

A STUDY OF THE LIFE  
AND SHORT POEMS OF ISVARCANDRA

GUPTA

By

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### Abstract

The present thesis is a monograph on the life and short poems of Išvarcandra Gupta, an extremely popular poet in mid-nineteenth century Bengal. It falls into three parts. The first part discusses the existing accounts of Išvarcandra Gupta's life, assesses the additional information adduced by two modern scholars, Bhabatoṣ Datta and Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy; and also adds gleanings from a newspaper file not previously examined by other scholars.

The second part constitutes a thematic discussion of the contents of Gupta's short poems. This discussion reveals Gupta's attitudes towards religion, contemporary Hindu and European society, contemporary political events, and the glimmerings of patriotism inherent in his poetry.

The final part studies the development of literary criticism in Bengal and the beginnings of comparative criticism in Bengali. It also assesses Gupta's place in both contemporary terms and also in terms of Bengali literature as a whole. The final chapter throws light on Gupta's literary technique and suggests that even Gupta was unaware, that his contemporary and posthumous reputation would rest upon his hastily written short satires.

### Acknowledgement

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I express my gratefulness to Dr. A. V. Kunst, Mr. J. Carnochan, Mr. A. W. Stone and Mr. Bhabatoş Datta for the assistance they so kindly rendered me.

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## Abbreviations

K.S.	<u>Kabitā Saṃgraha</u> edited by Baṅkimcandra Caṭṭopādhyāy and Gopālcandra Mukhopādhyāy (1885-1886).
G.B.	<u>Granthābalī</u> published by Basumatī Sāhitya Mandir (without date).
S.P.	<u>Saṃbād Prabhākar.</u>
H.R.K.K.	<u>Hinduratna Kamalākar.</u>
S.S.C.M.	<u>Sāhitya Sādhak Caritmālā.</u>
S.B.S.C.	<u>Sāmayikpatre Bāṅglār Samājcitra.</u>
S.P.S.K.	<u>Saṃbād Patre Sekāler Kathā.</u>
C.G.	<u>The Calcutta Gazette.</u>
C.R.	<u>The Calcutta Review.</u>
F.I.	<u>The Friend of India.</u>
S.C.	<u>Samācār Candrikā.</u>
B.H.C.	<u>Bengal Hurakaru and the Chronicle.</u>
B.H.I.G.	<u>Bengal Hurakaru and the India Gazette.</u>
B.K.B.P.	<u>Bāṅgālā Kabitā Biṣayak Prabandha</u> by Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy.

## Transliteration

### Vowels:

a ( অ )	ā ( আ )	i ( ই )	ī ( ঈ )
u ( উ )	ū ( ঊ )	e ( এ )	ai ( ঐ )
o ( ও )	au ( ঔ )	ṛ ( ঋ )	

### Consonants:

k ( ক )	kh ( খ )	g ( গ )	gh ( ঘ )	ṅ ( ঙ )
c ( চ )	ch ( ছ )	j ( জ )	jh ( ঝ )	ñ ( ঞ )
ṭ ( ট )	ṭh ( ঠ )	ḍ ( ড )	ḍh ( ঢ )	ṇ ( ণ )
t ( ত )	th ( থ )	d ( দ )	dh ( ধ )	n ( ন )
p ( প )	ph ( ফ )	b ( ব )	bh ( ভ )	m ( ম )
y ( য )	r ( র )	l ( ল )	v* ( <del>ব</del> <sup>বর্ণ</sup> )	ś ( শ )
ṣ ( ষ )	s ( স )	h ( হ )	ṛ ( ৠ )	ṛh ( ৡ )
ś ( ষ )	ṁ ( ং )	ḥ ( ঃ )	~ ( ণ )	kṣ ( ক্ষ )

Except in words which are familiar to western readers such as Veda, Vidyāsāgar, Vaiṣṇava etc. where ৠ is transliterated at 'v'.

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## INTRODUCTION

(i)

The need for a reappraisal of IśvarcandraGupta

A nation's memory, like an individual's, distorts its past, magnifying men whose triumphs modernised society and diminishing those who impeded progress. These distorted national memories are reflected in popular histories and text-books. Those of Bengal praise liberal reformers like Rāmmohan Rāy, Gaurīśaṅkar Bhaṭṭācārya, Debendranāth Thākur, Akṣay Kumār Datta and Vidyāsāgar and are almost silent about their opponents, Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy and Iśvarcandra Gupta, whose brief appearance in popular histories tends to be in the role of swimmers against the tide of events.

Yet it is probable that in the first half of the 19th century more people opposed reform than favoured it; the difference being that the reforming party were in the main more articulate and socially influential, being constituted, as they were, of members of the more enlightened, educated classes, who favoured westernisation. Since it was this party which was increasingly to dominate the educational, cultural, administrative and professional life of Bengal,

it is small wonder that they triumphed. Their opponents were, however, far from powerless.

Two of the most powerful newspapers of the period were in the hands of their opponents: the Samācār Candrikā and Sambād Prabhākar, the second of which, Gupta's paper, was to become India's first vernacular daily. Undoubtedly, therefore, Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy and Iśvarcandra Gupta possessed popular appeal: they were the first journalists to attempt to reach a mass audience. Unlike the reformers, their appeal was not to the intellect through reasoned argument, but to the emotions via satire. Both satirised their opponents: Bhabānīcaran brilliantly lampooning Rāmmohan Rāy and Iśvarcandra setting his satirical sights less successfully perhaps on Rāmmohan's former colleague, Gaurīśaṅkar, and Rāmmohan's successors, Akṣaykumār Datta and Vidyāsāgar, who ushered in the logical consequence to Rāmmohan's abolition of Suttee, namely widow-remarriage.

Thus to understand the period 1800-1859, a study of the works of Bhabānīcaran and Iśvarcandra is essential: they provide the most faithful indices of popular taste, opinions and attitudes during that period. Both of them favoured a heavily poetic prose style, strongly influenced by the late 18th century poet Bhāratcandra Rāy, whose



popularity with the masses continued unabated throughout their times. Both of them were activated by that 'xenophobia', which always underlies popular appeal in Bengal: the dislike of foreign fashions in speech, dress and ideas.

'Xenophobia' is perhaps a bad word to choose, for it expresses only the negative side of what I want to say: the dislike of what is foreign; it fails to convey the positive side: the love of one's own.

It was their love of what was essentially Bengali — the language and literature of the Bengali masses — which prompted them to ridicule things that were non-Bengali. It was their quality of being khāṭi Bāṅgālī (খাঁটি বাংলা) - genuinely Bengali -) which inspired them, and it was this same quality, which gave them their mass appeal.

What Bhabānīcaran and Išvarcandra sought to preserve was worth preserving, and they sought to preserve it with humour and laughter. And despite all his 'xenophobia', Išvarcandra was not opposed to British rule: he recognised its value, as did Baṅkim afterwards; but he also foresaw its dangers, and through his patriotism, like Baṅkim who seems to have been influenced by him, he indicated a way of ending it.

Bhabānīcaran and Išvarcandra are therefore worthy of reappraisal. A recent thesis by Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal has sought to do this for Bhabānīcaran. The present thesis seeks to do it for Išvarcandra, by illumining his personality, his attitudes, and his place in Bengali literature.

(ii)

The works upon which this reappraisal is  
based

This enquiry is confined to Gupta's short poems, for it is only there that his creativeness is manifested, and no systematic, comprehensive study has yet been made of them. Sakuntalā and Sāradāmaṅgal are therefore excluded, though some parts of later works such as Prabodh Prabhākar, Hita Prabhākar and Bodhendu Bikāś have been included, since they appear under different titles in anthologies of Gupta's poetry.

All Gupta's short poems were evidently published some time or other in the Samḃād Prabhākar. After Gupta's death, his younger brother, Rāmcandra began collecting them and actually published an anthology in three slim volumes. The first important anthology was, however, that made by Baṅkimcandra Caṭṭopādhyāy: Kabitā Saṅgraha (1885), which became the model for all subsequent anthologies. The

second volume of this anthology was edited by Gopālcandra Mukhopādhyāy (1886). Later anthologies were published by Kālīprasanna Vidyāratna (1900) and Manīndrakṛṣṇa Gupta (1901). Baṅkimcandra and his associate had given examples of all the various types of poems written by Gupta, drawing the line only at what they considered 'unreadable' (presumably the scurrilous verse attacks on Gaurīśaṅkar Tarkabāgīś). Manīndrakṛṣṇa considered this arbitrary exclusion to be a 'boulderisation' of Gupta (preface, Granthābalī, Vol.I) and therefore included everything under Gupta's signature. He was, however, unable to add many new poems to his anthology (Granthābalī, Vol.I). A few additional poems do appear, however, in the anthology published by the Basumatī Sāhitya Mandir (W.D.) collected under the title 'apūrbba prakāśita kabitābalī (hitherto unpublished verses). This progressive inclusion of additional verse indicates that in all probability all the best of Gupta's poetry has now been published. Though some may have been lost due to the non-availability of early newspaper files, it is unlikely that much of value is now missing. The number of published couplets does, however, fall short of the 'fifty thousand verses' estimated by Gopālcandra Mukhopādhyāy (Bijñāpan (notice) - Kabitā Saṁgraha) as Gupta's total output. Even if 'verse' is taken to mean 'couplet', Gopālcandra's estimate still appears a gross

exaggeration.

A file of Gaurīśaṅkar Tarkabāgīś's Hinduratna Kamalākar discovered by me in the British Museum has enabled me to correct some faulty statements by earlier scholars and to reconstruct an important episode in modern Bengali literary history.

