considered by non-Brahmins as himself, as mother. It is interesting to observe that the Brahmin author, in his attempt to assert the high prestige of the Brahmins in the early 19th century Calcutta, has unconsciously admitted that immoral practices were resorted to even by Brahmins.

Apart from projecting the moral condition of the 19th century Calcutta, Dūtībilās also enlightens us through the narrative of the city wives about the Calcutta middle class whom Bhabanicaran has elsewhere called bisayi bhādrālok.<sup>89</sup> Thus mention is made of a deoyān of an import house,<sup>90</sup> a sadar mate,<sup>91</sup> an accountant,<sup>92</sup> a money

89. See chapter V, p. 185.

90. Text: Deoyān āmār pati āmdānī ghare. D.B., p.86.

91. Text: Sadar meter karma mor svāmī kare. Ibid., p.87.

92. Text: More pati ati barā ghare tahbildār. Ibid., p.87.

changer<sup>93</sup> and a clerk.<sup>94</sup> A similar account was given by the city wives of Burdwan in Vidyā Sundar, the 18th century work of Bhāratcandra.<sup>95</sup> It seems that the 18th century Bengali middle class was more or less dominated by the same professions as in the early 19th century. Thus Bhāratcandra speaks of a money changer,<sup>96</sup> an accountant<sup>97</sup> and a clerk.<sup>98</sup> It is curious to note that in the 18th century the clerk was a 'mere copyist', while in the early 19th century he was an important man, dressed in excellent clothes, speaking English and maintaining a high standard of living. A new profession however cropped up in the 19th century which did not have any corresponding equivalent in the last 18th century. The deoyān of an import house was obviously a post created to meet the need of the times. With the establishment of the English trade houses in Calcutta such an office found quick recognition in society.

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93. Text: Keha kahe pati more byānker pōddār. Ibid., p.88.  
 94. Text: Kata kaba patigun ni je se kerāni. Ibid., p.88.  
 95. Bandyopadhyāy, Brajendranāth and Dās, Sajani Kanta, (ed.), Bhāratcandra Granthāvalī, Calcutta, 1950, pp.286-292.  
 96. Text: Pōddār āmār pati krpanpradhār. Ibid., p.290.  
 97. Text: Khajāñci āmār pati sabāri adham. Ibid., p.290.  
 98. Text: Pātīlekha rajār munśī mon pati. Ibid., p.289.

There are also occasional references to contemporary cultural activities in Dūtībilās. Anāṅga held the performance of Sakher Yātrā<sup>99</sup> at her house and also went to an ākhrā to listen to Kīrtan.<sup>100</sup> It is clear that these were the only entertainments for the woman members of contemporary Hindu society. The male members could go to snānyātrā, brothels and garden houses to amuse themselves, but as it was not the practice of the day, nor was it considered desirable to take wives to such functions and places, the women folk could either indulge in immoral activities by subterfuge, as in the case of Anāṅga, or they remained confined within the four walls of their homes.

(iii)

The first edition of Nababibilās (the Harlot's Progress) came out under the name of Gobindacandra Mukhopādhyāy in 1754 Saka (1832).<sup>101</sup> That the work was composed not later than 1830 A.D. is confirmed by a statement in the Samācār Darpaṅ of the 28th August, 1830, that 'Bibibilās

99. See section i of the present chapter, p. 214.

100. v. supra, p. 233.

101. v. supra, p. 207.

will shortly be printed from the Upendralāl Press, installed in the residence of Amar Siṃha Caudhuri of Nebutalā Lane of Bahubājār. Those willing to place an order for it are directed to write to Srīyukta Brajamohan Siṃha Caudhuri of Malāṅgā ... Its price is one rupee.<sup>102</sup> Like Nababābubilās and Dūtibilās, Nababibilās also turned out to be a successful publication. Between 1832 and 1853 it ran into five editions.<sup>103</sup>

Consisting of 117 pages<sup>104</sup> Nababibilās is set on the same pattern as Nababābubilās. Written partly in prose and partly in verse, it is also divided into four distinct sections āṅkur (germ), pallab (blossom), kusum (flower) and phal (fruit). The theme of the work has been given in a nutshell in a single couplet that occurs in the title-page. It is as follows:

'She first appears as a prostitute, then as a maid,  
later as a procuress,

And finally when her degeneration is completed

She has to depend exclusively on a beggar's bowl.<sup>105</sup>

102. S.S.K., II, p. 735.

103. S.S.K., 4, pp. 28-29.

104. For this discussion I have mainly depended on the first edition, while the Rañjan Publishing House edition has also been consulted occasionally. All references to text however correspond to the first edition.

105. Text: Agre beśyā pare dāsī madhye bhabati kutvini // Sarbbaśe sarbbañāśe saram bhabati tukkanī //

The purpose of the work has been explained by the author as follows.

'The work has been composed with a view to destroying the illusions of unchaste women and providing entertainment as well as wisdom (to others) on the pretext of censuring them.'<sup>106</sup>

Thus like Dūtibilās the present work also seems to have been written for didactic as well as aesthetic reasons.

There was in Calcutta a new bābu who had a beautiful young wife. His way of life was much the same as that of the bābu of Nababābubilās. In consequence, his wife felt unhappy and neglected. A low-caste manicuress read the woman's mind and approached her with the assurance of a new future only if she deserted her husband. She said that 'you have a number of qualities and you should keep company with talented men; only then will your youth be properly rewarded. I shall arrange for you such handsome, talented and witty lovers as you desire. The woman who being afraid of scandal sticks to her husband can never attain such happiness and prosperity and so I advise you to forsake your family; because it is the origin of all sufferings and it worries people and causes troubles.'<sup>107</sup> Later she promised

106. Text: Kulatā gañjan chale kulapār sandehabhañjan o manojñan o jñānāñjan nimitta ... racita haila.

107. Text: Appendix, pp. 335-336.

to take her to a 'full bābu' who would adore her like a queen. The young woman submitted to the temptations of the manicuress and left her husband's home to commence the promised life. Her husband moved heaven and earth to discover her, but meeting with no success he finally relinquished all his efforts. His relatives rebuked him by saying that 'you have so long enjoyed yourself by consorting with low-caste Hindu, Muslim, Portuguese, English and French women; now see for yourself who disgraces you.'<sup>108</sup> The bābu was then ostracised by society.

His wife on the other hand took shelter in the home of the manicuress. Soon she became eager to meet her ideal lover and began to press the manicuress to fetch him. The clever woman went to a Kāyastha bābu who was in fact a provincial residing in the city to enjoy himself in amorous ways. She gave him an alluring description of the beautiful woman she had enticed away and succeeded in arousing passion in him. The provincial bābu lost no time in fulfilling his desire by paying the manicuress a handsome amount of money as her commission. From then on he went on amusing himself regularly with the run-away woman in the house of the manicuress. Soon the word got round that the manicuress was running an immoral business at her place. The

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108. Text: Appendix, p. 336.

police came and apprehended her along with the bābu and the young woman, and committed them for trial. Having learnt this, the husband of the eloping woman came to the court where the magistrate sentenced the manicuress to imprisonment for enticing away a chaste woman, set the provincial bābu free and persuaded the young woman to return to her husband. The husband himself also entreated her to come back. But she turned a deaf ear to all his persuasions and registered herself as a regular prostitute under the assumed name of nababibi.

Thus commenced the phase when nababibi blossomed into a new chapter of her life. She had meanwhile placed herself under the disposal of an old whore of the city and addressed her as mother. "This woman was extremely shrewd and all her seeming affection was mere pretence."<sup>109</sup> And all she wanted was to train up nababibi in the art of prostitution so that she could earn her a fortune. So she approached her old clients saying, 'would you please give nababibi some training in music and singing.'<sup>110</sup> Her old associates were experienced libertines. 'Most of them shave off their moustaches, put on gorgaphi(?) shoes, wear voluminous necklaces, sing jhumur songs,

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109. Text: Māgi barai ghāgi sneha sakali mithyā. N.B.B.,p.31.

110. Text: Tomrā dayā kariyā amār ei nababibike kichu gāonā bājnāy tālim deo. Ibid.,p.32.



play the violin ...<sup>111</sup> One of them, Addiji, was in some sort of love with nababibi's 'mother'. He promptly replied, 'what is the difficulty, bibi? We are ready to teach nababibi music and singing in the way you want us to do. Here you have Poddār mahāśāy, he knows all kinds of songs, jhumur, yātrā, rāmprasādī, nidhu-tappā; he can even sing khemṭā of Mitrajā. In the past Poddār mahāśāy used to play the role of Bāsudeb in the party of the late Paramānanda yātrāoṃyālā, and there he mastered all kinds of singing. And Sethjī plays violin while I myself know dancing as I once performed in the troupe of Haru.<sup>112</sup> But when they were asked to commence their duties as tutors to nababibi both of them made excuses. So bibi requested Addiji to look for a professional musician. The news was published in the newspaper that a certain bibi needed an ostād.<sup>113</sup> Consequently nearly all the Muslim ostāds of Calcutta turned up at bibi's place. But the 'mother' of nababibi dismissed all of them, saying, 'I don't need a Muslim ostād at this moment. I want a Bengali musician, because apart from teaching music he will be required to attend to other duties of the household and also take a lesser salary.'<sup>114</sup> So the

111. Text: Prāy aneke gōp kāmāy, gorgāphi jutā pāy, tūti2 māla galāy, jhumurer gīt gāy, behālā bājāy. Ibid., p.32.

112. Text. Appendix, p.336.

113. Ostād is an Arabic equivalent for tutor. Even to this day it is a title most sought after by musicians. Thus we have Ostad Bare Gulam Ali, Ostad Faiaz Khan, Ostad Amir Khan etc.

114. Text: Amar ekṣane mochalman ostāder prayojan nāi āmi ekjan bāngālī gāiyā cāhi kenanā amar ar2 karmakāryyao karibek ebam gāṇā bājāo śikhaibek athaca māhiyānā alpa laibek. N.B.B., p.35.

following day a band of Bengali musicians came and offered themselves as candidates for the job. Addiji also brought along with him some more musicians belonging to various other parts of India. The first candidate examined by nababibi's 'mother' was one Rāmmānikya, a man from the Dacca district of East Bengal, whose affected pronunciation and 'toad like voice',<sup>115</sup> repulsed his would-be employer. The next candidate, named Jarip, nephew of one Dilmāmud, described himself as a resident of Anārpur, well-versed in the various branches of Bengali music. But his voice was 'as soft as that of an ass',<sup>116</sup> and his performance only frightened his listeners. Then appeared one of those men who were brought by Addiji. He was a Brahmin from Upper India, residing at Corbagan in Calcutta. Nababibi's 'mother' took a fancy to him particularly for the fact that though his voice largely resembled that of an owl,<sup>117</sup> yet as he was a Brahmin he could also be utilised as a cook. But the Brahmin did not appreciate the idea and left. Later Addiji introduced an Oriya, named Mukunda Paṭanāyāk, to nababibi's 'mother' explaining that he had served as head bearer in the houses of many distinguished Europeans of Calcutta. He had resigned his job as a head bearer after being beaten by one Mr.

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115. Text: Bheker nyāy svarabān. Ibid., p.36.

116. Text: Gārdabher nyāy mrdusvare. Ibid., p.38.

117. Text: Pecaksvare gānete prabartta hailen. Ibid., p.40.

Locket for stealing something. Nababibi's 'mother' wanted to know if there was any causal relation between working in the houses of Europeans and acquiring proficiency in music. His performance however showed that there was none. It was found that all these musicians allegedly knew rāmāyan gān,<sup>118</sup> ṭhākurānī biṣay gān,<sup>119</sup> kabi gān,<sup>120</sup> dhaper gīt,<sup>121</sup> pīrir gīt,<sup>122</sup> kheur,<sup>123</sup> yātrā gān,<sup>124</sup> nidhu-ṭappā<sup>125</sup> etc. Since none of them was willing to work as a tutor of music-cum-cook-cum-bearer, nababibi's 'mother' decided to interview those candidates who had assembled there uninvited, attracted by rumour. But when she disclosed that the selected candidate would be required to work in various capacities only at a monthly salary of Rs. 2/½, all the applicants hurried back home except one who was almost devoid of any sense of music. He accepted the commission and performed the other duties flawlessly, but he was not able to teach nababibi even the a.b.c. of music in a year's time. Soon he was sacked when nababibi in her first appearance

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118. Songs based on the Rāma episode.  
 119. Songs in praise of goddess Kālī.  
 120. The Kabi-songs had originally formed a part of the old Yātrā (Sen, D.C., History of Bengali Language and Literature, Calcutta, 1911, p.697.) and 'the existence of Kabi-songs may be traced to the beginning of the 18th century or even beyond it to the 17th, but the most flourishing period of the Kabiwalas was between 1760 and 1830.' (De, S.K., op.cit., p.302).  
 121. Pastoral song.  
 122. Songs in praise of Satya pīr.  
 123. Kheur is a form of Kabi song.  
 124. An indigenous form of dramatic entertainment.  
 125. Ta ppā is a light kind of music, mostly suited to love songs. Nidhu-ṭappā is named after its innovator Nidhu Bābu who

(footnote continued overleaf ...)

before the experienced bābus made a mockery of music. Her 'mother' then urged Āḍḍiji to obtain a Hindusthānī ostād. Āḍḍiji quickly found out a man named Miyā Tillu and introduced him to nababibi's 'mother' as a Hindusthānī. 'Miyā Tillu is a Bengali Muslim, popularly known as pāti nere. He knew Bengali sufficiently well, but spoke in Hindi as he was introduced (to nababibi's 'mother') as a Hindusthānī ostād. Miyā Tillu spoke a kind of Hindi mixed with Bengali, as did the ṭikāoyālās (the sellers of ṭikā, small cake of charcoal dust) and tāmākoṃyālās (tobacconists).<sup>126</sup> For another two or three years he taught nababibi music, but she learnt nothing of music, only a few faulty Hindi expressions.