Part One

Life

## Chapter I

### An Outline of the Life of Īśvarcandra

#### Gupta

(i) The available accounts of Gupta's life. Īśvarcandra Gupta died on the 23rd of January, 1859; his death was marked by a brief notice inserted in the Sam̐bād Prabhākar (25th January, 1859) by his younger brother, Rām̐candra Gupta, to the effect that Īśvarcandra died at 2 a.m. the previous Saturday, whilst sitting with feet immersed in the waters of the Bhāgīrathī,<sup>1</sup> consciously and repeatedly saying the name of God.<sup>2</sup> A further notice appeared in Sam̐bād Bhāskar inserted by Gupta's rival, Gaurīśaṅkar Tarkabāgīś.<sup>3</sup> It apologised for failing to give an account of Gupta's death and promised, if possible, to do so later. The promise was never kept: within a fortnight Gaurīśaṅkar

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1. An offshoot of the Ganges, though throughout a long period of history it was considered by Hindus to be its main tributary and was venerated as the sacred stream. The mythological account of its origin is ascribed to the labour of Bhagīrath, the great grandson of the celebrated King Sagar; he saved his ancestors who were reduced to ashes by the curse of the sage Kapil, bringing Gaṅgā (the aqueous form of Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī) from heaven through the strength of his worship. (The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.III, 1908, pp.38-39.)
  2. K.S., p.43.
  3. S.S.C.M., Vol.I, Book 8, p.32.

was also dead.<sup>4</sup>

Except for a brief eulogy forming part of a clash of critical opinions between the Prabhākar<sup>5</sup> and the Bijñāpanī,<sup>6</sup> Gupta remained forgotten for seven years.<sup>7</sup> Then Michael Madhusūdan Datta revived interest in him in a sonnet published in Caturddaśpadī Kabitābalī (1866).<sup>8</sup> The sonnet deplored Bengal's neglect of the one-time 'play-boy king in the braja of poetry'.<sup>9</sup>

The first biography of Gupta appeared in 1869, just ten years after the poet's death, as one of seven brief essays in Harimohan Mookerjee's Kabīcarit ('Lives of the

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4. S.S.C.M., op.cit., see the notification by Samād Pūrnacandroday (10th Feb., 1859).
  5. S.P., Wednesday, the 10th May and Monday, the 12th June, 1865.
  6. Bijñāpanī, a journal published from Dacca, remarked that Bengali poets including Bhāratcandra and Gupta are inferior to Persian poets in respect of poetic qualities. Samād Prabhākar refuted it, affirming that Īśvarcandra was not only a poet of ingenuity but also one who, though short-lived, surpassed the long-lived Ferdausī, Nijāmī, Hāfez and Sādī in originality.
  7. Though as immediate reactions to the death of Gupta more references can be cited: a poem by Balāicandra Sen (see Sahar Kalkātār Adiparbha by Samudra Gupta, 1956, p.173), and a short essay by the editor of Hindu Patriot and Bengali, Girīścandra Ghoṣ (see Raṅgalāl, Maṇmathnāth Ghoṣ, 1929, pp.223-24). See also S.B.S.C., Vol.I., pp.397-401, 453-468.
  8. Caturddaśpadī Kabitābalī, ed. by Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy and Sajanikānta Dās, 1940, pp.47-48.
  9. Text: āchile rākhālrāj kābya brajāṅgane; i.e. Īśvarcandra is compared to kṛṣṇa.

Poets').<sup>10</sup> The second biography was probably that of Rāmgati Nyāyratna, who re-echoes Mookerjea's account with equal brevity.<sup>11</sup> Baṅkimcandra Caṭṭopādhyāy was the first to produce a full-length life of the poet. He had made a few passing remarks on Gupta in an essay, entitled Bengali Literature, published in The Calcutta Review (1871).<sup>12</sup> In 1876 he had made a comparative assessment of Gupta's work contrasting its satire with the wit of Dīnbandhu Mitra,<sup>13</sup> but it was not until 1885 that he published Gupta's life. It was based on materials collected by Gopālcandra Mukhopādhyāy, one-time editor of Sambād Prabhākar and served as the preface to Kabitā Saṁgraha and of other subsequent collections of Gupta's poetry.<sup>14</sup>

Baṅkimcandra's life of Gupta has achieved the status

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10. Mookerjea, Harimohan: Kabīcarit ('Lives of the Bengali Poets, with selections from their works and an introductory brief history of Bengali Poetry') Part I, 1st ed., Calcutta 1869, pp.167-182.
  11. Nyāyratna, Rāmgati: Bāṅgālā Bhāṣā O Bāṅgālā Sāhitya Biśayak Prastāb (A Discourse on the Bengali language and Literature), 3rd ed. Chinsura, 1317 B.S., pp. 222-225.
  12. C.R., 1871, pp.297-298. The article is a review of Harimohan's Kabīcarit and anonymous; but its authorship is ascribed to Baṅkimcandra. (See A Critical Study of the Life and Novels of Baṅkimcandra, [chronology], by Jayanta K. Dāsgupta, University of London Ph.D. Thesis, 1937.
  13. S.S.C.M., Vol.II, pp.170-171.
  14. Noteworthy among those are Īśvarcandra Gupter Granthābalī (1900) ed. by Kalīprasanna Vidyāratha and Granthābalī (1901) ed. by Manindrakṛṣṇa Gupta.



of virtually a standard work. It appears to have served as the basis of most subsequent biographies. Slight discrepancies in detail may appear in later works, but, until comparatively recent times, no new information had been added to Baṅkim's account by any of his distinguished successors, Sibnāth Sāstrī and Dīneścandra Sen included.<sup>15</sup>

In the first edition of Kabitā Saṃgraha (1885), Baṅkim's account of the life of Gupta occupies eighty pages. It is divided into four sections: an introduction contrasting Gupta's style with those of more recent poets; and three chapters, the first on Gupta's childhood and education, the second on his journalistic activities and the last, a criticism of his poetry.

The account is considerably longer than Mookerjea's and Nyāyratna's and also more accurate in regard to dates.

(ii) Baṅkimcandra's account. The main outline of Gupta's life as presented by Baṅkim is as follows. Išvarcandra Gupta was born on Friday, the 8th of March, 1812 (25 Phālgun, 1218 B.S.)<sup>16</sup> in the village of Kācrāpārā<sup>17</sup> near

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15. For a select list of works containing a discussion on Gupta see Bibliography.

16. Discrepancies in Gupta's date of birth persist in the accounts by literary historians like Harimohan Mookerjea, Rāmgati Nyāyratna, Sibnāth Sāstrī, Dīneścandra Sen and Rameścandra Datta: We have accepted the date given by Baṅkimcandra as authentic.

17. Village in the Barrackpore subdivision, District of the Twenty-four Parganas, Bengal, situated in 22° 57' N. and 88° 26' E. The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XIV (New Edition), Oxford, 1908, p. 373.

Tribenī,<sup>18</sup> the sacred bathing place, some thirty-one miles north of Calcutta, where the Ganges, Jamunā and Sarasvatī diverge. Kācrāpārā stands on the eastern bank of the river, close to the villages of Kumārhaṭṭa and Gariphā, which lie to its south and which were the homes of many illustrious men.<sup>19</sup>

Iśvarcandra Gupta came of a baidya (physician caste) family, descended from Rāmendra Dās of Kācrāpārā. Rāmendra's only son Rāmgobinda, had had two sons, Bijayrām and Nidhirām. Bijayrām had been a distinguished scholar and in recognition of his scholarship in Sanskrit literature, grammar and rhetoric had achieved the title of bācaspati.<sup>20</sup> His tol (school) had drawn pupils from far and wide. He was said to have composed a number of books, but none of them were published. Gupta's great grand-father, Nidhirām had mastered Āyurbbedik<sup>21</sup> medicine and had received the much-coveted title Kabirañjan. Though not poor, Gupta's family had possessed little property. Gupta's father, Harinārāyaṇ,<sup>22</sup> had forsaken his caste vocation and become

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18. Lit. 'the three braids of hair': otherwise 'the affluence of three sacred river'.

19. Such as the famous devotional poet Rāmprasād Sen, born in Kumārhaṭṭa (1718) and well-known personalities like Rāmkaṃal Sen, Kṛṣṇabihārī Sen and Pratāpcandra Majumdār who were born in Gariphā.

20. Lit. 'the lord of speech', as an epithet of Brhaspati.

21. Hindu system of medicine.

22. Not Harimohan as mentioned by Dīneścandra Sen in his History of Bengali Language and Literature, 1st ed., Calcutta 1911, p.759.

a clerk in a nearby indigo factory at Seyāldāngā<sup>23</sup> at a monthly salary of eight rupees.

As a child Gupta was intelligent and brave. He is said to have composed a couplet while ill in bed at his maternal uncle's in Calcutta, when only three years old.<sup>24</sup> The alleged couplet runs:

'Mosquitoes by night and flies by day!'

This is Calcutta life, say what you may!'<sup>25</sup>

Bahkimcandra accepts this feat, arguing that 'since the literary world accepts the story of John Stuart Mill learning Greek at three years of age, let it accept this story also'.<sup>26</sup>

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23. Bahkimcandra gives a different spelling (seyāldaha'). Edward J. Thomson, in the Introduction of his book Bengali Religious Lyric, presumably confused this place with Silāidaha, where lies a Kuṭhibāri (revenue house) of Jorāsāko Tagore Estate and wrongfully states that 'Sileda, the favourite retreat of Bengal's most famous poet (i.e. Rabindranāth Thākur) today, is in Nadiya.' (p.16). Tagore's silāidaha, as a matter of fact, belongs to Kuṣṭhiyā district. 'It is a village on the bank of the river Padma, six miles off from Kuṣṭhiā town'. (District Census Report, Kuṣṭhiā (1961), chapter 3, pp.1-17).

24. The date of its occurrence differs from author to author, indicating its root in general guesswork. According to Harimohan it was six years; we suppose this is more or less acceptable. Bahkimcandra might have modified the age in order to bring it at par with Mill's episode.

25. Text: rete maśā dine māchi ei tārye kolketāy āchi. (Translated by Dīneścandra Sen, op.cit., p.761).

26. K.S., p.11.

At the age of five, on his way home from the Kālīpūjā festival one dark night, Gupta was passing through a place which was said to be haunted: when someone tumbled over him and exclaimed: 'who goes there?'. 'Iśvar, sir, on my way to Thākur's (the brahmin's) house to keep an engagement', Gupta replied boldly.

Gupta grew to be notorious in his neighbourhood and, despite an aptitude for impromptu verse, neglected his studies. At school he wrote poetry based on Persian texts explained to him by boys from upper forms.

When he was ten years old, his mother died, and his father took a second wife. Gupta expressed his disapproval of the marriage by hurling a brick at his stepmother, as she entered their compound. He received a sound thrashing for it from his elder uncle's slippers. Thereafter Gupta went to stay with his maternal uncle, Rāmmohan Gupta, of Joṛāsāko and was supported by the Tagore family who lived nearby.<sup>27</sup> At the age of fifteen he was forced to marry a girl from his native village named Durgāmaṇi. He is said to have wanted to marry the beautiful daughter of a wealthy man in Kācrāpārā, but his father refused his

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27. Ibid, p.20.

consent, preferring the noble lineage of Durgā, whose father Gaurahari Mallik was a major kulin (one of eminent descent) in the baidya caste. Furthermore, no bride-price was required for Durgāmaṇi. Išvarcandra obeyed his father without protest, but shortly after the wedding he declared his intention to abandon domestic life (samsār dharma).<sup>28</sup> Indeed, never once in his life did Gupta either speak to, or cohabit with, Durgāmaṇi, though he scrupulously provided for her maintenance. This prompts Baṅkim to observe:

'He lacked that education of the soul which the company of woman bestows upon a man: of that edifying influence which the admiration and love of the gentler sex engenders in the minds of youth, he had none; womankind was the subject of his constant abuse.'<sup>29</sup>

A mutual interest in poetry sparked off a friendship between Gupta and Jogendramohan Thākur. On the 28th of January, 1831 (16 Māgh, 1237 B.S.), shortly after Gupta's father died, he and Jogendramohan launched a

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28. The second of the four stages of an Aryan's life, pertaining to a householder, the other three stages being (i) brahmacharya (the condition of a religious student, during which one abstains himself from sexual intercourse), the first stage; bānaprastha (withdrawing from society and retiring into the woods for uninterrupted meditation), the third stage, and sannyās (renunciation of the world), the last stage.

29. K.S., pp.19-20. Translated by Dīnēścandra Sen, op.cit., p.761.

journal called Sambād Prabhākar. Under the youthful editorship of Gupta, who was then but little more than nineteen, it rapidly attracted the attention of the élite, including gentlemen of substance and of letters. Two things made the journal noteworthy: it opened up fresh vistas by bringing ordinary, day-to-day events into the <sup>pr</sup>view of literature; and it cradled young writers of the following generation. Baṅkim comments:

'Many established authors, such as Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy and Dīnbandhu Mitra, served their literary apprenticeship on the Prabhākar.... My own preliminary writings were published there and Iśvarcandra Gupta gave me much encouragement at the time....'<sup>30</sup>

The death of Jogendramohan on the 25th of May, 1832, brought the publication of the Prabhākar to a close.<sup>31</sup> Gupta by then had already made his mark as an editor. Impressed by his powers, the Zeminder of Andul, Jagannāth Prasād Mallik, launched a journal entitled Sambād Ratnākar (24th July, 1832) and appointed Gupta as editor. Citing Rāmcandra Gupta, (Iśvarcandra's younger brother) Baṅkim indicates that this second editorship was brief: Gupta

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30. K.S., pp.25-26.

31. The cause of Gupta's disassociation with the paper was, however, different. See Chapter III.

resigned and went south on pilgrimage, visiting Purī, staying for some time in Cuttack with his uncle Syāmamohan Rāy, and whilst there studying the tantra<sup>32</sup> with a learned mendicant. On his return from Cuttack in April 1836 (Baiśākh, 1243 B.S.), he revived the Prabhākar as a thrice-weekly, bringing out the first issue on Wednesday, 10th August, 1836 (27th Śrābaṇ, 1243 B.S.). It prospered so well that from the 14th June, 1839 (1 Aṣāṛh, 1246) it became a daily, the first of its kind in India. On the 20th of June, 1846, Gupta brought out a further journal, the Pāṣaṇḍa-Pīraṇ. Beginning as a popular magazine, the Pāṣaṇḍa-Pīraṇ was transformed by rivalry with Gaurīśaṅkar Tarkabāgīś's Rasarāj into a vehicle for witty verse invective. The mutual mud-slinging thrown up by this rivalry grew so foul and malodourous, that the Reverend Long moved the Government to ban obscene literature. Baṅkim avers, however, that this rivalry did not, as some held, permanently mar the relationship between the two veterans, Gupta and Tarkabāgīś.<sup>33</sup>

Gupta had from early youth been clubbable: he participated not only in modern institutions, like local

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32. A code of Hindu religious ceremonies observed for the worship of the deities, particularly of Siv and Durgā.

33. A full exposition of the rivalry on the basis of fresh materials is ventured in Chapter IV of this thesis.

clubs and school committees, but also old ones, like kabi and Hāph Akhrāi parties.<sup>34</sup> These latter were verse contests, in which one party vied with another at composition and performance. Gupta used to compose for this purpose, and the party using his compositions generally triumphed. This being so, parties sought his aid first and only when they failed to get it, did they try elsewhere. Gupta was also at one time a member of the Ādi Brāhma Samāj and of the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā.<sup>35</sup> From 1850 he instituted a series of Bengali New Year celebrations at the Prabhākar Press. People from all walks of life attended. The high-light of the function was a dinner, rounded off with prize-giving.

The daily Prabhākar was slender and intended primarily

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34. The most popular types of entertainment untouched by the English influence. Kabi songs, Akhrāi and Pācālī all were lyrical in character. Susīlkumār De observed that 'the existence of Kabi songs may be traced to the beginning of the 18th century or beyond it to the 17th, but the most flourishing period of the kabiwālās was between 1760 and 1830'. (Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century, S.K.De, 2nd edition, 1962, p.273). Kabi is a contest between two groups of singers, the first of which proposes a theme (cāpān) and the second gives the answer (utor). Hāph Akhrāi is a modification of Akhrāi, which came into being at Sāntipur but was given shape by Kaluicandra Sen and Rāmnidhi Gupta at Calcutta under the patronage of Rājā Nabakrṣṇa Deb. In Hāph-Akhrāi a compromise between Kabi songs and Akhrāis is apparent. (See Unabiṃśa Satāldīn Kabiwala O Bāṅglā Sāhitya, N. Chakravarty, p.33.)
35. Contemporary records testify that Gupta was sometime associated with these institutions, but no proof of his becoming officially a brāhma is in evidence.



for news and editorial comment. Gupta therefore instituted a monthly supplement, as a vehicle for his literary writings, commencing from April 1853 (1 Baisakh, 1260 B.S.). It appeared on the 1st of each Bengali month. Some years after the revival of Prabhākar, Gupta had relinquished the day-to-day editorship, submitting editorials only on topics of special social or political significance, but always contributing his verses. From then on the main burden had fallen on the assistant editor Syāmācaran Bandyopādhyāy. The monthly Prabhākar became the object of Gupta's devoted care.

Towards the end of his life the strain of over-work forced Gupta to take time off for travel and recuperation. He visited Gaur whose ruined splendour drew verse-tears from his pen, and he spent over a year touring Gayā, Benāres and Prayāg. His charming looks and manner ensured him a welcome and gifts, wherever he went.

During such spasmodic travels over a ten-year period, Gupta collected the lives, songs and verses of famous poets. The first fruit of these endeavours was the publication in the (monthly Prabhākar's) December, 1853 (1 Pauṣ, 1260 B.S.) number of the life of Rāmprasād Sen and songs from his Kālikīrttan and Śrīkrṣṇakīrttan. Other features followed about Rāmnidhi Sen, Haru Ṭhākur, Rām Basu, Nitāī Dās Bairāgī, Lakṣmīkānta Bisvās, Rāsu, Nṛsiṃha and others. The May

1855 (1 Jyaisṭha, 1262 B.S.) number contained the life of Bhāratcandra Rāy and some of his rare verses.<sup>36</sup>

Other works by Gupta which appeared first in the monthly

Prabhākar and subsequently in book form were Prābodh

Prabhākar, Hita Prabhākar and Bodhendu Bikāś. Gupta

also serialised some short tales and moral poems in

Prabhākar under the heading Nitihār. He started a

translation of the Srīmad Bhāgavat,<sup>37</sup> but he had completed

little more than the maṅgalācaran<sup>38</sup> before a serious illness drove him to his bed.

He had been over-working since the launching of the monthly Prabhākar (1853). The January 1859 (1 Māgh 1265

B.S.) number of the monthly Prabhākar had scarcely been

sent to the press, when Gupta took fever. Bulletins in

the daily Prabhākar for the 8th, 9th and 10th of Māgh

(21st, 22nd and 23rd January, 1859) record Gupta's gradual

decline. On Saturday the 10th, when death was imminent,

he was removed to the Ganges, where at about two that

night he died.