Thereafter the old whore resolved that her 'daughter' had enough of lessons in music. Now she should learn some practical aspects of prostitution. Thus began the third phase of nababibi's life. Her 'mother' advised her to attain full command over the six ch-s namely chalanā,<sup>127</sup> chenāli,<sup>128</sup> chelemi,<sup>129</sup>

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(footnote contd. from previous page ...)

lived between 1741 and 1839. Guha-Thakurta P., The Bengali Drama, London, 1930, p.25. Also Cakrabartī, Nirañjan, Unabimśa Śatabdīr Kabioṃyālā O Bāmlā Sāhitya, Calcutta, 1958. p.143.

126. Text: Appendix, pp. 336-337.

127. Lit. deception; here it indicates how a prostitute should extort money from her lover by deception.

128. Lit. coquetry; here it means how a prostitute should tame her client by displaying coquetry.

129. Lit. levity; meaning how a whore in her old age should keep her clients under control by behaving in a childish way.

chāpāna,<sup>130</sup> chemo<sup>131</sup> and checrāmi<sup>132</sup> to make a successful prostitute. Nababibi diligently cultivated all the six ch-s and was soon appointed by a rich bābu as his mistress. Nababibi had now come to the 'flower' stage in her development, by which the author meant that she was far gone in her evil ways. According to the instruction of her 'mother' she now began to rob her bābu on the one hand, and started a secret affair with a dākoṃālā<sup>133</sup> on the other. The bābu was incensed when he discovered it, but nababibi applied her knowledge of all the six ch-s to bring him back under her control. The wretched bābu gave in to her for the time being but soon he stopped seeing her when he had exhausted all his money. Nababibi and the dākoṃālā were delighted at the thought of having long uninterrupted love-sessions from now on. But the old whore realized the consequence that might result from such follies of a young whore. She advised nababibi to get rid of the dākoṃālā. The dākoṃālā, having sensed the old whore's attitude towards him, tempted nababibi to make off with him. In the absence of the 'mother', one day nababibi

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130. Lit. to conceal; here how a prostitute should conceal her secret affairs from her permanent bābu.
131. Lit. snappiness; meaning that when the secret affair of a mistress is discovered by her bābu, she should instead of making confession, snappily deny the truth of the allegation.
132. Lit. meanness; a prostitute should always take her remuneration from the occasional customers well in advance even if she is called mean for doing so.
133. The word dākoṃālā at present means a postman (Deb, A.T., Students' Favourite Dictionary, 21st ed., Calcutta Bengali to English, p.517). But it seems that in the context of the present story it refers to a man who used to do the job of putting 'relays of horses or men on the road', an act which was known as dāk-basāno in Bengali. (Deb, A.T., ibid., p.516).

collected all she had earned, money and jewellery, and eloped with the ḍākoḃālā. He took her straight to a garden house at Ṣeyāldaha where both of them fulfilled their desires. When the old whore finally traced her, she left no stone unturned to take nababibi back home. But the latter was determined to live the rest of her life with the ḍākoḃālā. The ḍākoḃālā was a very shrewd man. He lived off nababibi's fortune until she had spent the last farthing of her savings. At the beginning they drank excellent English brandy and ate various kinds of savoury Muslim dishes, polāo, kāliyā, kormā, koptā, dopeyājā, kābāb etc. and also such Bengali dishes as were prepared with ghi (clarified butter). Later when she started selling her jewellery and other belongings they drank cheap country liquor instead of brandy and ate only rice and ḍāl (pulses) instead of polāo and kormā. Soon the time came when nababibi had exhausted her wealth as well as her youth. The ḍākoḃālā anticipated trouble and eventually left her. Nababibi was compelled to take to prostitution again to earn a living. She began to solicit passers-by, Hindu and Muslim; but having lost her youthful charms she could seldom allure any of them. When she failed to earn a living thus, nababibi took up employment under an up-and-coming prostitute as her maid. She however continued to carry on with her occasional clients and soon incurred the displeasure of her employer for her frequent absence from duties. This eventually led to her dismissal. She tried elsewhere for similar employment, but none would employ her as a

maid as she had already earned a bad name for her irregularity. So nababibi resolved to act as a procuress. Because of her previous acquaintance with the bābus of the city she earned a reputation as well as money as a procuress. But soon she was arrested for enticing away a chaste woman. Through the efforts of an influential bābu she managed to get out of the prison, but she at once promised to give up the job of a procuress and confessed that even 'begging is better than this'.<sup>134</sup> She then went to a Vaiṣṇava Gosvāminī and made a confession to her. Once initiated into Vaiṣṇava faith she dressed as a Vaiṣṇava mendicant and with a beggar's bowl in her hand she begged from door to door, singing the praise of Hari. But she still recollected the happiness of her life as a housewife and lamented her follies to let all chaste women know the consequences of living an immoral life.

So far as the pattern of the story is concerned

Nababibilās is very similar to Nababābubilās and Dūtibilās.

The episode here may very well be described as the continuation of the same as that of Nababābubilās. In Nababābubilās the author concentrates all his attention on Jagaddurllabh Bābu, the hero of the episode. That his wife was leading an immoral

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134. Text: Ihāpekṣā bhikṣāo bhāla. N.B.B., p.III.

life has been hinted at twice. First, when she asked Bābu to declare in the presence of all that he had been sleeping for the last two months in her apartment.<sup>135</sup>

Second, when Bābu discovered that he had become the father of five daughters in spite of the fact that he had never lived with his wife.

In Dūtibilās, the author sketched the different phases of the degeneration of Śrīdeb, the hero of the episode. Śrīdeb may be described as a developed version of Jagaddurllabh. Jagaddurllabh acted as a puppet in the hands of Khalipā, but Śrīdeb was far too independent and to use his own expression "none can overpower" him. Though Anaṅga was portrayed as a licentious woman, one cannot but notice that the ultimate punishment was inflicted on Śrīdeb. In other words, Śrīdeb was held responsible for the guilt which was committed equally by Anaṅga. Anaṅga's amorousness seems to have been justified by the author for the simple reason that her husband was "always surrounded by prostitutes".

In the present episode, the author has laid entire stress on hababibi, the wife of a young new bābu. The bābu

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135. v. supra, pp. 216-217.



was made to pay for his wife's desertion, and ostracised by society, but it appears that the final catastrophe this time was awaiting nababibi. In the gradual process of destruction she firstly lost her honour, then her youth and later the illusion that unrestrained freedom brings happiness and prosperity.

It is evident that in all the above works the author has directed his attack against those people of the Calcutta Hindu society who were rich and indifferent to the traditional practices of Hinduism. The bābus not only frequented brothels, they even cohabited with non-Hindu prostitutes. Khalipā advised Jagaddurllabh Bābu to consort especially with Muslim prostitutes. And consequently Bābu defied the śāstric instructions and even dined with the Muslim prostitutes. When someone objected to it, the high priest of the Bābu's family retorted that it was quite in conformity with the tāntric practices and therefore not opposed to śāstra.<sup>136</sup>

This most probably contains a very subtle attack against Rammohan Ray who about this time was reported to have justified his alleged association with a Muslim woman by citing support

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136. N.B., p.38.

from the tantras.<sup>137</sup>

In Nababibilās, the husband of nababibi was rebuked by his relatives for consorting with prostitutes of various religions and nationalities. While living with the ḍākoṃālā, nababibi also reportedly took Muslim dishes and drank English brandy. Her circumstances deteriorated and she even went to the extent of soliciting Muslim customers. The growing love for Muslim food and dress was attacked first by Bhabānicaraṇ in Kalikātā Kamalālay; but it was not long before the attack was transferred from the habits of Muslims to the community itself. In Nababibilās, Bhabānicaraṇ described Bengali Muslims as pātinere.<sup>138</sup> Language also enters into consideration at this point. There was a mixed language, i.e., a language in which words of Sanskrit origin and words of Perso-Arabic origin were both used. This language was current among the lower class people in Calcutta and was also used by Bengali Muslims. This mixed language probably contained more Perso-Arabic elements than did the accepted colloquial speech of Calcutta, and in referring to it the author is suggesting that Bengali Muslims

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137. See chapter IV, p. 147.

138. v. supra, p. 254. Glossed by Carey as 'a Moosodman (in contempt)' s.v., A Dictionary of the Bengalee Language, vol. I., (abridged) Serampore, 1827, p. 340.

speaking a form of Bengali which is different from that used by Bengali Hindus. From this point it is not a long step to a further suggestion that in respect of their food and way of life, and in respect also of their language Muslims were alien to Bengal and that the Hindus alone were true Bengalis. It is important to notice this discrimination at the language level between Bengali Muslims and Bengali Hindus at such an early date in view of the fact that the cleavage between the two communities became wider within the next few decades. Bankimchandra Chattopādhyāy develops this point of view by using the term 'Hindu' and the term 'Indian' as synonyms.<sup>139</sup>

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139. Clark, T.W., The Role of Bankimchandra in the Development of Nationalism, article published in Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, (edited by C.H. Philips), London, 1961, p.439.

## Chapter VII

### THE USE OF VERSE

The greater part of the literary writings under review is in prose, but a number of passages, some of them lengthy, are in verse. The form and history of prose in the early 19th century has been examined in detail by S. K. Das, in his work Early Bengali Prose: Carey to Vidyāsāgar;<sup>1</sup> but so far little has been said of early 19th century verse, of which the only examples extant up to 1831 are those which have been cited above. These early experiments with verse, though not of great literary merit, have intrinsic interest and are also important to the historian of Bengali literature in the modern age, i.e. post-1800. Dūtibilās and two of the dvijarāj satires are entirely in verse. One of the bābu satires<sup>2</sup> and the last satire of the dvijarāj<sup>3</sup> are partly in prose and partly in verse. Nababābulilās and Nababibbilās, though mainly written in prose, have occasional verse passages; and there is one verse passage in Kalikātā Kamalālay.

The verse form used is the traditional paṣār with a number of equally traditional variations from the paṣār

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1. Das, Sisirkumar, Early Bengali Prose: Carey to Vidyāsāgar, Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1963; published Delhi.
  2. The episode of the Brahmins of Kṣōddhā; see chapter III, p.117.
  3. Death of Dvijarāj; see chapter IV, p.169.

norm. The paṅṅār metre goes back to the beginnings of Bengali literature. Rudimentary examples of it can be found in the poems of the mahāśiddhās, the Carvāṅgā Paḍas, which were composed probably in the 11th century A.D.<sup>4</sup> When Bengali literature came into its own at about the end of the 14th century, the paṅṅār metre was already established as the standard metrical norm for narrative verse. All the medieval mahākāvyas and maṅgalkāvyas, the chief exponents of which were Kṛttibas, Kāśīrām Dās, Mukundarām and Ketakā Dās, are composed in paṅṅār and paṅṅār variations.<sup>1</sup> The last great poet of the maṅgalkāvya tradition, Bhāratcandra Rāy, also used the paṅṅār metre. His work, which contains the popular Vidyā Sundar, was completed in 1752.<sup>5</sup> Mohitlāl Majumdār exaggerates when he says that Bhāratcandra was the first poet in medieval Bengali literature who was able to accomplish in his works the marriage of language with metre;<sup>6</sup> but he was right to assert Bhāratcandra's claim to be considered a great poet. He was certainly very popular in his day, and his popularity continued undiminished well into the 19th century.

The paṅṅār metre is a kind of rhyming couplet, the two lines being divided into hemistiches by a caesura. The

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4. Sen, Sukumār, Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihās, vol.I., Calcutta, 1948, pp.45-66.
  5. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth and Dās, Sajanī Kānta, (ed) Bhāratcandra-Granthāvalī, Calcutta, 1950, p.17.
  6. Majumdār, Mohitlāl, Bāṅlā Kabitār Chanda, Hāorā, 1948, p.96(1).

normal line contains 14 syllables, and the caesura falls after the 8th. The variations from the norm are also couplets, but they vary in the number of syllables in the line and in the placement of the caesura. One common variant of paṃār, known as tripadī, has two caesuras, with internal rhyme as well as end rhyme. There is no doubt that the poets of the 1820s learned their verse technique from Bhāratcandra, whose poetry contains all the paṃār forms which can be found in the verse passages under examination. The extent of the debt of our poets to Bhāratcandra can be demonstrated by a comparison of extracts from his works with extracts from theirs. It should not be supposed that Bhāratcandra invented the paṃār verse. On the contrary he inherited the paṃār forms from a long line of narrative poets which reaches back to the 14th century. The 19th century poets could have taken any of these earlier masters as their models, but for the fact that the works of these masters had been temporarily lost, and were not known, or very little known, in Calcutta circles of the day. The only narrative poet from the past whose works were widely read and listened to in the early 19th century Calcutta was Bhāratcandra, and it is for this reason that it can be stated without doubt that he was their one and only exemplar.

In addition to the normal paṃār, Bhāratcandra and

Bhabānīścaran and the other poets of our period, employed sporadically the following variations from the paṃār norm: laghu (short) tripadī, dīrgha (long) tripadī, I/II, māljhāp, ekābali and totak. The following short extracts illustrate these different metrical structures, Bhāratcandra's work being quoted first in each case.

paṃār

sūryya yāy<sup>8</sup> astagiri/āise<sup>6</sup> yāminī  
 hena kāle<sup>8</sup> tathā eka/ āila<sup>6</sup> mālinī  
 kathāy<sup>8</sup> hīrara dhāra/hīra<sup>6</sup> tāra nāma  
 dāta<sup>8</sup> cholā mājā dolā/ hāsya abirāma (vidyā Sundar)

(As the sun went down behind the mountains and night fell, a flower-woman came. Her tongue was as sharp as a diamond, and hīrā [diamond] was her name. Her teeth were beautiful and polished, her face was set in a smile.)

The metrical form of these two couplets requires little comment. Each line contains 14 syllables, divided 8/6 by the caesura, and there is end rhyme in both cases. The following five examples, taken from Dūtibilās and other works, are metrically identical.

i) Sandhyāra parete ghare/ elo<sup>6</sup> tāra pati  
 kāche āsi kahe hāsi/ anaṅga yubati  
 sadā matta haiye thāka/ laiye bārāṅganā  
 ākhere<sup>8</sup> ki habe tāra/ nāhi bibecanā (Dūlībitas)

(Her husband came home after dusk. Anaṅga went

to him smiling and said, you are always  
intoxicated with prostitutes; never do you  
think the consequences of it.)

ii) śrīyuta candrikākara/śuna mahāśayā  
nibedana kari kichu/manera āśayā  
brahma kulodbhaba hai/dvijarāj nāma  
nagare basati kintu/ nahe nija dhāma (Dvijarājer

Khedokti, I)

(O editor, Candrikā, please hear me sir. Let  
me submit to you the intention which is in my  
mind. I am a descendent of Brahma, my name  
being dvijarāj. I live in the city, but that  
is not the place of my birth.)

iii) bhāgyagune milechila/ yabanī ramanī  
parama sundarī tini/ supriyabādinī  
tāra garbhe janme eka/sulakṣṇā kanyā  
āmāra nayāntārā/ rūpe guṇe dhanyā (Dvijarājer

Khedokti, II)

(I am fortunate that I obtained a Muslim woman.  
She was beautiful and soft-spoken. I have a  
daughter by her, who is endowed with auspicious  
marks. She is the light of my eyes, a girl  
praiseworthy for her beauty and attainments.)

iv) hāy dvijarāja tumi/ gele kothākāre  
tomāra maraṇe duḥkha/ pābe paribāre  
kata yatna peyechile/ dhanera kāraṇa  
nā haila dhana ebe/ haile nirdhana (Dvijarājer

Nrtyu)



(Oh, Dvijarāj, where have you gone. Your death will cause suffering to your family. What troubles have you taken to obtain riches. But you did not earn a fortune, instead you lost what you had.)

v) samprati mā taba pade/ kari nibedana  
 kiñcita karuṇā mayi/ kara bitaraṇa  
 ati yatanete ei / grantha ārambhan  
 karechi mā yena hay/ ihār pūraṇa (Nabatābubilās)

(Oh, mother, now I submit to you my humble prayer. Please have mercy on me. I have commenced this book with great care, please see that I can accomplish my task properly.)

### dīrgha tripadī I.

The metrical variant of payār known by the name dīrgha tripadī I consists of two lines, each of 30 syllables, divided by two caesuras 8/8/14. The lines are end-rhymed, and there is also internal rhyme in the syllable, or syllables in the case of double rhyme, before each of the two caesuras.

tumi bārāile prīti / mor tahe nāhi bhīti/  
 rahe yena rīti nīti nahe bara dāya  
 cupe eso cupe yeṃ / āra dike nāhi dheṃ/  
 sadā eka bhābe ceṃ ei rādhikāya

(Vidyā Sundar)





that kind of love. Boarding chariots they go regularly to brothels and spend money but get not love.)

lucca hale dātā haý, / kāhāro nā kare bhay, /  
 8 8  
 10  
 kebal premer baśa ray  
 8 8  
 yejana pirite rākhe, / tār preme bandī thāke, /  
 10  
 tār janya bahu duḥkha pāy (Nababābubilās)

(A libertine is generous. He fears none and he is subordinate only to love. He keeps himself attached to her who loves him and undergoes numerous sufferings for her.)

nagare nāgara yata, / tāra madhye manomata, /  
 8 8  
 10  
 manamatha āche ekjana  
 8 8  
 yadi haý prayojana, / āniba se priyājana, /  
 10  
 milāiba ratane ratana (Nababibilās)

(Of all the lovers in the city there is one Cupid who may be acceptable to you. If you need him, I will bring the beloved one and join you together, jewel to jewel.)

There is in this category one innovation, which has not been traced in Bhāratcandra Rāy's poetry. It occurs in the Dūtibilās and Bhabānicaraṇ calls it tripadābali. It is of the dirgha tripadī pattern,



Only one example of this metre occurs in Bhabānīcaraṇ.  
It is found in Dūtibilās.

<sup>6</sup> jagatajananī /      <sup>6</sup> jagatapālinī /  
<sup>9</sup> jagatabilāyākārinī  
<sup>6</sup> tritapanāśinī /      <sup>6</sup> trilokatāriṇī  
<sup>9</sup> tripurārimanohārinī

(The mother of the world, protectress of the world and destructress of the world. Destroyer of the three fold asceticism, saviour of the three realms. Enchantress of the enemy of Tripura, i.e. Śiva.)

Certain minor variation on the paṅār form were invented by Bhāratcandra Rāy, and the fact that they are used in our poems is further proof, if that were needed, that it was the Vidyā Sundar, not the earlier maṅgalkāvyas, which Bhabānīcaraṇ and his fellows used as their models. They are however variations of dubious musical attractiveness.

Frequency of rhyme, assonance and alliteration, together with an increase in the number of caesuras make them tedious jingles, of which a little is quite enough. They are known as māljhāp, ekābali, and totak respectively.

māljhāp

This metre is also known as māljhāp paṅār, and it will be noticed that it contains 14 syllables in

each line, as does the normal paṃyār. In

Bhāratcandra we have

$\begin{array}{cccc} 4 & & 4 & \\ \text{kotoyāla} & / & \text{yena kāla} & / & \text{khārā dhāla} & / & \text{jhāke} \\ 4 & & 4 & & 4 & & 2 \\ \text{dhari bāṇa} & / & \text{khara śāṇa} & / & \text{hāna hāna} & / & \text{hāke} \end{array}$

(Vidyā Sundar)

(The sentry like Death brandishes sword and shield.

Gripping the sharp arrow he shouts, strike, strike.)

and in Bhabānicaran

$\begin{array}{cccc} 4 & & 4 & & 4 & & 2 \\ \text{caukīdāra} & / & \text{bale kāra} & / & \text{paribāra} & / & \text{bala} \\ 4 & & 4 & & 4 & & 2 \\ \text{satya habe} & / & \text{māna rabe} & / & \text{nāhi kabe} & / & \text{chala} \end{array}$  (Dūtibilās)

(The guard says, tell me whose family you

belong to. There will be truth, honour will

be intact. Do not deceive me.)

In the addition to the end rhymes there are in each

line no fewer than three internal rhymes, all of

which, as is the end rhyme, are double.

ekābali

This form of the couplet has anll syllable line,

divided 6/5. In Bhāratcandra we have

$\begin{array}{ccc} 6 & & 5 \\ \text{hīrā kahe titi} & / & \text{ākhira nīre} \\ 6 & & 5 \\ \text{jībana yaubana} & / & \text{gele ki phire} \end{array}$  (Vidyā Sundar)

(Saturated with tears from her eyes Hīrā said,

if youth and life go, can they come back?)

and in Bhabānicaran

$\begin{array}{ccc} 6 & & 5 \\ \text{paradina āsi} & / & \text{kahiche mati} \end{array}$

giyāchinu<sup>6</sup> sethā/ lai<sup>5</sup>yā mati (Dūtibilās)

(Mati came the following day and said, I went there with the pearls.)

toṭak

This is the most tiresome tour de force of them all. It is unscannable except as a childish jingle. Its internal pauses occur in the middle of the words, with no regard for the sense, though there is little of that to have regard for. The lines consist of four feet, each of three syllables.

Thus we have in Bhāratcanāra

nrpanan/ dana kā/ ma rase/ rasiyā  
paridhā/ na dhuti/ pariche/ khasiyā (Vidyā Sundar)

(The prince became intoxicated with the wine of love. The dhuti which he was wearing about his body fell to the ground.)

and in Bhabāntīcaraṇ

nabanā/ gara kā/ makūpe/ majiyā  
kata khe/la khyāle/ramaṇī/ lai<sup>5</sup>yā (Dūtibilās)

(The new lover, immersed in the well of love, plays many a game with his sweetheart.)

These last three verse forms might well have been ignored altogether, except that they indicate, as has been stated above, the extent of the debt of



Bhabānīcaran to Bhāratcandra. He took from him all the verse forms he could find without discrimination or critical judgment.

The general conclusion drawn from the verse extracts quoted is that Bengali verse in the second decade of the 19th century was entirely traditional in respect of the metrical forms it employed. It was a period in the history of Bengali culture when English literature was beginning to make its impact on the population of Calcutta. Shakespeare was already being enacted in English on the stage,<sup>7</sup> and some Bengalis are known to have attended these performances. The Hindu College was in existence, and two of its teachers, Derozio and Richardson, were famous for their readings of English poetry. Later poets drew much of their technique from the West. Rāngalāl experimented with English lyric metres; Madhusudan introduced blank verse and the sonnet into Bengal, and Rabīndranāth Thākur followed his example, even to the extent of writing blank verse plays on the Shakespearian model. Yet in the verse which was written in Bengali before 1831 there is no sign of any western influence, a negative fact of great importance in determining the chronology of the development of poetry in the modern era. The Bengali

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7. Clark, T. W., Shakespeare in Bengal, article published in (contd. on the next page...)

poets we have studied may have looked to the new changing social scene for their subject matter, but they drew exclusively on the past for the verse forms they used.

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(..... contd. from the previous page)

Shashibhushan Das Gupta Commemorative Volume, ed. R. N. Das Gupta and S. K. Das, pub. Delhi, 1966.

## Chapter VIII

SATIRICAL WRITING AND AUTHORSHIP

Satire as a literary mode was virtually unknown before the period with which we are concerned. The poets of the medieval centuries had from time to time invited their listeners to laugh at certain individuals and their behaviour. The presentation of the money-lender Murāri Śīl in Mukundarām's great work<sup>1</sup> could not have failed to provoke laughter, because in him so many of the characteristics of the village money-lenders which the audience was bound to recognise, were described in action. Face was a favourite interlude in the yātrā plays; and some critics are of the opinion that in his treatment of Vidyā, Bhāratcandra Rāy was having a dig at the family of the Rājā of Burdwan, from whom he had at one time received unkind treatment.<sup>2</sup> But all these were sporadic occurrences, digressions from the main subject of the works in which they occur. The intention to use literary writing for the explicit and sole purpose of holding up certain people and their behaviour, to ridicule and attack, was a new development in the history

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1. Bandyopādhyāy, Śrūmār and caudhuri Biśvapati, (edited) Kabikarīkan-Candī Part I, University of Calcutta, 1952.
  2. Dutt, R. C., Cultural Heritage of Bengal, Calcutta, 1962, p.87; also Bandyopādhyāy Brajendranāth and Dās, Sajanī Kāvta, Bhāratcandra granthābalī, Calcutta, 1950, p.12.

of Bengali literature, and it finds its first expression in the works we have been examining. How this literary innovation entered Bengal is hard to say, other than by surmising that in an age of growing controversy Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy had the genius to realise the potentiality of ridicule as a vehicle for the propagation of his general attitude to life and of his didactic and polemical purposes. It is clear that his works followed a different line from that adopted by the writers of the Carey school to whom must be credited the greater part of the literary writing of the first two decades of the 19th century.

The range within which satire can operate is wide, extending from the gentle laughter of the good-humoured critic to the vicious lampooning of an ill-tempered adversary. These extremes can be illustrated from English literature by reference to Dryden and Pope: from, that is to say, the not unkindly derision of

'Who in the course of one revolving moon  
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman and buffoon'

to the vicious condemnation of

'Come let me flap this bug with golden wings,  
This child of dirt that stinks and stings'.

These extremes can be paralleled in Bengali, though at a comparatively crude level by the humorous description

of the bābu's attempt at morning riding<sup>3</sup> on the one hand, and the bird<sup>4</sup> diatribe on the other.

Two general categories of satire have emerged in the detailed analysis in some of the foregoing chapters.<sup>5</sup> They conform in general to what Aristotle classified as 'social satire' and 'personal satire'.<sup>6</sup> Within the terms of this twofold classification the bābu sketches, Kalikātā Kamalālay and the bilās works can be assigned to the former category, and the dvijarāj works to the latter.

#### Social Satire

It is not difficult to discern that these Bengali satires had a didactic purpose, and what that purpose was. The authors were, as we have said before, orthodox Hindus, desirous of propounding the tenets and supporting the practice of their code; and they made use of satire to expose of the dangers of departing therefrom. In their social satires the intention was to point out the inconsistencies and absurdities of the bābus' behaviour and to endeavour to correct it in others by describing its inevitable consequences. Only Tilakcandra seemed to

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3. Chapter III, p.99.

4. Chapter IV, p.126.

5. Chapters III, IV, V and VI.

6. Bhattacharya, Sadhankumar, Yāristotaler Poṣetiks o Sāhityatattva, Calcutta, 1956, p1270.

escape punishment. Or was it that the story ended prematurely? The foppish bābu,<sup>7</sup> Dātāram Ghos̄,<sup>8</sup> the bābu of Śyāmbājār,<sup>9</sup> Śrīdeb,<sup>10</sup> Jagaddurllabh<sup>11</sup> and Nababibi,<sup>12</sup> all had to atone for their misdeeds. The moral is clear. Scripture lays down that fathers must discipline and educate their sons, and sons must learn from their fathers the Hindu way of life and follow it scrupulously. These fathers and these sons departed flagrantly from righteousness, and paid the penalty. But both fathers and sons were types designed by the authors to teach Hindus the necessity of obeying the holy precepts; they were not individuals whom the authors had chosen to pillory. No one could, as the readers of Hutom Pyācār Nakṣā did later, have reason to suspect that an attack was being made upon him personally. But there was more in these satires than just the exposure of disobedience and ignorance. The models on which the erring bābus based their conduct were the luxurious nabābs and the newly-arrived British, whose example we are led to believe was corrupting Hindu youth. It would be wrong to say that there was in this antipathy to influence from outside their own community any explicit

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7. v. supra, chapter III, pp. 107-108.

8. Ibid., pp. 98-100.

9. Ibid., pp. 123-124.

10. D.B.

11. N.B.

12. N.B.B.

political opposition, but the ground for racial and communal discrimination was being prepared.

Nevertheless to begin with at any rate the satire was good-humoured, though there were here and there some fairly pointed barbs. The general method was exaggeration. The bābus went to extremes in every aspect of their behaviour, though some were more vicious than others. It was absurd, but also amusing. A few examples will suffice.