(iii) Discussion of Bāṅkim's account. Bāṅkim's account

36. Bāṅkim's assumption (K.S., p.41) that Kabibar Bhāratcandra Rāyer Jībanbr̥tānta was Gupta's first published book is not correct. The first published book was Kālīkīrttan of Rāmprasād Sen (S.S.C.M. Vol.I, Book 10, p.11.).

37. This is a proof of Gupta's knowledge in Sanskrit language though he composed Prābodh Prabhākar with the help of Padmalocan Nyāyratna.

38. The lines at the beginning of a poem, in praise of some deity.

was not based solely on his own knowledge. It seems to embody and greatly elaborate the outlines provided by Harimohan Mookerjee and Rāngati Nyāyratna, and as Baṅkim himself confesses, consists in parts of a mere rearrangement of detailed notes provided by the one-time editor of the Prabhākar, Gopālcandra Mukhopādhyāy. Baṅkim himself seems to have been responsible mainly for the construction placed upon the facts of Gupta's life and for the literary assessment of his works.

At the time of Gupta's death, Baṅkim was a young man of twenty-one.<sup>39</sup> He appeared<sup>5</sup> to have known Gupta personally, but not intimately.<sup>40</sup> By the time he wrote the life he was forty-seven. His personal recollections of Gupta must by then have grown somewhat dim, and the portrait he gives of Gupta must therefore be largely a reconstruction based on his slight personal knowledge, the facts supplied by others, and his own highly developed literary insight. His account is none-the-less valuable, especially in regard to the details of Gupta's private life: his childhood, youth and marriage. Baṅkim is here admirably frank and indeed indirectly

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39. Baṅkimcandra Caṭṭopādhyāy was born on 26th June, 1838 at Kāṭālpārā, West Bengal. (S.S.C.M., Vol.II, Book 22, p.5.)

40. While Baṅkim was doing his literary apprenticeship on the Prabhākar, he was a student of Hughly College.

critical of Gupta's married life and the warped attitude towards women this engendered in him. In regard to Gupta's professional and public life, however, Bankim is less valuable.

Like the other two contemporary biographers, Harimohan Mookerjee and Rāmgati Nyāyratna, Bankimcandra appears to have known Gupta only in his later, more liberal years. They see Išvarcandra as the successful editor of the daily Prabhākar, a distinguished poet and prominent member of Calcutta society, a member of such liberal institutions as the Ādi Brāhma Samāj and the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā, and the pioneer of literary history in Bengal. Much of their portrait of Gupta may well be correct, but recent research has revealed some errors and omissions. Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy has, for example, shown that Gupta left the Sambād Prabhākar even before Jogendranāth Thākur's death, not because of it; Bhabatoṣ Datta, another modern scholar, has indicated a gradual development in Gupta's outlook, changing from staunch orthodoxy to a kind of liberalism; and on the evidence presented by him we shall show that it was probably this early orthodoxy, which caused a rift between Gupta and Jogendranāth. These flaws in Bankim's account and their significance in the interpretation of Gupta's life

and personality will be discussed in a later chapter.

Meanwhile, in the next chapter, an attempt will be made to fill out Bankim's outline of Gupta's life with extracts from Bankim's account in which he personally reminisces about Gupta and with extracts from the reminiscences of other contemporaries.

## Chapter II

### Tsvarcandra Gupta's Contemporaneous Image.

#### (i) Contemporary social order and fashions in Calcutta.

Before presenting the snapshots upon which the contemporaneous image of Gupta may be based, it is necessary first of all to build up a framework in which to view them. A word or two about the society and fashions of the Calcutta of his day is therefore needed, for from the age of ten onwards most of Gupta's life was spent there.

Tsvarcandra Gupta first moved to Calcutta at the time of his mother's death and his father's remarriage (1822).<sup>1</sup> Scatch's map<sup>2</sup> of Calcutta (1825) records the spectacular development of this 'chance-directed, chance-erected'<sup>3</sup> town, whose 'mere trade grew to Empire.'<sup>4</sup> The English then resided, as their forefathers had, 'between Dhurmatollah and Bow Bazar'.<sup>5</sup> Towards the end of the eighteenth century their society had

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1. K.S., p.20.

2. Appendix VIII [End Pocket 1]

3. Kipling, Rudyard: Rudyard Kipling's Verse, Inclusive Edition, 1885-1918, 1923, p.86.

4. Ibid, p.86.

5. Cotton, H.E.A., Calcutta: Old and New, 1st ed. Calcutta, 1907, p.169.

begun to stratify into social classes: the subscription assemblies at the Old Court House fell out of fashion.<sup>6</sup>

The cream of European society began to foregather at private parties in the homes of the favoured few, the most exclusive dinner parties, balls and fêtes being held in the splendid, new Government House of the Lt. Governor.<sup>7</sup>

By Gupta's youth, Indian society in Calcutta had similarly stratified, the élite of it hobnobbing at the period with the European élite also. Previously Indian social structure had been feudal: birth alone had determined class. The European mercantile economy of Calcutta disrupted the feudal order,<sup>8</sup> and a new order based on wealth rather than pedigree emerged. The new order distinguished three classes: an upper middle class, a middle class and a working class.<sup>9</sup> The upper middle class consisted of merchants, bankers and entrepreneurs, mostly descended from early banians, 'who had amassed their fortunes in transactions with the English, the

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6. Blechynden, Kathleen: Calcutta: Past and Present, 1st ed., London, 1905, p.115.

7. Ibid, p.115.

8. But as a result of uneven growth of capital, feudalism had never lost its ground in Indian social structure.

9. Gupta, Suśīlkumār, Unabhiṣa Satābdite Bāṅgalār Nabajāgaran, Calcutta, 1959, p.245.

French and the Dutch.'<sup>10</sup> They included families who had bought up about half the zamindari of Bengal which had been brought into the auction-rooms 'by the rigour of the Sale Law.'<sup>11</sup> A further substantial number of this class owed their position to the provisions of the Permanent Settlement (1793).<sup>12</sup> The upper middle-class was thus not so much created by the new mercantile economy from Europe as reconstituted by it. It was this reconstitution which probably gave rise to the many factions within society, whereby families of established social prestige vied with upstarts for the leadership of society. It is notable that Rāmmohan Rāy and the Tagores, who came into prominence during this period, owed their position to wealth recently acquired from commerce.<sup>13</sup> These families probably constituted the liberal wing of society, whilst the older more established families probably constituted the more orthodox wing. I say 'probably' advisedly, for the details of this have, so far as I know, never been worked out.

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10. Sinha, Nārendra K., The Economic History of Bengal, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1956, pp. 4-5.
  11. Ibid, p. 4.
  12. Gupta, Suśūlkumār, op.cit., pp. 250-251.
  13. Mātilāl Sīl, Rāmdulāl De, Dvārakānāth Tagore and Rāmkr̥ṣṇa Mallik flourished under British patronage.



'A revolutionary event',<sup>14</sup> which did owe its origin to British rule was the emergence of the middle class. It consisted at first of employees, small traders and owners of small landed properties. It became an influential force in the diffusion of western education and came to depend for its livelihood largely on emoluments received for employment in Government service and in the service of the upper-class. It was mainly this class whose intellectual activity and progress resulted in the general awakening of the Hindu community from the sixties onwards.<sup>15</sup>

The urban working-class also owed its origin in large measure to the upheavals resulting from the Permanent Settlement and the coming of a mercantile economy. As a significant social force, however, they were at this period negligible, being completely dependent on the other two classes and lacking any independent organisation or institutions of their own.

As might be expected in such a stratified society, much was made of titles to social distinction, whether hereditary or acquired. Caste distinctions were often alluded to in

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14. Gupta, Suśilkumar, op.cit., p.246.

15. Ibid, p.246.

disputes and wrangles,<sup>16</sup> and people prided themselves upon their kaulīnya (noble lineage).<sup>17</sup> Titles like Tarkabāgīś and Vidyāsāgar, indicating eminence in the various branches of Sanskritic scholarship, were also valued in this age which sought to sanction social reform with citations from the Vedas and Upaniṣads. And aristocratic titles like Prince and Rājā were sported by men like Dvārakānāth Tagore and Rāmmohan, who were not of aristocratic birth. At the bottom of the scale of titles and distinctions came the word bābu, which was used roughly equivalent to the English 'Esquire' and may indeed have originated from a desire for such an equivalent.<sup>18</sup> It was a term around which much satirical writing arose:<sup>19</sup> indeed the word bābu itself almost seems to epitomise part of the class struggle for social dominance between the liberal and orthodox parties in the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century Calcutta.

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16. In the dispute between Gupta and Gaurīśaṅkar, Gaurīśaṅkar, though a man of comparatively progressive outlook, did not hesitate to exhibit his pride in being a brāhmin. See Chapter IV.

17. Many books appeared about this period tracing the origins of various castes and vaunting the status of one against another. Some examples: (i) On Caste, tr. by Haracandra Ghos, pp.13; (ii) Doctors, A Superior Caste, Baidhatpati, 1830: a defence of the caste of Baidya; (iii) Kulins, belonging to the kāyasthas, account of Kul Pradīp, 1832, p.24; (iv) Castes, account of the origin, Jāti Mālā, J.R., 1850: 'a curious work on the Mythological rise of castes, why some of them degraded. (A Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Books, J.Long, Calcutta, 1855, pp.682-686).