- 1) The bābus collect all the best books in a variety of languages - Persian, English and Arabic. They have them arranged so neatly, some in one glass cabinet and some in two, that not even the most expert book-seller could better the arrangement. And the books are guarded with such care that not even a century hence will anyone suspect that they have been handled. But then, why should one suspect such a thing, when with the exception of the warden who arranged them in the first place, no one else has ever touched them, not even the bābu himself. And so far as we are aware, no one ever will... We presume that these bābus are of the opinion that the more books one has in one's house, the more secure is one's hold on Sarasvatī (the goddess of learning); just as the more cash one keeps in the house, the more Lakṣmī (the goddess of fortune) lingers there. The moment one spends, Lakṣmī grows restless. Presumably also the

moment one disturbs the books, Sarasvatī is peeved. (K. K. pp.38-39)

(Bābusakal nānāyātīya bhāṣāy uttam<sup>2</sup> grantha arthāt pārsi imrājī ārabi ketāb kraṣṭ kariyā keha ek kehabā dui gelāsoyālā ālmārīr madhye sundar śrenī pūrbbak emata sājāiyā rākhēn ye dokāndārēer bāpeo emata sonār hal kariyā ketāb sājāiyā rākhite pārena ār tāhāte eman yatna karen ek śata batsareo keha bodh karite pāren nā ye ketābe kāhāra hastasparsa haiyāche anya parer hasta deoyā dūre thākuk jeladgar bhinna bābuo svayam kakhana hasta den nāi ebaṃ konakāleo diben emata kathāo śunā yāynā ... bāburā bujhi śuniyā thākiben ye adhik pustak grhe rākhile sarasvatī baddha thāken yeman adhik dhan āche tāhār byay nā karile lakṣmī susthirā thāken byay karilei bicalitā hayēn ihāo bujhi temani ketāb laiṣyā āndolan karile sarasvatī biraktā hayēn tatprayukta hastasparsa tāhāte karen nā)

ii) Deoyānjī even wanted to suspend a gold brick from the neck of his son as a sign of his opulence. (B.U. I.) (deoyānjīr icchā ye svarṇer iṣṭak putrer gale dolāymān karata āpan aiśvaryya prakāś karen)

iii) Meanwhile the bābu lover who had been strutting like an elephant, now made off like a crippled gnat, bruised and naked. (ityabasare e mātaṅgabāt upapati bābu aṅge ulaṅga haiyā paṅgu pataṅgabāt palāyan karilen)

iv) Later, a son as handsome as the moon was born to him. The joy of the entire household knew no bounds: Deoyānjī has been blessed with a son. Being beside himself with joy, Cakrabartī made generous gifts (to the poor) and had such



auspicious rites as the dancing of lizards and the singing of frogs performed at this house. (B.U.I.)

(pare ek candratulya uttam putra janmila tibat  
samsāre ahlāder sīmā nāi deoyānjīr putra  
haiyāche cakrabartī ahlāde praphullacitta haota  
yatheṣṭa dānādi karilen o bāṭite ṭiktīkir nāc  
o bheker gān ityādi māṅgalik karma karāilen)

- v) Look, there is none wiser than he (bābu) is. He is well-versed in all the sāstras, such as English, Persian, Arabic, Nāgarī (Hindi), Phiringī (Portuguese) and Armenian. He studied English for a mere month and after that he could understand letters (in English) at a glance and reply to them without hesitation. Especially we don't even know when he studied Sanskrit. But he can yet interpret it. But why should not the bābu become a scholar without studying anything, he is the son of the Deoyān and as such he is not an ordinary man. (B.U.I.)
- (dekha ihār apeksā bijña nāi imrāji pārśī  
ārabi nāgarī phiringī ārmāni Ityādi tibat  
sāstre tatpar imrājī bābu ekmās dekhiyāchilen  
ihāte ciṭhigulān dekhibāmātrei bujhite pāren o  
tāhār uttar caṛ2 kariyā likhiyā den biśeṣataḥ  
saṃskṛta śāstra kon kāle dekhiḥlen āmarā jñāta  
nahi kintu tāhār bādārtha karite pāren yāhā  
hauk bābu nā pariṣā paṇḍit nā habek kena deoyānjīr  
putra prākṛta manuṣya nahen)

Here and there one finds clever touches of irony.

- i) Bābu is a god-gifted person; such intellect and judgment (as his) are rare. It must have been an auspicious moment for India when he was

born here. (B.U.I.)

(bābujī debānugṛhīta manusya emata uttam buddhi  
bibecanā ār nāi dhanya śubhakṣaṇe bhāratbarṣe  
āsiyāchen)

- ii) During the mourning period, the extremely  
charming and well-mannered gentlemen drink  
brandy alone to practise morality. (K.K., p.12.)  
(atyanta apūrbba śiṣṭa śānta mahāśayrā aśauca  
samaye śuddhācārārthe kebal brāṇḍi mātre pān  
karen)
- iii) None is capable of reading the English letters  
written by the bābus except the bābus themselves  
(such is their proficiency in English). (N.B., p.15.)  
(bābusakal yerūp iṃrājī patrādi likhiyā thāken  
tāhā anya kāhār sādhyā nāi ye pāṭh karen kebal  
bābu bujhite pāren)
- iv) Thereafter a person ... addressed the bibis in  
a voice as soft as that of an ass. (N.B.B. p.38)  
(tadanantar ek byakti ... bibidigake garddabher  
nyāy mṛdusvare kahilen)

In some places the weapon of ridicule is handled  
with skill.

- i) If anybody asked them anything in English, they  
(the bābus) would reply imitating the pronunciation  
of that sāheb (their tutor) thus: what is your  
father's name? Ṭoṭārām Ḍaṭṭa i.e. Totārām  
Datta. (N.B. p.17)

(iṃrājī bhāṣāte kona lok kichu jijnāsā karile ai  
sāheber mata śabda uccāraṇpūrbbak uttar karen,  
yathā, tomār, pitār nām ki, ṭoṭārām Ḍaṭṭa arthāt  
totārām datta)

- ii) I don't understand music and singing very well.  
But in my opinion the proficiency of the bābus

in music may be described as something like mango confection made out of jack-fruit. (K.K. p.47)  
 (gān bājanāsakal bhāla bujhinā kintu ñihārā  
 ki prakār kāloyāt haiyāchen tāhā āpan buddhyānusāre  
 bali yeman kāṭhāler āmsatva)

### Personal Satire

In the dvijarāj works the atmosphere is different from that in the bābu satires. Ridicule takes the form of biting derision; good-humour has been replaced by malice, and banter has given way to vilification. The person at whom all the darts were directed was Rāmmohan Rāy. He is not mentioned by name, but the activities under attack are recognisable as his, however much they are distorted. Satire to be effective must contain an element of truth, and here there is just enough truth to identify the victim to the reading public. Rāmmohan was considered guilty of attacking the Hindu citadel from within. Though he was a Brahmin he preached that polytheism was not based on scripture. He led the attack on Satī. He favoured western education and ridiculed Sanskrit. He consorted with Muslims and Englishmen, and imitated their ways of life; and committed the unforgivable sin of crossing the sea to England. Such a man was bound to be anathema to the conservative, orthodox Hindu. It is not surprising therefore that satire deteriorated into lampoon. No abuse was felt to be excessive.

In the first of the four personal satires the author calls Rāmmohan Rāy a bird, and lest anyone should fail to understand he explains what the term means.

'If a man of repute becomes addicted to hemp,  
He loses his name and becomes known as bird.

(biśiṣṭa santān yadi haṃ gāñjā khor  
svanām ghuciyā tār haṃ pakṣibar)

The author was however apparently too incensed to be consistent, or to entertain his readers with the tale of one 'bird'. He began by describing his victim as a bird, but he soon lost his way and ended by calling all his characters birds. His doing so would have been justified, and he would have been able to claim for his work an allegorical setting, had he not defined the term 'bird' to begin with. This inconsistency was doubtlessly due in large measure to literary immaturity, but it was also caused by lack of self-criticism on the part of the author, brought about by the heat of emotion. Nothing was too bad to say about Rāmmohan Rāy.

The method employed is, in many places, the twisting of truth, over-simplification and understatement.

- i) I understood that there was no prestige for a man who did not have money. But I did not know how to obtain a fortune. Somebody advised me to read Persian and I laboured hard to understand

the language. When I acquired a knowledge of the language of the Muslims, I gave up all those religious performances which a Hindu should perform. (D.K.I.)

(dhan bina m̄n nāi biśeṣ bujhiyā / kemane pāiba dhan nā pāi bhābiyā // pāilām upadeś pārsī paṛite / bahu śram karilām tadārtha bujhite // yakhan yaban bidyā haila upārjjan / kul dharmma karmma sab kari bisarjjan // )

- ii) A Brahmin scholar came to join me. I was obliged to listen to his interpretation of the Vedānta. After listening for some time in detail, I grew furious at Christ. Thereafter I found in the Hebrew scriptures the mystery of how he was born and what his achievements were. (D.K.I.)

(āsiyā milila ek dvija supaṇḍit / bedānter byākhyā śuni hainu badhit // kichukāl tār kāche śuniyā biśeṣ / krāiṣṭ prati atiśay haila dveṣ // parete hibrū śāstre pāilām marmma / kemane haila janma ār tār karmma // )

- iii) I wished I could get a pāñjā from the Emperor of Delhi and thus becoming the King of the country I would support my subjects and bring all of them within the fold of my religious belief. When I unfolded this desire to a friend, he counselled me, 'If you go to England, there is no doubt that your desires will be fulfilled.' By mistake I told him that I would certainly go and raise the marriage issue and show my pāñjā. That man published my statement everywhere. Now I have to go to England to protect my reputation.

(D.K.I.)

(bātik haila jor svapna dekhi kata / pātsāi  
 pāñjā pāi ei abhimata // edeśer rājā haḃe  
 prajāre pāliba / āpan mater madhye tābate āniba //  
 kāhār sāksāte ei maner basanā / kahibāte se āmāre  
 karila mantranā // yadyapi bilāte tumi yete pāra  
 bhāi / pūribe bāsanā taba sandeha ta nāi //  
 manabhrame kaḃechinu abasāya yāiba / bibāher  
 kathā kaḃe pāñjā dekhāiba // sei byakti ai ukhti  
 rāḃṣṭra kari dila / lajjā bhāḃe bhīta haḃe yāite  
 haila //)

Sneering and sarcasm also play their part.

- i) I got a good son by my Muslim beloved. I  
 named him Raja and he stayed with me. (D.K.I.)  
 (yabanī prayisī garbhe suputra janmila / rājā  
 nām dinu tār nikaḃe rahila // )
- ii) My friends, relatives and admirers in this country  
 rejoice at my happiness and weep at my sorrow.  
 But who will sympathise with me there i.e. in  
 England at the hour of my death? There will  
 be none to mourn. (D.K.I.)  
 (svadeśīya bahujaṅ svajan sajjan / sukhe sukhi  
 haḃ duḃkhe karaḃe krandan // sethā oḃṭhe prāṅ ele  
 ke balibe āhā / hāy<sup>2</sup> ki haibe ke śunibe tāhā // )
- iii) Oh, Dvijarāj, where have you gone, Your death  
 8 will cause suffering to your family. What trouble  
 have you taken to obtain riches. But you did  
 not earn a fortune, instead you lost what you  
 had. (D.M.)  
 (hāy dvijarāj tumi gele kothākāre / tomār maraṅ  
 duḃkha pābe paribāre // kata yatna peḃechile  
 dhaner kāraṅ / Nā haila dhan ebe haile nirdhan // )

The later satires against Rāmmohan Rāy are more deeply

embittered, probably as a result of the passing of the anti-sati act, for which Rāmmohan Rāy was held primarily responsible. Any act of his was misinterpreted, his motives were consistently twisted and even his misfortunes were made the subject of malicious pleasure.

These satires undoubtedly have an important place in the history of Bengali literature; but they and other contributions to the newspapers of the time throw much light on social conditions generally and on social change in particular, including developments in religious attitudes, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. But before passing on to consider them, it is necessary to assess the contribution of Bhabānīcaraṇ Bandyopādhyāy to the development of satire in Bengali literature.

Though the first satirical writings i.e. the bābu sketches were anonymously published in the Samācār Darpan, we have, however, reasons to believe that they were composed by Bhabānīcaraṇ Bandyopādhyāy. Critics like Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy<sup>13</sup> and Śrīkumār Bandyopādhyāy<sup>14</sup> made observations to this effect. Neither of them however,

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13. S.S.C., 4, p.20; see also Nababābubilās, Rañjan Publishing House, 1937, preface, p.xii.

14. Bandyopādhyāy, Śrīkumār, Baṅga Sāhitye Upanyāser Dhārā, Calcutta, 1962, p.22.

clearly indicated the reasons that led him to arrive at such a conclusion. There is not external evidence to prove beyond doubt that Bhabānīcaraṇ was the author of the bābu satires, but there is internal evidence which makes such a conclusion reasonably strong. It needs to be stated first that the use of the pseudonym had a long history in Bengali literature before this period and continued later in the century. Many medieval poets used names other than their own in the signature lines (bhanitā) of their poems and, in the second half of the 19th century, as we have mentioned before,<sup>15</sup> the authors of Ālāler Gharer Dulāl (1858) and Hūtom Pyācār Nakṣā (1861) also published under pseudonyms. In using a pseudonym therefore the author of the sketches was conforming to a tradition and the concealment of his identity must therefore be judged in this light.

The internal evidence which suggests that Bhabānīcaraṇ was in fact the author of the bābu satires rests upon considerations of style, satirical method and subject matter. The prose style, allowing for an increase of expertise in the medium that came with practice, is very similar in the named and the pseudonymous works. The

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15. Chapter VI, p. 208.



satirical method of the Upākhyāns and bilās works is also similar, the creation of types to represent a class of people whose behaviour was disapproved of and the holding of them up to ridicule. It is important to bear in mind that the type chosen namely the bābu is the same in both sets of works. The fact that the subject is a woman in the Nababibilās and Dūtibilās is a natural extension of the same subject. The bitterness which is obvious in the later works can be ascribed to a change in the situation in Calcutta with regard to religious belief and social practice which resulted in a growing anger on the part of the orthodox Hindus, of whom Bhabānīcaran was one.