18. Kāmāl.A.H.M., Bengali Press and Literary Writings, 1818-1831, University of London, Ph.D.thesis, 1969, p.96.

19. Important among those was Naba Bābu Bilā's (1823) on  
(footnote contd. overleaf ...)

Around about this period a blanket-term emerged to cover a whole new class: 'Young Bengal.'<sup>20</sup> It originally distinguished merely the English-educated young men clustering round the revolutionary educationist Derozio. But to Gupta it seems gradually to have blurred and merged with members of the sophisticated bābu class, whose exotic dress and behaviour excited so much obloquy and opprobrium from the pen of Bhabānicaraṇ Bandyopādhyāy,<sup>21</sup> when Gupta was a teenager.

As regards fashions in dress during Gupta's youth, it is probable that five major styles<sup>22</sup> prevailed:

(a) The Mugal Style. This was probably followed by the aristocracy, nabābs and zamindars. Rāmmohan Rāy's famous

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footnote contd. from previous page ...)

which Long comments: 'One of the ablest satires on the Calcutta Babu, as he was 30 years ago, new editions of the work are constantly issuing from the press, the Babu is depicted as germinating, blossoming, in flower, in fruit...' (Catalogue, ibid, p.678.)

20. Applied mainly to the fifteen students of Derozio, who were satirised by Jaygopāl Tarkālāṅkār (ed. Samācār Darpan) in a Sanskrit verse:

'dakṣinarañjano rāmaḥ rasik kṛṣṇamohanah /  
tarācādo rādhānātho gobindaśandra śekharaḥ //  
haraśandra rāmtanuḥ śibaścandraśca mādhaba //  
maheśhamṛtalālaśca pyāricādo madhubrataḥ //  
phiringī-puṅgaba-śrīmad-dirozio kuśeśāy /  
madhupān ratāḥ samyag digbidig jñānbarjitah //

(Samudra Gupta, op.cit., p.183).

The 'educated' in general were mocked at as 'ēju'. (Ibid, p.182.)

21. Kāmāl, op.cit., Chapters V and VI.

22. Portrait Gallery, Appendix VII.

portrait shows him wearing the Mugal style with indigenous modifications. The word pośāk at this period probably meant Mugal dress in a modified form.<sup>23</sup>

(b) The Western Style. This in adults was probably confined to Europeans and Eurasians, though letters in the press reveal that Bengali boys attending European schools had at this time begun to wear European clothes.<sup>24</sup>

(c) The Bābu Style. The bābus were seen strolling along the streets with their '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.'<sup>25</sup>

(d) The Brāhmin Style. This consisted of a kind of make-shift skirt (dhuti) with a shawl (śāl), when necessary, to cover the otherwise naked torso, displaying the sacred thread (paitā). Īśvarcandra Vidyāsāgar's portrait exemplifies this style.<sup>26</sup>

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23. Rāmmohan is said to have been attending the samāj in pośāk. (Ātmajīvanī: Debendranāth Thakur ed. Satiścandra Cakrabartty, Calcutta, 1962, p.278.)

24. S.P.S.K., Vol. I, p.129.

25. Lethbridge, Sir Roper, Rāmtanu Lāhiri - Brahman and Reformer, London, 1907, p.171. (A translation of Rāmtanu Lāhiri o Tatkalīn Baṅgasamāj by Śibnāth Śāstrī.)

26. Appendix VII.

(e) The Ordinary Bengali style. This consisted of a make-shift skirt (dhuti) and loose-flowing shirt (pāñjābī) in the case of Hindus or loose-fitting trousers (pājāmā),<sup>27</sup> and shirt in the case of Muslims. On social occasions a shawl might also be added.

(ii) Gupta's class and dress. The literate background of Gupta's family as a whole, their possessions and his father's position as an eight-rupee-a-month clerk indicate that Gupta belonged more or less to the lower échelons of the middle class. Evidently he attended school outside Calcutta, where Pērsian rather than English was taught.<sup>28</sup> Though he left that school at the age of ten, when he moved to Calcutta, he is not known to have attended any school where English was taught, and there were by 1822 several in Calcutta. This deficiency probably precluded him from full acceptance by the English-educated classes in later years and may well have prompted him to ridicule them.<sup>29</sup> In all probability, as suggested by reconstructed portrait (1957) of him, based on a death-bed photograph, by Satiś Siṃha, Gupta wore ordinary Bengali dress throughout his life.<sup>30</sup>

27. Muslim peasants and workers in Bengal wear lungī (a kind of make-shift skirt probably of Burmese origin) instead of pājāmā, which they reserve for special occasions, such as weddings and festivals.

28. K.S., p.19.

29. Chapter VI.

30. Basu, Sañjibkumār, Īśvar Gupta o Bāṅglā Sāhitya, 1964, frontpiece.

(iii) His appearance and manner. Bankim gives an impression of Gupta as being a man of ample humour and wit, sincere, frank and honest, with a bright, welcoming smile:

'He was always smiling, and his lips bubbled with engaging, humorous discourse. He was particularly fond of joking and satirizing. Pretence, hypocrisy and trickery were all strangers to him. His conversation was masterly. Be it in story, oration, dispute, verse or song, at making people laugh he was immensely talented. He was equally at home with both old and young. His manner charmed even his enemies.'<sup>31</sup>

He was always attracted by literary talent:

'I was still a boy at school, when I first became acquainted with Isvarcandra Gupta. Nevertheless, my memory of him remains bright. He was a radiantly handsome man with a well-modulated voice. Since we were children, his manner with us was somewhat distant. A number of bosom-pals attended him; their business was to sustain his merriment, for he was unable to live without humour even for a moment. He was fond of reciting his verses, and even though we were children, he recited to us as well. His powers of recitation were,

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31. K.S., p.46.

however, not so sophisticated as those of such people as Hemcandra. He was especially encouraging to those endowed with a little literary talent.<sup>32</sup>

(iv) Gupta, the Kabiwālā. Kabiwālā parties and Kabi<sup>33</sup> contests were a feature of Calcutta culture during the whole period of Iśvarcandra Gupta's life. In sophisticated society the theatre was gradually emerging and performances of Shakespeare<sup>34</sup> were popular with the élite of both Indian and European society and also with Young Bengal, but undoubtedly Kabi, pācālī and yātrā were the chief sources of entertainment, to ordinary people and wealthy classes alike.<sup>35</sup> There was a tremendous competition in this field, where 'the wealthy Hindus ... lavished immense sums of money.'<sup>36</sup> Gupta probably first rose to popularity as a Kabiwālā-composer.<sup>37</sup> He did not often sing: his voice was cracked; but his songs, we are told, were sung throughout Bengal.<sup>38</sup> Kṛṣṇakamal Bhaṭṭācārya quotes from memory one particular song which moved

32. Ibid, p.47.

33. See footnote 34, Chapter I, p. .

34. (a) Clark, T.W., Shakespeare in Bengal, published in Sashibhusan Dasgupta Commemorative Volume, ed. R.K.Dasgupta and S.K.Das, Delhi, 1966, pp. 41-44. (b) Sen, Sukumār, Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihās, Vol.II, 1955, pp. 32-33.

35. Cakrabartī, N., Unabimsa satābdīr kabiwālā o Bāṅglā Sahitya, 1958, pp. 29-31.)

36. Baṅkimcandra, in Bengali Literature (The Calcutta Review, 1871, p.296.

37. K.S., p.18.

38. Gupta, Bipinbihārī: Purātan Prasaṅga, Calcutta, 1966, p. 60.

him deeply by its exquisite simplicity and lyricism.<sup>39</sup>

Though mainly a composer of lyrics, Gupta also occasionally performed. Rādhāmādhav Kar relates how Gupta was once invited to the home of a wealthy man in Calcutta and prior to the performance was offered tobacco in a hookā that was not only cheap but also worm-eaten.<sup>40</sup>

'With your permission', the party said to Gupta, 'we shall begin.'

'Wait,' Gupta replied. 'Sing this first:'

'Once they hadn't even a pot to keep  
their oil in;

but now things have changed exceedingly.

Loaded by Rāmgopal, their ostentation  
has increased alarmingly.

Once they were bangle-makers and bracelet-sellers,  
not even allowed in Hindu homes.

Now their rank had risen: they are looked up  
to.

Their pockets are not big enough to carry their  
cash.

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39. Ibid, Kṛṣṇakamal Bhaṭṭācāryyer Smṛtikathā, p.61. The first line of the song is: 'purabāsi bale rāni tor ...'

40. Ibid, Rādhāmādhav Karer Smṛtikathā, p.259.



They give the poet a cheap hookā<sup>41</sup> and themselves in their dandiness hold an expensive one (ālbolā).<sup>42</sup>

The host was evidently a man of low-caste, whose enterprise had earned him wealth and prestige - a member of the bābu class, in fact; and Gupta's song is, if genuine, a typical instance of the debunking of the bābu's airs and graces that characterise the period. At all events, Gupta's song is said to have brought a blush to the upstart's cheeks and in consequence, a magnificent ālbolā to Gupta's satirical hands.

An article published in a journal called Hitabādī for the 16th of February, 1911, relates a further incident in Gupta's Kabīwālā career.<sup>43</sup> One of Gupta's successful protégés was the playwright Manomohan Basu. It is said that at an Hāph-Akhrāi performance at Benares, master and pupil competed against each other. The accolade was on this occasion accorded to the pupil, Manomohan, for his talents so charmed and enchanted Īśvarcandra, that he himself conceded victory.

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41. hookā - a portable variety of the Bengali tobacco pipe, made of a whole coconut shell and a hollow wooden stem, on the top of which an earthen bowl is fixed for smoking.  
ālbolā - a respectable edition of the hookā, with attachable long pipe which can be used for smoking from a distance.
42. Text: Appendix I.A (i).
43. Cakrabartī, N., op.cit., p.354.