Internal evidence is a good guide in the solving of such problems but not necessarily definitive. The reasons for naming Bhabānīcaran as the author of the works in question are strong and there is no other claimant. As therefore his claims to authorship are strong and uncontested, I am inclined to accept them and propose to hold this opinion as long as there is no strong external evidence to suggest that it is wrong.

The contribution of Bhabānīcaran to the development of satire in Bengali literature lies in the fact that it was he who established satire as a genre in modern Bengali literature. The cue was later taken up by

Īśvarcandra Gupta who however wrote most of his satires in verse. In prose Bhabānīcaraṇ's natural successors were Pyārīcāḍ Mitra and Kālīprasanna Siṃha. The tradition of satirical writing continued even after them. Madhusūdan Datta (1824-1873) also wrote two farces, the subjects of satire being the Young Bengal Group and a lecherous old man respectively.

## Chapter IX

SOCIETY, CULTURE AND LITERARY TASTE

The first three decades of the 19th century was a time of transition in the history of Bengal. Following the British conquest of Bengal there had emerged about this time a class of rich native families who owed their affluence to the new trading facilities which British rule offered them. Their way of life was, as has been outlined in chapter III,<sup>1</sup> largely influenced by British culture. They learnt English and clothed their children in western dress. They arranged parties to which European guests were invited and English drinks served. Even western music used to be played in those parties to entertain the European guests. But British rule did not affect the whole of Bengali society at once: it affected parts of it at different times. The first section of Bengali society affected were the merchants of whom we have spoken above. It was probably from them that the first impetus to English education came. They naturally wished to master English in order to facilitate business contacts with, and employment by, the British. This class therefore rapidly became anglicised and they

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1. Chapter III, pp. 102-106.

were ridiculed as social upstarts by their fellow countrymen whose envy was possibly excited by their affluence. The second section of society to be affected was the Hindu orthodox community, who were stirred into defensive activity by the proselytising zeal of the Christian missionaries and by the reformist activities of Rāmmohan Rāy and his associates.

Thus Bengali society was divided in its attitudes to British rule and the successive waves of influence that emanated from it. It should be remembered, however, that British rule directly affected only a part of Bengal, namely, Calcutta and its environs. The remainder of Bengal was for a time largely unaffected. The forces of social and cultural change were to begin with confined to Calcutta; and it was in Calcutta that modern Bengali literature emerged. Outside, in the country districts medieval literature still held its ground in popular estimation, though it produced no great work.

The cultural allegiance of the affluent Calcutta merchants was, however, not exclusively to their British benefactors. Contemporary records confirm that throughout the early 19th century they also patronised traditional culture. They arranged parties on the British pattern

on religious occasions such as Rāsa-līlā,<sup>2</sup> to which European guests and their wives came and danced, apparently with pleasure; but the pūjā functions in the houses of many rich Hindus offered the Calcutta Europeans a mixed entertainment. There would generally be European liquor and Muslim and European food. The music and dancing part of the entertainment would consist of items with which the Europeans were familiar and more traditional items such as sakher yātrā, kabi gān, kheur and saṃ.

There is however reason to suppose that the popular taste of the day was based upon fairly recent literary models, i.e. 18th century poetry, not upon the great poetry of earlier medieval period. The yātrā performances were sakher yatra which were based principally on the erotic theme of Vidyā Sundar, not kṛṣṇa yātrā, which of course was based on the purānic and other stories in the life of Kṛṣṇa. Kabi gan had some association with religious themes but in presentation they tended to be vulgar and scurrilous, a feature which had attractions for the common people. Kheurs were a kind of erotic song and as part of them a saṃ or a clown was more often than not employed to

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2. S.S.K.I., p.139.

entertain people by making lewd gestures, some of which were indecent enough to provoke legal action.<sup>3</sup>

The Calcutta bābus found great entertainment in these popular performances and took an active part in producing them. The Samācār Darpaṇ of the 26th January, 1822, reported that a new yātrā had been recently performed, for the production of which 'many respectable persons of the city are reported to have worked together'.<sup>4</sup> Under the auspices of some rich people in Bhabānīpur, a new yātrā was held in the same year. It was based on the romantic theme of Nala and Damayāntī. According to the Samācār Darpaṇ of the 13th July, 1822, 'a large sum of money was spent by its organisers',<sup>5</sup> for the production of this particular yātrā. In keeping with tradition these yātrās had an all male cast; but on the 12th August, 1826, we are told, a yātrā party from Manipur held performances in Calcutta in which 'the musicians were men, but the singing and acting parts were played by women'.<sup>6</sup> This was an innovation which did not become widely accepted until towards the end of the century.

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3. S.S.K.I., p. 139.

4. S.S.K.I., p. 140.

5. Ibid., p. 141.

6. Ibid., pp. 141-142.

But it was not the professional parties or performers alone that had produced such yātrās. The Samācār Darpaṇ of the 5th May, 1827, contained the following report: 'A yātrā on the theme of Rājā Vikramāditya was performed on Saturday last ... in the garden house of Bābu Jaganmohan Mallik. This party, it is learnt, has been recently formed. Some accomplished persons and gentlemen from Joṛāsāko have assembled to produce this show for the sake of entertainment.'<sup>7</sup> It was not only in the field of yātrā that the 'accomplished persons and gentlemen' had begun to appear. They also took part in kabi gān, and there is evidence to show that they caused a considerable problem for the professional kabi-singers or kabioyālās by thus performing on a non-professional basis. The Samācār Candrika published a letter from one Muce Dom Kabioyālā, which was reprinted by the Samācār Darpaṇ of the 22nd November, 1828, stating that 'some young men of respectable families have come to snatch away our bread. They have formed an amateur kabi-party and they perform without remuneration singing and dancing in the houses of others with much more labour than is possible for the professional parties.'<sup>8</sup> But the rich people of Calcutta, it seems, still invited the

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7. Ibid., p. 142.

8. S.S.K.I., p. 144.

professional parties on the occasion of religious festivities to their houses. One such kabi performance was held in the residence of Bābu Golakcaraṅ Mallik of Calcutta on the 17th January, 1829.<sup>9</sup> There were two contending parties who sang various parts of a kabi song and concluded their performance by singing kheur. 'Such a performance was not anything new to a Calcutta audience.'<sup>10</sup> In fact, kheur elicited great admiration from the bābus of Calcutta. The origin of kheur may be traced back to the last centry when Kṛṣṇacandra of Nadiyā had allegedly encouraged and patronised it.<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to note that in the second decade of the 19th century the reading public took a definite interest in the witty yet indecent jokes that were usually attributed to Kṛṣṇacandra,<sup>12</sup> a development which illustrates the character of popular taste at the time. Even the most enlightened of the Calcutta-ites were no exception. A house-warming party arranged by Dvārakānāth Ṭhākur<sup>13</sup> was attended by distinguished members of Calcutta European society. The sumptuous dinner was followed by songs, dances and western music, and last but not least, by a

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9. Ibid., p.144.

10. Ibid., p.144.

11. S.S.K., I., p.464.

12. The Samācār Darpaṅ published from time to time a number of such jokes under the title parihās (joke or laughter).

13. Chapter III, p.102.



final performance by clowns one of whom 'dressed as a cow and chewed grass'.<sup>14</sup>

Apart from patronising indigenous cultural entertainments, the rich bābus had also adopted certain aspects of the nabābī tradition. Like the nabābs they held functions in their garden-houses in which professional dancing girls performed dances and sang songs. Niki, the famous Muslim courtesan, was a household name to the bābus. Even in a function held in the garden house of Rāmmohan Rāy she figured as a special attraction.<sup>15</sup>

This was the period when an event like the appointment of a mistress, usually a Muslim, by a rich bābu found a space in the columns of a newspaper.<sup>16</sup>

Unaccustomed affluence accompanied by unlimited opportunities resulted in reckless, unrestrained spending. In 1820, Rāmratna Mallik, a rich Calcutta merchant, had reportedly spent about Rs.800,000 on the occasion of his son's marriage.<sup>17</sup> The Samācār Darpaṇ commented that 'nobody in the city of Calcutta has ever witnessed a marriage festival like this before'.<sup>18</sup> In the same year the two sons of another Calcutta tycoon, Rāmdulāl De, were married. Guests were invited through a notice

14. S.S.K.I., p.139.

15. Chapter III, p.102.

16. S.S.K., I., p.136.

17. Ibid., p.269.

18. Ibid., p.269.

published in the columns of the Government Gazette.

It was arranged that the European guests would be entertained in the Simlā residence of Rāmdulāl for two days while the 'distinguished Arab, Mogal and Hindu' guests would be entertained for four days.<sup>19</sup>

Within this socio-cultural milieu there emerged in the history of Bengal two important innovations: the establishment of a printing press and the birth of a newspaper in Bengali. Printing was imported by the Serampore missionaries for the purpose of the evangelisation of the heathen. Journalism was also initiated, as has been mentioned in chapter II,<sup>20</sup> with the same ultimate end in view. As a result, religious controversy became rife in the nascent vernacular press, as new papers were published to represent different points of view.

Concurrently with the introduction of printing and the initiation of journalism, attempts were being made at Fort William College to produce a viable Bengali prose. First used as the medium of translation of the

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19. Ibid., p.269. Rāmdulāl De (1752-1825) started life from very ordinary circumstances. Brought up as a destitute orphan by his grandmother, he began his career as a mere bill collector on the very low salary of five rupees per month. His prosperity is said to have started with a fortunate accident. Without going into further details it may be said that Rāmdulāl De subsequently became one of the wealthiest banians of Calcutta. Ahmad, Salahuddin, op.cit., p.11.

20. Chapter II., p.46.

Bible into Bengali, prose became the vehicle of text books at Fort William College and later of religious controversy in the press.

As a vehicle of literature, however, the new prose had a long way to go. For one thing literature, in Bengali had hitherto meant verse literature. The continued popularity of medieval poetry was made possible by the printer. Versions of Kṛttibās's Rāmāyaṇ and Kāśīrām Dās's Mahābhārat were printed in Serampore. And Bhāratcandra Rāy's Annadā maṅgal kāvya was published during the same period by Gangākośor Bhaṭṭācārya. The edition which was published in 1816 was the first printed publication of this work.<sup>21</sup> In form the work is a trilogy, comprising three separate and independent poems, viz. Annadā-maṅgal (eulogy of the goddess of Plenty), Vidyā Sundar (the erotic romance of Vidyā and Sundar) and Mān Simha (an episode relating the expedition by Mān Simha, the army commander of the Emperor Jahangir of Delhi, against Pratāpāditya, a rebel chief of Bengal). It was, however, the Vidyā Sundar part of the trilogy that had become most popular during the early 19th century. The story, in short, is as follows.

Vidyā is the beautiful and accomplished daughter of Bīr Simha, King of Burdwan. She vows that only he who defeats her in scholastic contest will marry her. The news of her promise is circulated far and wide, and quite a number of princes from different countries come to debate with her, but all of them

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21. Chapter I, p.34 ; also chapter II, p. .

are ultimately beaten. Bīr Siṃha in his attempt to find a suitable bridegroom for his daughter sends a messenger to Kāñcīpur, a southern state. Rājā Guṇasindhu, the King of Kāñcīpur, has a very handsome and well-educated son, named Sundar. Having learnt of Vidyā's promise from Bīr Siṃha's messenger Sundar leaves home without his parents' knowledge. Prior to his departure, the goddess Kālikā assures him of help and success. Sundar finally reaches Burdwan, accompanied by his favourite Śuk (parrot). He lodges at the house of Hīrā, the flower-woman to Vidyā, through whom he sends a message to the princess. Then he succeeds, with the help of Kālikā, in digging an underground passage from his place to Vidyā's quarters in the palace. Subsequently on a nocturnal expedition he appears in Vidyā's apartment, defeats her in debate and secretly marries her. Vidyā becomes pregnant. The news infuriates Bīr Siṃha who orders the police-chief to find the criminal and put him to death. Sundar is arrested and taken to the ground of execution. Then Kālikā comes to the rescue. His true identity is discovered and the King finally accepts him as his son-in-law.

Bhāratcandra's Vidyā Sundar is not an original poem.<sup>22</sup> But it was Bhāratcandra's touch that charged

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22. As many as twelve poets of the Vidyā Sundar poetry have so far been discovered including one who wrote in the first part of the 19th century.

the traditional theme with a new poetic excellence that made it popular. According to a recent critic, Bhāratcandra 'accomplished what he set out to do - to amuse, decorate, perhaps titillate a little'.<sup>23</sup> Whatever may be the inspiration, Bhāratcandra's Vidyā Sundar is an example of sparkling wit and gay humour, impeccable pun and flawless rhymes, with some personal satire and some social comment.

While writing his grammar, Halhed quoted profusely from Bhāratcandra to furnish illustrative materials. This is a clear indication of Bhāratcandra's popularity in the late 18th century. That he was equally popular in the early 19th century will be confirmed by the following evidence.

According to Sukumar Sen, it was the Vidyā Sundar of Bhāratcandra that 'dominated the poetic literature of the Calcutta region'<sup>24</sup> in the early 19th century. Sen also maintains that the printed literature of the 19th century 'largely consisted of the various editions (prices varying from one rupee to one anna) and imitations of Bhāratcandra's poem'.<sup>25</sup>

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23. Dimock, (Jr.) Edward C., The Thief of Love, Bengali Tales from Court and Village, the University of Chicago, 1963, p.23.