(v) Gupta, the editor. As editor of the Sambād Prabhākar, Gupta's duties were multifarious: sales, advertising, news, lay-out, editing were all in his domain; and he had also the monthly supplement and the Pāṣaṇḍa-Pīraṇ to cope with; in addition to which he contributed verse, editorials, and articles of special interest on political and social questions.<sup>44</sup> A letter<sup>45</sup> from Akṣaykumār Datta to Rājnarāyaṇ Basu in Midnapore indicates Gupta's eagerness to enhance the news-potential of the Prabhākar. The editor of Prabhākar, Datta writes (March, 1850), would be eternally grateful, if Basu would act as local correspondent for Midnapore, supplying details of such sensations as 'quarrels, affrays, robberies, fire-raisings, thefts and murders.'<sup>46</sup> It was from such correspondents as these that Gupta collected his valuable accounts of the Mutiny uprisings.<sup>47</sup>

It is unfortunate from our point of view that Gupta's assistant editor Śyāmācaran Bandyopādhyāy in later years took such a large share of Prabhākar's editorial burden, for his doing so throws doubt on the authorship of some editorials.

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44. The topics dwelt upon by Gupta in editorials are catalogued by Bināy Ghos under four general heads: Economy, Society, Education and Miscellaneous. Titles of these articles delineate Gupta's profound interest in Indian affairs. (See S.B.S.C., pp.15-19.)

45. S.S.C.M., Vol.I, Book 12, p.10.

46. Ibid, p.10.

47. K.S., p.32.

Many, of course, accord well with views expressed elsewhere in Gupta's verse, but some reveal a more liberal attitude than his verse would otherwise warrant, and one is therefore, perhaps wrongly, tempted to ascribe them to Śyāmācaran Bandyopādhyāy, Gupta's assistant.

The following two editorial extracts, for example, express views on patriotism and commerce similar to those reflected in Gupta's verse.

- (a) 'That man is not a man who does not with his money allay the hunger of the hungry and the thirst of the thirsty. That man is not a man who is not at pains to preserve his own national religion and to cultivate knowledge. That man is not a man who is not eager and enthusiastic to establish the independence of his own land. I call him a man whose mind is embellished with the gold of love; I call him a man whose mind is ornamented with compassion; I call him a man who is extremely eager to achieve the welfare of his fellow countrymen. Furthermore, I call him a man, who labours for the improvement of his own nation's religion and scriptures and who is specially vigilant in regard to his own country's independence.'<sup>48</sup>

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48. S.P., 13th April, 1848 (1st Baiśakh, 1255). Basu, Sañjīl Kumār, op.cit., p.132.

(b) 'The means they have specified, as for example, stamp-duty, salt-duty, and monopoly of opium, can in no way be described as fair administration, for it is not only unjust and impolitic for the 'king' to engage in commerce, but as all wise men should consider, it is also a great injustice to carry on monopolies.'<sup>49</sup>

But the two extracts below considerably modify Gupta's attitude to female and western-education, as expressed in his satirical verse.<sup>50</sup> It is possible to justify this modification, of course, on the grounds that Gupta desired a kind of education which would produce more intelligent, competent young men and women, whose allegiance to Indian culture was, however, unaffected by it. That is to say, his objections to western education were based upon the rebellious iconoclasm of Young Bengal<sup>51</sup> and the snobbish pretentiousness of western-educated young girls.<sup>52</sup>

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49. S.P., 1st May, 1850. (See S.B.S.C., op.cit., p.75. )

50. See Chapter VI, Hindu Society, pp.137-138.

51. Ibid, p.137.

52. Ibid, pp.148-149.

- (c) 'It is impossible to describe the inconveniences to which we are put by the lack of facilities for female education. An investigation of such social evils as the break-up of homes and the separation of brothers will reveal the root-cause to be female ignorance. Consequently, by educating females we shall remove these evils and enhance domestic peace and happiness.'<sup>53</sup>
- (d) 'The approved plans for the establishment of universities in this country are excellent. The people of this country are in no way incapable of studying the kind of subjects which are taught at the universities in England ... Had the people of this country been granted suitable education in universities established here, then by now they would have competence in various spheres.'<sup>54</sup>

Gupta's liberalism in regard to education as revealed in the two extracts above can be corroborated by other evidence, for example, he actively supported the establishment of an English school in Bārāsāt (20th July, 1839).<sup>55</sup>

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53. S.P., 7th August, 1850. S.B.S.C., op.cit., p.320. See also pp. 304-317.

54. S.P., 18th July, 1854. Ibid, p.355.

55. S.P.S.K., Vol.I, p.65.

(vi) Gupta, the poet. In a letter to Iśvarcandra<sup>56</sup> requesting him to compose some 'simple Bengali poetry' as a text for female schools, S.D.W. Bethune testifies (7th July, 1851) that Gupta was by then considered 'one of the best living writers of Bengali poetry.'<sup>57</sup> Bankim, who saw an age closing with Gupta's death, also records that he had 'obtained the highest rank in public estimation', though grudgingly attributing this to the 'poverty' of his times.<sup>58</sup>

Sibnāth Sāstrī confirms Gupta's popularity: 'When I came to Calcutta, I used to devour Iśvarcandra Gupta's poetry as soon as I got my hands on it.'<sup>59</sup>

Kṛṣṇakamal Bhaṭṭācārya too speaks of the popularity of Gupta's satires in fashionable salons throughout Calcutta, though he censures both Gupta's vulgarity and the vitiated tastes that enjoined it.

'Hutom Pyācār Nakṣā may not have been effective as satire, 'but as an early specimen of that type of writing deserves not to be forgotten.' From the

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56. Basu, Sañjibkumār, op.cit., pp.127-28.

57. As a matter of fact with the exception of two other poets, Madanmohan Tarkālaṅkāra and Raghunandan Gosvāmī, Iśvarcandra Gupta was the lone figure in Bengali poetry during the first half of the 19th century.

58. C.R., 1871, p.297.

59. Sāstrī, S.N., Atmacarit, 1st Signet Edition, 1952, p.45.

point of view of taste, it was in many respects preferable to the writings of Īśvarcandra Gupta and Gaurīśaṅkar Bhaṭṭācārya.<sup>60</sup> Both these gentlemen sang unadulterated vulgarity which was unfit to be kept anywhere except in uninhabited regions. The Rasarāj composed by Bhaṭṭācārya was for that reason unreadable; but at that time it was fashionable to recite such compositions in the drawing rooms of prominent men and in the salons of the rich. To the vitiated tastes of that society these were enjoyable.<sup>61</sup>

Gupta's style too was defective in the eyes of the more sophisticated. Despite his undoubted reputation, he remained for Baṅkim no more than a 'poetaster'.<sup>62</sup> All the features that had enriched Bhāratcandra's verse seemed to impoverish Gupta's, especially his alliterations. Rājnāraṇ Basu writes:

'... my sermons were unlikely to appeal to Īśvar Bābu because of their dirth of alliterations. I was not blind to Īśvar Gupta's qualities as my lecture on Bengali Language and Literature will show, but I didn't approve of his fondness for alliterations one bit.'<sup>63</sup>

60. See Chapter IV.

61. Gupta, Bipinbihārī, op.cit., p.51.

62. C.R., op.cit., p.297.

63. Basu, Rājnāraṇ, Atmacarit, 3rd ed., 1952, p.55.

This comment may have been justified, but one suspects that it was motivated: Gupta had after all expressed indifference to Basu's sermons and he had also once 'sarcastically' written that Basu's conclusion on the Vedas were based on a reading of Bacon.<sup>64</sup>

(vii) Gupta, the hatcher of the succeeding generation. Gupta is justly famed for his encouragement of young authors. In 1852, he announced in Sambād Prabhākar the receipt of contributions in both prose and verse from Dīnbandhu Mitra, Baṅkim-candra Caṭṭopādhyāy and Dvārakānāth Adhikārī, who were then students of Hindu College, Hughly College and Kṛṣṇanagar College respectively.<sup>65</sup> These were published 'without change or correction'<sup>66</sup> to enable readers to judge their merits and place them in a qualitative order. This particular feature, became known as the Kalejīya Kabitā yuddha (Collegiate Poetry Contest).<sup>67</sup> In this particular instance Adhikārī secured first place and was awarded the prize.

The Sambād Prabhākar (13th April, 1858) contains a

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64. Ibid, p.55.

65. Majumdar, Kedārnāth, Bāṅglā Sāmayik Sāhitya, 1917, pp. 243-246.

66. Ibid, p.243.

67. Specimen Text: Appendix I.A (ii).



notice of a further competition in translating Goldsmith's Hermit and Gray's Elegy from English into Bengali.<sup>68</sup> Though initiated by Umeścandra Datta of Bowbazar, the project was backed by Gupta, who not only published the winning entries but also commented upon them at his New Year's Day Celebration that year.<sup>69</sup> The same issue of the Prabhākar carried a poem in laghu tripadī, the 'actual production of a Bengali female',<sup>70</sup> namely Thākuraṇī Dāsī. Iśvarcandra wrote an appreciation of it and remarked on the importance of female enterprise in literature.<sup>71</sup>

(viii) Gupta, the tourist. Whilst on his travels Gupta took the opportunity not only to collect the lives and works of forgotten poets but also to mix with provincial people. He was, as Baṅkim testified, universally received with respect. Even complete strangers were charmed by his engaging speech. Rich rural zamindars delighted in his visits and presented

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68. S.P., 13th April, 1858. The translations were anonymous, but the translation of Hermit has been ascribed to Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy. (See Raṅgalāl, by M.N.Ghoṣ, p.147.).

69. Ibid, pp. 13-14.

70. Ibid, p.22.

71. Gaurīśaṅkar did not fail to exploit this patronization of a woman. See Appendix 1.B ( IV ).

him with lavish gifts and large sums for his journey.