24. Sen, Sukumar, History of Bengali Literature, Delhi, 1960, p.166.

25. Ibid., pp.166-167.

The price of the Gaṅgākīśor edition is not known to us. But it follows from the above statement of Sen that it was cheap, cheaper in fact than the Fort William books.<sup>26</sup> The lowest known price (one anna), which was cheaper than an average newspaper of the period (four annas), suggests that the impression must have comprised a large number of copies. It is obvious that the popularity of Bhāratcandra's poem encouraged the publishers to print it in larger quantities which in return enabled them to bring down the price of each copy.

The popularity of Vidyā Sundar can be further gathered from the fact that apart from having numerous editions it was also staged in the form of yātrā and drama. The Samācār Darpan of the 16th June, 1821, reports that 'a yātrā based on the Vidyā Sundar episode of Bhāratcandra's Annadā-maṅgal has been produced'.<sup>27</sup> 'In 1833, a performance of Vidya Sundar was given at the Shambazar residence of Nabin Chandra Basu by an amateur company of both sexes. The play was a dramatized version of an episode in Bharat Chandra's Annada Mangal ...'<sup>28</sup>

26. Here is a price list of a few Fort William publications. Pratapadityacaritra: Rs.5/-; Hitopades: Rs.8/-; Puruspariksa: Rs.8/14/6; Bengali Dictionary by Carey (two vols.): Rs.100/-. Quoted by Bandyopādhyāy, Asitkumār, Unabimsa Sataker Bāhālī o Bāhālā Sāhīya, Calcutta, 1956, p.114.

27. S.S.K., I., p.140.

28. Guha Thakurta, P., The Bengali Drama, London, 1930, pp.46-47.

Incidentally this was the first Bengali drama to be staged in Calcutta under Bengali management.<sup>29</sup> It was also transformed into a yātrā by Gopāl Uṛe, a poet composer.<sup>30</sup> Rājā Yatīndramohan Thākur himself prepared a dramatized text of Vidyā Sundar based on the same poem in 1865.<sup>31</sup> These numerous editions of Bhāratcandra's work, and its transformation into yātrā and drama indicate that throughout the early 19th century no other single work was as popular as the Vidyā Sundar of Bhāratcandra.

Nevertheless the predominant theme of literary writing during this period is the bābu. It is his doings which are such important evidence of contemporary society, culture and literary taste. He made his debut in Bābur Upākhyān I as a rich, vain and pompous young man, who lived off the property acquired by his rich merchant father. His way of life resembles that of the Muslim nabābs. In the Bābur Upākhyān II, the bābu developed into a licentious, lecherous blackguard who strives to model his life in every particular on that of the sāhebs. He went to his garden-house to listen to kheur on Sundays to match the sahebs' going to church. Most of his nights

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29. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth and Dās, Sajani Kānta, (a) Bhāratcandra Granthābalī, Calcutta, 1950, p.18.

30. Ibid., p.18.

31. Ibid., p.18.

were spent in brothels. In another episode,<sup>32</sup> he went to watch the snānyātrā of Māheś with his wife who entertained him by singing kheur. But he lost her forever in the confusion of boats. Elsewhere we find him cultivating all the supposed qualities of an established bābu under the supervision of an old bābu.<sup>33</sup> He patronised sycophants, consorted with prostitutes and dined with the low caste Hindu as well as Muslim women. On one occasion he fell in love with the wife of a rich neighbour and became her paramour.<sup>34</sup> He carried on with her until he was reduced to penury. On another occasion his wife deserted her and took to prostitution.<sup>35</sup>

The portrait of the bābu reflects some part of the moral condition of early 19th century Bengal. It also mirrors the social as well as cultural transition which Bengali society was experiencing during our period of study. It was this bābu society that patronised the erotic romance of Vidyā Sundar and the erotic kabi songs, namely, kheur. Their favourite associate was the prostitute, their favourite reading Vidyā Sundar, and their favourite entertainment kheur.

The purpose of the bābu sketches, Kalikātā Kamalālay

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32. Saukīn Bābu; see chapter III, p. 107.

33. N.B.; see chapter VI, p. 214.

34. D.B.; see chapter VI, p. 219.

35. N.B.B.; see chapter VI, p. 250.



and the bilās works, may be described as an attempt to reform the Bengali Hindus of the early 19th century Calcutta who were allegedly tempted to lead immoral lives by their exposure to foreign culture. It is clear that the authors of these works belonged to the conservative section of Hindu society. The fact that the affluent citizens of modern Calcutta were becoming extravagant, irreligious and immoral could hardly be welcomed by these writers. It is for this reason that they pilloried the bābus as well as Rāmmohan Rāy, the allegedly anti-religious leader.

The social history of Bengal in the early 19th century may be said to have been marked by one special feature: the dispute between the Hindu conservatives and the liberals. This dispute occupied much space in the columns of the Bengali newspapers of the day. The conservatives saw in the reformist attempt of the liberals the imminent disintegration of Hinduism. While in the behaviour of the bābus they saw the decadence of the old values, and were inspired to portray the bābu in such a way as to make it clear that they were attacking any deviation from orthodox patterns of life.

Whether the liberals made similar attacks on the conservatives is not known to us, for two reasons: firstly, there is not extant copy of the liberal newspaper, the

Sambād Kaumudī; and secondly, though Rāmmohan Rāy was always prompt in retorting to the personal attacks made against him by the orthodox Hindus, there is no record that he ever resorted to satirical writing himself.

As we have said before, it was a time of transition in the history of Bengal. The medieval age was passing into the modern. The impact of this transition, in the form of a conflict between the old and the new, was felt in every domain of life. Bengali Hindu society was, as has already been stated, divided in its attitudes to these changes. On the one end, there were the liberals like Rāmmohan Rāy and his associates, on the other end there were the conservatives under the leadership of Rādhākānta Deb and Gopīmohan Thākur. Though the evangelising attempts of the Serampore missionaries alarmed the conservative Hindus, the first attack on Hinduism, however, came from within, not from without. Rāmmohan Rāy challenged the idolatrous practices of Hinduism as early as 1815. In this year he founded his Ātmīya Sabhā and published the Vedānta Grantha to preach the worship of the formless Brahma. Rāmmohan Rāy later attacked certain age-old institutions of Hinduism, kulinism and satī. The conservatives were not however slow in counter-attack. The orthodox newspaper, the Samācār Candrikā became the organ of the conservative

section of Hindu society. The conflict between the conservatives and liberals reached its climax in 1829 when sati was declared illegal. This event prompted the conservatives to close their ranks and launch a counter-movement to have the anti-sati law revoked. Under the banner of the Dharma Sabhā they decided to send an appeal to the Privy Council in favour of sati and in a special meeting of the Sabhā they resolved to ostracise those Hindus who had openly violated the principles of their religion.

The same note of conflict may also be traced in the sphere of language and education. The growing importance of English was not overlooked by the Hindu community and this was clearly demonstrated by their endeavour to establish the Hindu College in 1816. They also participated in the organisations like the Calcutta School Book Society (1817) and the Calcutta School Society (1818) which were founded to promote vernacular education. But their attachment to Sanskrit was nevertheless undiminished. In 1823, prior to the opening of the Sanskrit College, Rāmmohan Rāy wrote his famous letter to Lord Amherst, the then Governor General, clearly indicating that the study of Sanskrit was a waste of time. This letter infuriated the orthodox section who equated Sanskrit with Hinduism itself. A section of the orthodox Hindus even at such an

early period advocated the cause of Sanskritised Bengali. In 1830 the Samācār Darpan reprinted an article from Baṅgadūt which upheld the cause of sādhu bhāṣā, which was a language purified of foreign, i.e. English and Perso-Arabic, elements. The conflict with regard to language was to continue, with the conservatives supporting the claims of Sanskrit to be the language of literature and culture, and the reformists advocating the claims of English. One side of this conflict is presented very clearly in the satires under review.

With the spread of English education and culture the number of pro-western bābus increased in the city of Calcutta. Their affluence encouraged and enabled them to flout Hindu traditions. They fashioned their lives on the model of the Muslim nabābs and that of the Europeans. The reaction of the conservatives to the bābu behaviour has already been described. Since they had no longer any effective control over the newly-rich defectors, they attacked their behaviour by resorting to satire, the weapon of the weaponless.

The literary writing of this period is also marked by a conflict between tradition and innovation. On the one hand, a few writers continued to compose verse on the pattern of Bhāratcandra; while on the other these same writers and others, notably the members of the Carey school

and their successors, together with a growing number of journalists with literary aspirations, were at the same time striving to make prose an adequate vehicle of literary expression.

The output of poetry was however small and not of high merit, and, though the Bhāratcandra tradition was continued by Iśvar Gupta in the next decade and after, Bengali poetry did not come to its own again until poets began to experiment with new verse forms borrowed from English poetry. Prose was on the other hand, though still immature, was growing and its quality improving and by 1840s in the hands of Debendranāth Thākur and Akṣay Kumār Datta had established itself firmly as a literary mode of quality.

The satires we have been studying reflect all the aspects of this conflict between tradition and innovation and for that reason they constitute first hand source material of great importance to the student of Bengali society during this period. They show us the reactions of the citizens of Calcutta to the social, literary and cultural changes through which the city was passing.

APPENDIX

30. t̄āhārā prāte gātrothhān kariyā mukh prakṣālanādi pūrbbak bahubidha loker sahit ālāp kariyā pare taila marddan kariyā thāken nānāprakār taila yāhār yāhāte sukhānubhab haȳ tini t̄āhāi marddan kariyā snānkriyā samāpanānantar pūjāhomdān balibaiśva prabhṛti karmma kariyā bhojan karen kiñcitkāl bisrām kariyā apūrbba poṣāk jāmāyorā ityādi paridhān kariyā pālki ba apūrbba śakatārohane karmmasthāne gaman karen karmmanuyāyi kāl bibecana pūrbbak tatsthāne thākiyā grhe āgata haiyā sesakal bastrādi parityāg kariyā hastapādādi prakṣālanānantur gaṅgodaksparsē pabitra haiyā sāyāmsandhyā bandanādi samāpan kariyā jalayogānantar punarbbār baitḥak haȳ, pare anek loker samāgam haiyā thāke keha koṇa karmopalakṣe kehabā kebal sākṣāt karibār nimitta āisen athabā tini kakhan kāhār sahit sākṣāt karite gaman karen ityādi.

(K.K., pp. 8-9).

32. t̄āhārdiger anek ai dhārā kebal āhār o dānādi karmmer lāghab āche ār śramabiṣāye prābalya baṛa kāraṇ .... bistar path hāṭite haȳ pare prāȳ pratidin rātre giyā desyānjīr nikaṭ ājñā ye ājñā mahāśaȳ<sup>2</sup> karite haȳ nā karileo naȳ porā udarer jvālā.

(K.K., p. 9).

33. āpani nitānta bhrānta emata kathāo karnakuhare prabeś  
 haite deo yehetu edeśe kebal karmmakāṇḍeri bāhulya ebaṃ  
 mahāmahōpādhyāy smārtta bhaṭṭācārya mahāśayrā jājvalya-  
 mān basiyā āchen tāhādiger byabasthānusāre bhāgyabān  
 lokerā sarbbadāi deb pratiṣṭhā puṣkarinī pratiṣṭhā dol  
 durgotsab rath nitya naimittik karma karitecheu biśeṣataḥ  
 pitṛ mātṛ śrāddhādi karmme dhanī loksakal svajāti jñāti  
 bandhubāndhab purohit adhyāpakādi nimantraṇ kariyā  
 āścaryya sabhā śobhā karen.

ai sabhā madhye keha sonār keha rupār dui cāri dānsāgar  
 kariyā thāken tāhāte apūrbba2 paryyaṅka prabhṛti  
 byabahāropayogi drabya sakal utsarga kariyā pātrabiśeṣ  
 bibecanāpūrbbak dānādi karen ār adhyāpak bidāyer yerūp  
 dhārā emtat keha sunen nāi, naiyāyik paṇḍiter bidāy  
 100/80/ gharā gāru, smārtta paṇḍit bidāy 50/30/ gāru  
 thāl bāṭā ityādi.

ār śrāddha dibase bā rātre kāngālibidāy, pratyek  
 kāngāli 2, keha 1 -  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{8}$  -  $\frac{1}{16}$  kintu yata lok  
 āise sakalkei diyā thāken āpan bibhab bujhiyā dāner niyam  
 kariyā den.

(K.K., pp.10-11)

34. āpanārdiger sāstrer adhyāyan tyāg kariyā kebal pārsī  
 o imṛājī paṇen bāngālā likhite o paṛite jānen nā ebaṃ

bāṅgālā śāstra heya jñān kariyā śikṣā karen nā  
 ar śrāddha śāntir biṣay, yakhan pitāmātār paralok-  
 prāpti hay takhan antyeṣṭikriyāke kutsit karmma bodh  
 kariyā pratinidhi dvārā dāha kariyā tarpan kariyā  
 thāken sei samay ek añjali jal adhik kariyā pradān  
 karen arthāt ek kālei jalāñjali pūrbbak śrāddhādi udyāpan  
 kariyā āisen ebaṃ aṣaucer cihnārthe kebal cul dhārau  
 mātra karen kehabā kebal mastaker keś rākhiyā kuṭī  
 yāibār anurodhe dāṛir kṣaur karān.

(K.K., pp. 11-12).

35. āhār bōjārer pākharā māmsa miṭhāi o muchalmānkrta  
 pāoruṭī ebaṃ nānā prakār sarāp ityādi drabya sakal  
 bhojan karen paricchad arthāt poṣāk dhūti prabhṛti  
 bastra parityāg kariyā ijār jāmājoṛā ityādi paren

(K.K., p.12)

41. anek lok svajātiyā bhāsāy anya jātiyā bhāṣā miśrita  
 kariyā kahiya thāken yathā kam, kabul, kameś, kaylā,  
 karjja, kaṣākaṣi, kājiyā, ityādi ... ihāte bodh hay  
 saṃskṛta śāstra ihārā paren nāi ebaṃ paṇḍiter sahit  
 ālāpo karen nāi tāhā haile etādrśa bākya byabahār  
 kariten nā.