'The bonds of Gupta's friendship enclosed even those who had spoken with him only once. He captured the hearts of all with his simplicity and engaging conversation.'<sup>72</sup>

Whenever he struck up an acquaintance with young lads on his journey, he would go home with them and if he saw any fruit or vegetables that took his fancy, he would ask for them and take them with him.<sup>73</sup> He did not feel himself in the least demeaned in doing so. When the lads' elders learnt of Gupta's identity, they could not do enough for him.<sup>74</sup>

'Whenever he saw any boys on his travels, he used to call them over, get them to sing for him and tip them.'<sup>75</sup>

The impression of Gupta - the vagabond wayfarer - that one derives from his contemporaries accords little with the dull description of his travels presented by himself. In the passage below he implies that the only

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72. K.S., p.39.

73. Ibid, p.40.

74. Ibid, p.40.

75. Ibid, p.40.

person he met on his travels was the Almighty.

'I set out from my press in Calcutta on the 7th of Agrahāyan (November) last and cruised for several months. I enjoyed myself immensely at various places during my travels. Everywhere, whether on water or on land, whether in the mountains or the forest, All-Merciful God preserved us. By His Grace, we escaped from all kinds of likely dangers. Not even for a moment did we fall into difficulties. There were, however, extremely anxious moments, but those were immediately followed by plain sailing on the boundless oceans of joy. Every new sight brought me fresh happiness. The straight-flowing play of the rivers' waves, the playfulness of the swell, the straight-forward motion and the twisting motion too. The radiant glow on the mountains, the enchanting loveliness of the woods, the haunting beauty of Sundarbaus. The sight of so many towns, villages, markets, temples, sacred places, fields, groves, and lakes filled me with sheer delight and bestowed fulfilment upon my eyes.'<sup>76</sup>

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76. Cakrabartti, Nirañjan, op.cit., p.364.

His poem bhraman (travel) describing in detail places of historical interest and natural beauty, degenerates into a lament on the decline of the Bengali race. The personal touch which infuses such delight into the picture of his travels presented by others is entirely missing.

(ix) Gupta, the lover of wine. Gupta's character was not stainless: he drank. When in his cups, he composed without intermission. Like Addison's, his 'brain', Kṛṣṇakamal Bhaṭṭācārya tells us, 'worked best, when he had a drop inside him.'<sup>77</sup> His partiality for wine was indeed great:

'Of the senses' six enemies,<sup>78</sup> I leave aside all but the fifth (mad = liquor). When I get my hands on that, the other five are friends. The fifth is very candid and also very smart: I dress up as a gentleman with my feet on a mat, worthy of respect;<sup>79</sup> for when I hold a glass, I don't care a fig. I take

77. Gupta, Bipinbihārī, op.cit., p.62.

78. The six appetites and passions in human nature, such as lust (kām), anger (krodh), avarice (lobh), delusion (moha), pride (mad) and envy (mātsarya).

79. K.S., p.46.

Text:

ek dui tin cāri chāri deha chay //  
pācere karile hāte ripu ripu nay //  
tanca chārā pañca sei ati paripāṭi //  
bābu seje pāṭir upare rākhi pāṭi //

my fish and nourishing broth and savour it to the full.<sup>80</sup>

His praise for the benefits of drink was unabashed:

'If you wish to be eloquent and enjoy life, then never go to the tobacconist. For that pitiless staff-wielding addiction is roaming around and if he catches you on dry land, will beat you. If you wish, then spend your money on drink; it will make your complexion glow like gold.'<sup>81</sup>

He nevertheless remained conscious of the corrupting power of drink for those with weak-heads:

'This honey is very sweet and keeps men satisfied. Through misuse, however, it turns to poison. You may take money from your home and pour it down your throat, but take care lest people label you a drunkard.

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80. K.S., p.47.

Text: pātra haṃ pātra peṃ dhole māri kāti /  
jholmākḥā māch niyā cāṭi diyā cāṭi //

81. G.B., p.323.

Text: baktā yadi habe bhāi bhoktā yadi habe,  
doktār dokāne kabhu yeyonāka tabe //  
nidāy leṭhel neṣā berāy ghuriyā /  
dāngāy dekhite pele thengāy dhariyā //  
icchā kare pān kara, byāy kara basu //  
haibe deher barna thik yena basu //

If you are a connoisseur then take a glass; but unless you are competent, do not touch that vessel of poison.<sup>83</sup>

Even wine, all-powerful though it was, remained, so Gupta tells us without disclosing the cause of his conviction, inferior to 'the first kiss of love.'<sup>84</sup>

'Look at wine, the favourite drink of the Asuras, even a touch of whose cup fills the mind with pleasure, drunk with this, the Yādabas fought and died, Wine that kept Balarām in a never-ruffled cheerful mood - now has become a familiar article with the civilized world; Even that drink - wine, sweet wine - I covet not in preference to this first kiss of love.'<sup>85</sup>

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83. G.B., p.323.

Text:

e madhu madhur ati rākhe paritose //  
e madhu madhur hay byabahār dose //  
chāriye gharer karī dhele dāo gale //  
dekho dekho loke yena mātāl nā bale //  
tabe tumi pātra lao pātra yadi hao //  
chūyonā biṣer pātra pātra yadi nao //

84. Ibid, p.162.

85. Text: Appendix I.A (iii). Translation by Dineścandra Sen, op.cit., p.7671

(x) Gupta's image of himself. Gupta's image of himself was probably as a poet alone. In a poem he states that he desired neither wealth nor fame, merely consolation.<sup>86</sup>

'...O Poetry, my prayer to you is this: I want nothing from wealth-giving Lakṣmī; just dance a while in my heart, so that through your presence I may lose all sorrow.'<sup>87</sup>

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86. Kabitā, G.B., p.301.

87. Text: ataeb kabitā go tomār dohāi /  
dhanadātri Lakṣmī-haste, kichu-nāhi cāi //  
kebal kṣānek nr̥tya, kara go hr̥daye /  
sarbbaduḥkha parihari, tomār udaye //

### Chapter III

#### Certain Events in Gupta's life reviewed in the light of Recent knowledge

Information brought to light by two modern scholars, Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy and Bhabatoṣ Datta, illumines certain important events in Gupta's life, which will therefore be discussed below.

(i) Gupta's resignation from the editorship of Sambād Prabhākar. Neither Mookerjea nor Baṅkimcandra mention any resignation.<sup>1</sup> They leave us to assume that Gupta's editorship ceased when the paper closed down after the death of Jogendramohan Thākur. Quoting a news-item from Samācār Darpan for 2nd June, 1832, Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy has demonstrated, however, that Iśvarcandra had quit the paper three months before it ceased publication.<sup>2</sup> Therefore his relinquishment of the editorship was not due to the death of his patron, but to some other cause. It is now clear that the cause was a rift with his patron,

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1. Bhabatoṣ Datta, who brought into light the proceedings of the meetings of Court of Directors of Hindu College (MSS. preserved in the Presidency College Library, Calcutta) on which our assumption is mainly based, also remained silent about this point. (Iśvarcandra Gupta racita kabijībanī, by Bhabatoṣ Datta, 1st ed., Calcutta, 1958, p.46.)
  2. S.S.C.M., Vol.I, Book 10, p.49.



which seems to have resulted from Gupta's attitude to Henry Vivian Derozio. Appointed Assistant Master in the Senior Department of Hindu College (May, 1826)<sup>3</sup>, Derozio, within a short time, made a strong impression on his pupils, giving impetus to enquiry and promoting free thinking. The classroom being found inadequate, the venue of discussions moved to his home and the Academic Association was established (1827).<sup>4</sup> About the nature of this association, one of their younger contemporaries remarked:

'In this grove of Academus - and the debating society had a garden attached to it, it being held on the premises now occupied by the Wards' Institution - did the choice spirits of young Calcutta hold forth, week after week, on the social, moral and religious questions of the day. The general tone of the discussions was a decided revolt against existing religious institutions. The Hindu mind, conservative for a hundred generations, had suddenly become, not only liberal, but ultra-radical. The

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3. Kisorīcāṇḍ Mitra's statement (See A Biographical Sketch of David Hare (Calcutta, 1877) by Pyārīcāṇḍ Mitra, Appendix B, VII-XXXVII) that 'In 1827, Mr. Henry Vivian Derozio was appointed Master in the Senior Department' is not correct. A newsitem published in Samācār Candrikā (13th May, 1826) testifies that Derozio was working as a teacher by that time. (S.P.S.K., Vols. I and II, p.28.)
4. Ghosh, Binay, Bidrohī Derozio, Calcutta 1961, p.50.

young lions of the Academy roared out, week after week, 'Down with Hinduism! down with orthodoxy!'<sup>5</sup>

Based on famous European writers and authorities,<sup>6</sup> these discussions and debates, were instrumental in forming a new perspective, making many young men rapidly 'sceptics, and others direct atheists'.<sup>7</sup>

Derozio was the father of Young Bengal. Even before Sambād Prabhākar commenced publication, Iśvarcandra was hostile to them, as is evidenced by his letter to Baṅgadūt (18th December, 1830). Informing the public of a change in the name of a society from 'Nababiśiṣṭa Śiṣṭagan Sabhā' to 'Baṅgarañjinī Sabhā', Iśvarcandra goes on to discuss eligibility for membership:

'We shall be much obliged if the respected, noble and polite persons come to our society, but the entry is prohibited to those who are anti-religious, atheist, dispossessed of any manners and hostile to

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5. Day, Rev. Lal Behari: Recollections of Alexander Duff, D.D., LL.D., 1st ed., London, 1879, p.30.
  6. 'The sentiments delivered', states Alexander Duff, 'were fortified by oral quotations from English authors. If the subject was historical, Robertson and Gibbon were appealed to; if political, Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham; if scientific, Newton and Davy; if religious Hume and Thomas Paine; if metaphysical, Locke and Reid, Stewart and Brown. The whole was frequently interspersed and enlivened by passages cited from some of our most popular English poets, particularly Byron and Sir Walter Scott. And more than once were my ears greeted with the sound of Scotch rhymes from the poems of Robert Burns.' (India, and India Mission, Edinburgh, 1839, p.642.
  7. Ibid, Appendix.

their mother-tongue due to some proficiency  
in foreign language. (Italics mine) If,

however they come, they cannot be members.<sup>8</sup>

The people expressly excluded from membership of the society were obviously Young Bengal, of whom Išvarcandra clearly disapproved.