(K.K., p.13)



vābanik bhāṣāsādhubhāṣā

kamine	antyāj, kṣudra, sāmānya, nīc
kal	yantra
kālam	lekhanī
kasam	śapath, dibya
kasāi	goghna
kasur	aparādh, truṭi
kaṣṭhā	śakta, kaṭhin,
kam	alpa, nyūn,
kabul	svīkār, aṅgīkār, pratiśruta
kasabi	beśyā, gaṇikā, bārāṅganā, kulaṭā
kāmraṣ	daṁśan, dantāghāt
kājiyā	kalaha, bibōd, bisambād, birodh
kāmāl	balabat, arādhāraṇ
kāyḍā	rīti, dhārā
kācā	apakka, ām
kellā	byūha, durga
ketāb	pustak, grantha
kinārā	upānta, tīr
kimmat	mūlya
khayrāt	bitarau, dān
kharac	byay

khāṭī	niścay, akrtrim,
khārā	daṇḍāyamān
khārā2	śīghra, druta, trasta
khārāb	manda, kadaryya, kutsit, nindita,
khālās	mukta, mocan, uddhār
khāmkā	haṭhāt, akasmāt, daibāt
khāsā	uttam, bhadra, paripāṭī
khājnā	kar, upasvatva, rājasva
khun	binās, hatyā, ghāt
khub	uttam, utkrṣṭa, bhadra
khusi	ānanda, āhlād, paritoṣ, santoṣ
kholāsā	pariṣkār,
khosāmod	upāsana,
khos	uttam, harṣa
khod	svayam
garam	uttapta, uṣṇa
garmī	grīṣma, nidāgh
garjī	svārthī, svārthapar
garaj	ābaśyak, prayojan
gaor	manoyog, abhinibeś, abadhān
gami	śok, santāp
ghum	nidrā
ghus	utkoe

jaṅgal	ban, aranya
jaṛa	mūl
jabar	bara, sabal, balabān
jabānī	pramukhāt
jabāb	uttar
jāyḍād	sampatti, sarbbasva, sthābarādi
jācāi	parīkṣā, Bibecanā
jāyḡā	sthān,
jān	prān
jehel	kāragār, kāragrha
jaulasī	ujjval, saundaryya
jhāk	samūha, bistar
jhūtā	mīthyā, asatya
ṭukrā	kiñcit
ṭerā	bākā, baṅka, bakra
ṭhag	caur
ṭhāgāy	curi kare
ṭhāor	bibecanā
ṭhāṭṭā	upahās, śleṣ
ṭhāṇḍā	snigdha, śītal, him
ṭhāṭh	kapat, kāp
ṭhik	niścīt, nirdhārīta, yathārtha

dar	bhāy, śānkā, trās
ḍakāit	dasyu
ḍāli	upadhaukan
ḍaul	prakār, dhārā, gaṭhan
ḍhākā	ācchādan, ābaran
ḍhil	ślatha
ḍhukāy	prabeś karāy
taraph	svarūp
tuphān	tarāṅga
tāgādā	śīghra, druta
tāmāsā	kautuk, kābya, rahasya
tājjab	camatkār, bismaṃ
tagir	karmmacyuta
dar	mūlyā
dāṅgā	kalaha, dvandvaja
dābi	prāpya
dek	birakta
deri	bilamba, gaṇa
del	antaḥkaraṇ, man
dakhal	adhīn
daulat	sampatti
dākhil	upanīta

dhum	tumul
dhokā	sandeha
namud	āṅkur, ārambha, pratham
nek	uttam
pasam	lom, rom
pāji	antyaḥ, sāmānya, kṣudra
pharsā	śubhra, pariṣkāra
phasād	mithyā, kālpanik
pher	beṣṭan
bahal	niyūkta, sthāpita
baḍal	binimay, paribartta
barāt	pratinidhi
baḍ	manda
barāmad	apabād
bāki	abaśiṣṭa
bāgān	udyān, upaban
beyāj	br̥ddhi
bakta	adr̥ṣṭa, bhāgya
baḍjāt	duṣṭa, asat
baniyād	mūl
bhāj	miśrita
bhāgrā	palāyita

bhitar	madhya, madhyasthal
bhor	pratyūṣ, prātaḥkāl
mafjur	svikār
maskarā	bhār, bhaṇḍa
marad	puruṣ
majlis	sabhā
marjī	manastha
majāk	śleṣ
matlab	abhiprāy, manastha
makarar	niyukta, prabartta
maslat	parāmarśa
māph	mārjjanā, kṣamā
māpā	parimāṇ
māphik	mata, dhārā
maphik	praṇay, ātmīyatā
monasab	rīti
muskil	kleś, āpad
maphassal	gopan, aprakāś
muddai	bādī, bibādi, pratibādī
rad	anyathā, rahita

rakam	prakār, mata
raphā	pariṣkār
reṃāit	mārjjanā
rosnāi	ujjval
larāi	yuddha
lāl	rakta
sahar	nagar
sahaj	abalīlā, abahelā, anāyās
savyāri	yān
sahi	svākṣar
samuj	bibecanā
sācā	satya
sājā	daṇḍa
sāp	pariṣkār
sidā	sara l
sum	kṛpaṇ
sagun	dibya, śapath
seoyāy	byatirek
sujī	nirghaṇṭan
sepāhi	sainya
sor	citkār
hangām	kalaha

haṭ	itar
hak	sātya, yathārtha
halap	śapath
hāvṙā	bāyū, paban
hāmesā	sarbbadā
hājir	upasthit
hāmāl	garbha
hājār	sahasra
hukum	ājñā, anumati
kṣatrā	kṣati
āsal	prakṛta
āin	rīti, dhārā
āndesā	sandeha
āndāj	anumān
ājab	āścaryya
āmal	adhikār
āpśos	khed
āsmān	ākāś
ācchā	uttam, bilakṣaṇ, bhāla
āsān	śaithilya
iyād	smaraṇ
itphāk	praṇay, bibecanā
isādī	sākṣī
uṭhāo	uttolan



emārat	aṭṭālikā
esārā	saṅket
ojar	apekṣā, pratibandhakatā
omar	baḥāḥkram
osoḃās	sandeha
ojan	tulā

(K.K., pp.13-21)

42. anek bhadraker santānerā agre saṃskṛtānuyāyi  
 bāṅgāta bhāṣā o lekḥā parā abhyās kariyā paścāt  
 imrājī o pārsi bidyā śikṣā karen arthakarī bidyā  
 śikṣā karā abaśya karttabya ... ataeb arthakarī  
 bidyopārjjaner ābaśyakatā āche tahā śāstrasiddhi  
 baṭe ebaṃ yokhan yini deśādhipati hayen takhau  
 tāhādiger bidyābhyās nā karile ki prakāre rājkarṃma  
 nirbbāha hay ihāte āmār mate konā doṣ dekhi nā

(K.K., pp.12-13)

43. kintu jijñāsā kari ye sakal śabder artha bāṅgālā bhāṣāy  
 hay nā athabā sei mata śabda tomār saṃskṛta bā  
 tadanuyāyi śabdeo nāi tāhār ki karttabya.

(K.K., p.21)

44. ihāteo bara doṣ sparsā hay nā yehetu sandhyāpūjā o daiba karmma pitṛ karmme ai sakal śabda byabahār karilei doṣ haite pāre biṣay karmma nirbbāhārthe kimbā hāsya pariḥāsādi samaye byabahār karaṇe ki doṣ ar anyā jātiyā bhāṣā nā kahile pare saṃskṛtanuyāyi bhāṣā byabahār karile aneke bujhite pāre nā.

(K.K., p.24)

52. kalikātā nibāsi bhāgyabān lokediger nikaṭe brāhmaṇ paṇḍiter sarbbadā gamanāgaman āche ebaṃ bhāgyabān byakti sakal paṇḍitediger nānāprakār gaurab kariyā niyāta pratipālan karitechēn ... palligrām haite keha chātra keha kṛtabidyā haiyā kalikātāy āsiyā thāken kona yoge kāhār dvārā kona bhadrtar bhāgyabān loker sahit ālāpkāren pare sarbbadā yātāyāter dvārā ātmīyātā hay yadi āpanār bidyār prācuryya prakāś karite pāren tabei tāhār pratipatti hay śeṣe tāhār ṭol catuspāṭī ai dayāśīl dhārmik bābu kariyā den ebaṃ yā hāte tini sarbbatra khyāta haiyā adhik lābh karite pāren tāhār svataparata ceṣṭā karen ei prakāre anek ṭol caubārī haiyāche ebaṃ eikṣaṇeo haiteche.

(K.K., p.25)

55. bābusakal nānā jātiyā bhāṣār uttam2 granthā arthāt

pārsi imrājī ārabi ketāb kray kariyā keha ek kehabā  
 dui gelāsoyālā ālmārir madhye sundar śrenī pūrbbak  
 emata sājāiyā rākhēn ye dokāndārēn bāpeo emata sonār  
 hal kariyā ketāb sājāiyā rākhite pāre nā ar tāhāte  
 eman yatma karen ek śata batsareo keha bodh karite pāren  
 nā ye ei ketābe kāhāra hastasparśa haiyāche anya parer  
 hasta deoyā dūre thākuk jeladgar bhinna bābuo svayam  
 kakhana hasta den nāi ebaṃ kona kāleo diben emata  
 kathāo śunā yāy nā ... bāburā bujhi suniyā thākiben  
 ye adhik pustak grhe rākhile sarasvatī baddha thāken  
 yeman adhik dhan āche tāhār byay nā karile lakṣmī  
 susthirā thāken byay karilei bicalitā hayēn ihāo bujhi  
 temani ketāb laiṃyā āndolan karile sarasvatī biraktā  
 hayēn tat prayukta hastasparśa karen nā.

(K.K., pp.38-39).

56. bhāgyabān loker saṃsāre tābat drabyai thāke tābat ratna  
 yatna kariyā rākhēn kintu sarbbadā sakal drabya byabahār  
 karite hay nā yakhan yāhār ābaśyak hay takhani tāhā  
 byabahār karen yāhārdiger sakal pustak byabahār karibār  
 kona prayojan rākhe na tāhārā ki emata dāygrasta haiyāchen  
 ye ai ketābgulin artha byay kariyā kiniyāchen tāhā

byabahār [nā] karile din yāpan hay nā ar yāhārdiger  
ketāb byabahār nā karile din cale nā tāhārā tāhā  
kariyāo thākeu.

(K.K., p.40).

57. āmār bāngālā granthe kichu prayōjan nāi keha balen  
e sakal bālakdiger śikṣār nimitta haiteche āmārdiger  
ihāte ābaśyak ki keha balen ei chāpāoṃyālādiger jvālāy  
ār prāṇ bācenā sarbbadāi āise mahāśay hitopadeṣ puthi  
haiteche sahi karuṇ keha bale dāybhāgārthadīpikā  
haiteche nām sahi kariyā diun keha balen kalya āisaha  
kintu āmio sei pātra adyābadhi ek akṣar o lai nāi.

(K.K., p.41).

58. ekjan chutār ... idānī ālmāri deks prabhṛti kāṣṭher  
karmma kariyā kifcit saṅgatyāpanna haiyāche ... tāhāke  
yadi bala, imrājī bāngālā deksanari haiteche laibā se  
takhan e kathā abāśyai balibe ye mahāśay karāti pāoṃyā  
yāynā kāṭhcerā maskil haiyāche āmi ki kariba.

(K.K., p.44).

59. kona byaktir bāṭite kona bṛhat karmma arthāt purāu  
ārambha samāpan dibase ebaṃ pitṛ mātṛ śrāddhādi  
karmma upasthit haile ai byakti dalapatir nikaṭe āsiyā

āpan bisay abagata karān ebaṃ āpan bibhabānusāre byay  
 karibār kṣamatāo jānān tini sei byayōpayukta lok  
 nimantraṇ karibār phardda kariyā den āpan daler  
 naikya bhābāpanna kulīn brāhman eta, bhaṅga kulīn eta,  
 adhyāpak eta, sei phardda pramāṇ nimantraṇ hay pare  
 sidhā o patra deoyān tatpare karma dibase nirṇay  
 samaye nimantrita byaklīsakale dalapatir anumati laiṇyā  
 karmmakarttar būṭite āgaman karen dalapati prāy  
 sarbbatrai kiñcitkāl bilamba kariyā gaman kariyā thāken  
 sakal lok tāhār pratīkṣā kariyā sabhāy basiṇyā kāl yāpan  
 karen adhyāpakerā sabhāstha haiṇyā paraspar nānā sāstrer  
 bicār karitechen kulajña kulin mahāsāyśakal ebaṃ  
 kulācāryyasakal kulajir byākhyā karitechen goṣṭhipatike  
 beṣṭita kariyā kulīnsakal basiṇyāchen bhāṭṭerā  
 karmmakarttār baṃsābali o pūrbbapurūsur ebaṃ tāhār guṇ  
 kīrttan kariteche ai sabhābāṭṭir dvāre dvārpāterā hastapad-  
 ādi dvārā nimantrita bhinna anya loker gaman bāraṇ  
 kariteche emata samaye ati ātmīyabandhubāndhabsamabhibyā-  
 hāre bhūpatitulyamaryyāda dalapati āsiṇyā upasthit  
 hailen tatkāle sabhāstha sakale gātrothhān pūrbbak āsite  
 ājñā hay<sup>2</sup> ityādi pūjyatābodhak sambodhan bākyoccāraṇ  
 puraḥsar abhyarthanā karen tat pare dalapati tanmadhya-  
 bartti sthāne prthak āsane upabiṣṭa hayen kiñcitkāl

bilambe jijñāsā karen amuk<sup>2</sup> āsiyāchen ityādi, pare  
 karmmakartta dalapatir nikaṭ āsiyā galalagnikṛtabāsā  
 haiyā nibedan karen belā bā rātri adhik haiyāche  
 anumati haile sabhāstha mahāśaydigye mālya candan  
 arpaṇ karā yāy dalapati anumati karen goṣṭhipati  
 amuker nikaṭ yāo, tāhār anumati hay pare kulīn o  
 adhyāpak mahāśaysakaleo anumati karen pare paricārak  
 brāhmaṇerā candaner bāṭē o puṣpamālya āniyā kahe  
 agre candan kāhāke deoyā yāibek se samay prāy anek  
 sthāne birodh haiyā thāke yehetu candaner pātra  
 goṣṭhipati hayen se sabhāy dui tin jan thākilei sutarām  
 birodh hay pare dalapati birodh bhāñjan kariyā den agre  
 goṣṭhipatir candan haile tatpare dalapatir candan hay  
 tatpare agrapaścādbibecanā thākenā ekādikramei  
 mālyacandan haiyā thāke pare sakalei āpan<sup>2</sup> sthāne  
 prasthān karen anantar yāhār sahit yāhār āhār byabahār  
 thāke tāhārā āhār kariyā thāken pare dalapati mahāśay  
 upayukta pātra bibecanā kariyā bidāyer ankapāt kariyā  
 den karmmakarttā tadanusāre sammān pūrbbak sakalke  
 dānādi pradān karen.

(K.K., pp.29-31).

62. tini kona karmma karile tãhãr bãçite keha yãynã  
 ebañ tinio kãhãke nimantrañ karite pãren na yadyapi  
 tãhãr karmma ãçak haynã yehetu nãnã dešnibãsi arthãt  
 bişñupur kãşiyorã prabhñti sthãner brãhmañ kalikãlãý  
 anek pãoyã yãý.

(K.K., p.32).

18. şuna sarkãr tumi bãbudiger şarire kadãca betrãghãtãdi  
 karibãnã ãr bhayñjanak uccabhãşão kahibã nã ye rãp  
 kşudra loker santãndigake mãriyã thãka sadã anunay  
 binay bãkyete tuşta rãkhiyã lekhãparã şikşãibã.

(N.B., p.8).

21. ghare giyã poşãk parilyãg mişñãna jalpãn kariyã  
 baiñhak khãnãý camatkñta hastaparimita ucca gadir upar  
 basilen kãhãra dui kãhãra cãri pãşbãliş ãche, pital-  
 bãndhã kehabã rãpãbãndhã, keha sonãbãndhã hũkãte, keha  
 gurgurite, kehabã ãlbolãte tãmãk khãite ãrambha karilen.

(N.B., p.17).

22. bãbusakal dvitiiyã indratulya haiyã basiyãchen keha keha  
 bãbu kibã dhñr ki gabñir keha bale bãbur kibã pãñditya  
 ki baktñtãr tãtparyya jñãn hay şãkşãte sarasvatĩ

keha keha kiba sudhārā ki rasikatā emata prāy  
sambhab hay nā.

(N.B., pp.17-18).

25. kārāṇ palāo arthāt peyāj o raśun yāhārā āhār  
kariyā thāke tāhārdiger sahit sambhoge yata majā  
pāibā emata kona rārei pāibān nā.

(N.B., p.23).

26. yāhādiger pūrbbañjanme anek tapasyā thāke, tāhārāi  
uttam strī sambhog karē, alpa tapasyāy uttam strī  
sambhog hay nā, yadi beśyā gamane pāp thākita tabe ki  
urbbaśī, menakā, rāmrambhā, tilottamā prabhṛti beśyār  
srṣṭi haita.

(N.B., p.24)

28. dekha amuk nāmak ek brāhmaṇ kakhana lekhāpaṛā kare  
nāi, ek byaktir bāṭite pācak brāhmaṇ arthāt rāndhani  
brāhmaṇ haiyāchila / tatpare dālālir panthā dhariyā  
tāluk muluk kariyā eyārdal laiṅyā basiṅyā sarbbadā jīu  
khusi kariteche, tāhār putra o bhrātṛputra ihārā  
lekhāpaṛā śikhiyā deśbideśe cākari kariyā phiriteche.

(N.B., p.29).



31. ei rītyānusāre kakhana nijāgāre kakhana beśyāmandire  
 bābu majā kariyā berān, yāne kimbā bāhane ārohan  
 kariyā kakhana māheśer snānyātrā sandarśane yān  
 kakhana kuṭhī giyā thāken ... baiṭhakkhānāy basiyā  
 śāl o kāpaṛ kharid karen pāc śata ṭākāy śāl yora  
 kharid kariyā āṛāi śata ṭākāy bikraṛy karen ebaṃ  
 nilāme ek hājār ṭākāy gāri kraṛy kariyā anya byaktike  
 cāri śata ṭākāy bikraṛy karen eirūpe saodāgari karmmeo  
 tatpar hailen ... karttā jijnāsā karilen ei śālyora  
 kata tākāy kharid kariyācha, bābu kahilen amuk sāheb  
 āmāke ei śālyora bakśis diyāche kintu dilbāg  
 śāloyālā diyāche.

(N.B., pp.39-40).

33. ihā mane kariyā punarbbār bāṭī madhye śāyanārtha  
 gaman karilen, hāsyabadane kahilen tomār pāc narīr  
 gaṭhan bhāla naṛy āmāke deo āmi se sakal gahanā ār ei  
 pācnarī uttamrūpe taiyār karāiyā pūjār samay dība /  
 tini kahilen āmi bujhiyāchi tomār baṛai ṭākār darkār  
 haiyāche, kintu sab dite pāri yadi tumi sakaler sāksāte  
 bala ye āmi adya dui māsābodhi prati din bāṭīr madhyei  
 śāyan karitechī bābu kahilen tāhār āṭak ki e kathā  
 āmi sakalkei sarbbadā kahiba tumi ṭākā deo / tini  
 kahilen kalya dui prahar dui ghaṇṭā rātrir par ṭākā

pāibā kintu sandhyāke āsibānā ihār anyathā haile  
 ṭākā pāibā nā ār ye kathā baliyāchi.

(N.B.,p.41).

36. bāpure tumi amukke rākhiyāchile kintu tāhāke ṭākā  
 deo nāi se tomār nāme nālīs kariyā kayed kariyāchila  
 tomār pitā ṭākā diyā tomāke khālās kariyāchila, ihāte  
 tomāke ke biśvās karite āsibek.

(N.B.,p.47).

51. kalikātā nagarastha nimāñi caraṇ / mallik upādhi tini  
 pratāpe rābaṇ // ... āṭ putra tāhār sakale guṇabān /  
 ekṣaṇe tāhār sātjan barttamān // tār madhye saptam  
 svarūpcandra nām / debguru dvije bhakti ati kṛpādhām //  
 dhaniguṇi māni lok mānya kare māne / ekdin seijan basiyā  
 bāgāne // ... nānāras rāgrāṅge prasāṅga uṭhila / mudrā-  
 kṣare bahu grantha prakāś haila // kintu ādiras kābya dekh-  
 ite nā pāi / ye dekhi bhāratkṛta nabya kichu nāi // ekhan  
 katak nabya nāyāk majiyā / kare kata ras nānā nāyikā  
 laiṃyā // se ras barnīle bhāla grantha ek haṃ / tāhārā  
 kukarṃma tyaje ithe sukhoday / sabhāstha sakale bale  
 tāhār nikaṭe / ei mata grantha karā yukti siddha baṭe //  
 ... sakaler saha tini kariyā mantranā / ādeś dilen  
 grantha karite racanā //

(D.B.,pp.3-4).



62. āji kāmīnīr kāche yetechinu chale / phul dekhi  
 debālay dvāri yete bale // andare prabeś karā  
 haila mor bhār / nāpitinī yāy dekhi mānā nāhi  
 tār //

(D.B., p.20).

66. śrīdeb nāgar nām, śṛṅgār nagare dhām, lekhāpaṛā  
 jñānguṇ kebal nāgarī / kāmpure jamīdāri, se karmmete  
 byasta bhāri, tāluk rakṣār hetu āchi bāsā kari //  
 kṣatriyā kulodbhab, kebā kare parābhab, bāp bahu dhan  
 rekhe giyecheu svarge / mātā sahodar bhāi, dārāsūt  
 keha nāi, māyāpure nij bāṭī āche goṣṭhībarge //  
 bibāher nāhi āś, parabāse bāramās, sukhe thākibār  
 janya byāy kari dhan / śuna śuna satya kai, kāhāra  
 adhīn nai, taba pramādhīn hai haiyāche man //

(D.B., pp.58-59).

67. śuniyā yubatī kay, nām śune rasamay, ki haibe taba  
 kām bala dekhi śuni / tantramantra balechale, baškare  
 karatale, āmāke rākhibe guṇe bujhi tumi guṇī // nām  
 ki balite habe, śuna nām bali tabe, pūrbba nām āche  
 more anaṅga mañjarī / adyābadhi halo nām, purila he  
 manaskām, nām anurūp nām śrīdebnaṅgarī //

(D.B., p.59).

74. śune ek rasabatī kahe mṛdusvare / deoyān āmār pati  
 āmdāni ghare // imṛājī pārsī bidyā kichui nā jāne /  
 dambha kari karmma kare kāru nāhi māne // sāheber  
 sab kathā nāhi bujhe śune / tathāca tāhare bhālabāse  
 tār guṇe // kuṭhi hate āsiyā bāhire jal khāy / gāri  
 carī takhani bāgāne cale yāy // dvārete dvārir prati  
 ājñā āche tār / se bāṭite nā thākile hukum āmār //  
 ihātei bujha mane nāhi pāri kibā / ataeb patiguṇ jhuri  
 niśidibā // śuni kona surasikā kahiteche pare / sadar  
 meṭer karmma mor svāmī kare // tāṛātāri kuṭhi yāy tabu  
 rātri hay / bāṭī āsi bāhire thākiyā kathā kay // kāpar  
 chāriyā yāy bābur bāṭite / cākare hukum kare yāibā  
 ānite // se takhan yete pāre yakhan pāthāi / ithe kon  
 karmma siddha nāhi hay bhāi // anya rasabatī kay eki  
 barā guṇ / khātār muhari pati kāgaje nipuṇ // ṭhikṭhāk  
 kāl bujhe hay upanīta / sab āsā pūre mor yāhā manonita //  
 bhulbhrame yadi gṛhe ese asamay / kāgaj laiṃyā raise  
 ānamone ray // kahe kona kāminī kariyā ahānkār / mor pati  
 ati barā ghare tahbildār // kata loke ṭākā deṃ thok  
 thāk pāy / rete ghare ese baise majud milāy // se samay  
 kāro kathā nāhi śune kāṇe / kāch diṃye keha gele cāy nā  
 tā pāne // majud miliṃye gele hay barā khos / kichu yadi  
 dekhe śune nāhi dhare doṣ // hāsi khusi kariyā beṛāy  
 phire ghure eman patir guṇ kebā nāhi jhure // keha

kahe pati mor byānker poddār / ār yata bene āche  
 tārā tābedār // phāls noṭ, tābā mekī cene se cakite /  
 kebā pāre tār ghare mekī cālā ite // ṭākāi se bhāla  
 cene ār kichui naý / ṭākā tār hāte dile parakiyā laý //  
 śuni keha kahe bhāb yena rājrāñī / kata kaba patiguṇ  
 niye se kerāni / imrāñī mejāj tār kare huṭ hāṭ /  
 bidyār jāhāj bhāi jāne kata ṭhāṭ // nakal karite pāre  
 māchi nā eṛāý / rūl chāṛā karma nāhi kare be dāṛāý //  
 phitphāṭe sadā thāke rūtighaṇṭa khāý / maylā galiñ  
 kichu dekhite nā cāý // sukhete sadai thāke ghare nāhi  
 raý / ghare yabe ese sāp dekhe khusi haý // beýārā  
 kutsit lok dekhite nā pāre / soýākin laýyā thāka bale  
 ghore ghāre // kahiche ramañī kona śuna pati guṇ /  
 śunile śātrur mukhe paṛe kāli cun // pati more kare  
 cine bājāre dokān / ghare bāhire te bhāla dokān sājān //  
 sājāte kasur nāi dudig samān / kothāý ki haý tār karenā  
 sandhān //

(D.B., pp. 86-88).

107. nānā ras tumi dhara, rasiker saṅga kara, sārthak haibe  
 tabe tomār yauban / rūpe guṇe manohar, rasik nāgarbar,  
 manā mata milāiba cāhite yeman // bhābiyā kalānkabhaý,  
 ye nāri kulete raý, tār bhāgye kothā haý e sukh sampad /  
 ataeb tyaja kul, kul ye duḥkher mūl, ākul satata kare

ghaṭāy bipad //

(N.B.B., p.14).

108. tumi ye hāri, ḍom, sūri, caṇḍāl, muchalmān, phiringī,  
imrāj, pharāsis, nānā jātir sahit bihār kariyā majā  
kariyācha, ekhan dekha dekhi tomār jāti ke māre.

(N.B.B., pp.21-22).

112. tār āṭak ki bibi āmarā sakalei prastut āchi naba bibike  
ye prakāre gōonā bājānā śikhāite kahibe sei prakāre  
śikṣā dība ei ye poddār mahāśay ini sakal rakam gāonā  
jānen arthāt jumurer gīt, yātrār gīt, rāmprasādī pad,  
nidhur ṭappā o mitrajār khemṭā paryyanta gāite pāren,  
poddār mahāśay pūrbbe paramānanda yātrāoṃyālār daler  
bāsudeb sājiten, ihātei sakal prokār gāonā śikhiyāchen,  
ār ei seṭhjī behālā bājāiyā thāken, ebaṃ āmi ni je  
nācite pāri, karan āmi harūr dale nāciyāchilām.

(N.B.B., p.32).

126. miyā tillu etaddeśīya machalmān yāhāke pāti nere kahe  
tini bāngālā bhāṣā bilakṣaṇ rūp jānen tathāca hindi  
bhāṣāy kathopakathan karitechēn yehetu hindusthānī

ostāder paricaṣe paricita haiyāchen emate miyā  
ṭillu kathak hindi bhāṣā katak bāngālā bhāṣā miśrita  
kariyā yerūp ṭikā oyalā tāmākoṣālārā hindi kahe sei  
bhāṣā kahitechen.

(N.B.B., pp.55-56).

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