The foundation of the weekly Prabhākar provided further scope for attacks on Young Bengal. Acknowledging the publication of a new journal, Hindu Youth, Išvarcandra takes the opportunity to censure Derozio<sup>9</sup> and his followers<sup>10</sup> for their war 'against religion'. The account given by Sambād Timirnāśak, translated and published in The Bengal Hurakaru and the Chronicle under the title Native Papers, summed up Prabhākar's role as:

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8. S.P.S.K., Vol.II, 1830-1840, Calcutts (1340 B.S.), p.85.

9. Ibid, p.194.

10. See Footnote 20, Chapter II. According to Tarkālaṅkāra's list, they were: Dakṣiṇāraṅjan Mukhopādyaḥ, Rāmgopāl Ghoṣ, Rasikkrṣṇa Mallik, Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy, Tārācād Cakrabartī, Rādhānāth Sikdār, Gobīndacandra Basāk, Candrasekhar Deb, Haracandra Ghos, Rāmtanu Lāhīrī, Śibcandra Deb, Mādhabcandra Mallik, Amṛtalāl Mitra and Pyārīcād Mitra. About the nature of Prabhākar's attacks against them, The Enquirer (ed. Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy) observes: 'The Prabhakur has brought himself to the notice of the public by the indecencies his columns abound with, and his intemperate abuses against the Liberal Party. His examples has fired others with a desire of gaining the same influence among the orthodox community, pursuing the track he has pointed out.....' (Reprinted in India Gazette, d. 15th August, 1831, S.B.S.C., Vol.I, p.27.)

'In the year 1237, on the 16th of Māgh the Prubhakur arose, by whose rays the world we believe will be enlightened, so keenly have they been darted. The reason of this is that it has simply espoused the cause of religion and has not published a word of learning, knowledge, or judgement. He has merely abused the infidels, by which he has gained much regard amongst the Hindoos: for no respectable person thinks of arguing with an infidel. Consequently the Prubhakur has filled his paper with the meanest terms of speech.'<sup>11</sup>

Thus, during the controversy in Calcutta over Hindu College, Gupta took a position against 'Young Bengal'.<sup>12</sup> The severity of his feeling against them induced him to publish an article strongly criticising the Directors, teachers and educational policies of Hindu College.<sup>13</sup> The same session of the College Committee which adopted the resolution to dismiss Derozio (13th April, 1831)<sup>14</sup> also resolved to caution Gupta and accordingly, Luckynarayain

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11. B.H.C., Vol.IX, no.19, New Series. Calcutta, Monday, January 23, 1832, p.2.

12. Gupta's poem entitled Hindu Kalej (K.S., Part II, p.194) which portrays the degeneration of the institution from Hindu ideals into Christianity, was probably composed at this time.

13. S.B.S.C., op.cit., p.532.

14. Ibid, p.532.

Mookerjee, the secretary of the College, wrote a letter to 'The Proprietor of Sumbad Probhakar' asking him to furnish the writer's name so that legal measures could be 'adopted for his punishment' (19th April, 1831).<sup>15</sup>

'Isher Chander Gupta', the 'Editor Proprietor of Prabhakar' denied this allegation of offering 'unbecoming language' (23rd April, 1831):

'I am authorized in the name of the writer to inform you that he neither had the least intention nor did he mean by the language of his letter to bring the College institution or the characters of its teachers and members as a body into hatred and contempt or ridicule.....'<sup>16</sup>

But the Managing Committee of the Hindu College did not consider this explanation 'as altogether satisfactory'.<sup>17</sup> They directed him to 'express' his 'regret' in the next number.<sup>18</sup> Whether or not Gupta apologised cannot be ascertained for lack of further evidence,<sup>19</sup> but the following resolution adopted by the Court of Directors of the College (30th July, 1831) indicates that the matter was not dropped:

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15. S.B.S.C., *ibid*, p.533.

16. *Ibid*, p.533.

17. *Ibid*, p.534.

18. *Ibid*, p.534.

19. *Ibid*, p.534.

'Resolved that the papers relative to the Editor of Prubhakar Isher Chander Goopta be sent to Baboo Chundro Coomer Tagore who promised to get the matter settled and has the authority of prosecuting him if necessary without further reference.'<sup>20</sup>

Cāndrakumār Thākur, the College Governor, was the elder paternal uncle of Jogendramohan, Gupta's patron and associate. Nothing is recorded of his mediatory efforts 'to get the matter settled' with Gupta, but it may well have produced a strain in their relationship and probably as a result, Gupta abandoned the journal which he had founded.

(ii) Iśvarcandra's relations to the Dharma Sabhā and his attitude to Suttee. The next point to settle is the precise nature of Gupta's relations with the Dharma Sabhā and his attitude to the Suttee. According to the same report by Timirnāśak, Iśvarcandra had, by the last week of January, 1832, turned antagonistic to the orthodox movement, as it concludes with the comments that:

'Now however he has attacked religion, and if he continues in this course, we shall know the

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20. Proceedings, pp.41-62. Datta, Bhabatoṣ, op.cit., 46-47.



power of this son of a leech and his supporter.'<sup>21</sup>

But an observation contained in a news item of Samācār Candrikā (dated the 2nd June, 1832) contradicts this statement. Notifying the closure of Samḃād Prabhākar, it goes on to say:

'From its commencement up to the month of last Māgh, the Prabhākar, was with the religious side; after that when Gupta gave up the paper, the rays of the Prabhākar decreased a little and then, as a matter of fact, it had cast a little glance at the Dharma Sabhā leaders.'<sup>22</sup>

This does not mean, however, that Gupta was an avowed member of Dharma Sabhā.<sup>23</sup> The Samācār Candrikā for Monday, the 21st March, 1831 (9 caitra, 1237 B.S.) contains an interesting editorial. It was written as an answer to a pseudonymous letter<sup>24</sup> published in the Samḃād Prabhākar of Friday, the 18th March. In reply to a query about the supporters and the opposers of the Suttee among the contemporary journals, the Candrikā affirms that it has not the slightest doubt that the editor of the Prabhākar sides

21. B.H.C., op.cit., p.2.

22. S.P.S.K., op.cit., p.122.

23. The extremist party, which was formed on the 17th of January, 1830, with the objective to protect Hindu religious sanctity against any interference, including sending a representative to the King of England to submit a memorandum in favour of the Suttee. (S.C., 1st Baiśākh, 1237, 12th April, 1830, p.8.)

24. It is under the signature of 'Svadharmā Dās', which seems to be a pseudonym.

with the Sabhā.<sup>25</sup> This clearly indicates that Gupta broadly supported the Sabhā but remained silent about Suttee, from which one infers that he was non-committal on this issue.<sup>26</sup> In addition to this, a negative conclusion can be drawn from the fact that he is not known to have composed a single line in praise of this so-called sacred rite.<sup>27</sup>

(iii) Did Išvarcandra translate the Age of Reason? Bhabatoṣ Datta assumes that Gupta translated Tom Paine's Age of Reason.<sup>28</sup> This assumption is interesting, yet odd. Gupta's attitude towards the missionaries, as is evident from his satires, was hostile and uncompromising so it was not unlikely that any material which would undermine their theology, would be welcomed by him as a handy weapon. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that Gupta translated it. The source of this assumption is a comment on Paine's book by Samācār Darpan, which was summarised in 'The Bengal Hurakaru and The Chronicle', as follows:

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25. S.C., 9th Caitra, 1237 (Monday, the 31st March, 1831).  
 26. In the list of subscribers numbering 830 persons, published in Samācār Candrikā from 12th April, 1830 to 11th April, 1831, for sending a representative to England to fight for Suttee, Išvarcandra's name is not found. (See Samācār Candrikā, 1830-1831, British Museum.)  
 27. In 1852, however, Išvarcandra openly opposed the plea of re-introducing Suttee. (Datta, op.cit., p.48.)  
 28. Datta, Bhabatoṣ, op.cit., p.46.



'We understand that some time since a large number of the works of Tom Paine, not far short of a hundred, was sent for sale to Calcutta from America; and that one of the native book-sellers, despairing of a sale, fixed the price of each copy at a Rupee; a few were sold at this price, which falling into the hands of some young men educated in English, the anxiety to purchase the work became great. The vender immediately raised the price to 5 Rupees a copy, but even at that price we hear that his whole stock was sold among the natives in a few days. Some one soon after took the trouble to translate some part of Tom Paine's Age of Reason into Bengalee, and to publish it in the Prubhakur, calling upon the missionaries, and upon the venerable character by name to reply to it.....<sup>29</sup> (Italics mine)

The text testifies that 'someone' translated 'some part of Tom Paine's Age of Reason into Bengali' and that it was published 'in the Prubhakar'. Though, it is possible to infer from this statement that that person may have been Isvarcandra Gupta, it is far from being conclusive proof. Indeed, the following arguments can be adduced to indicate how unlikely it was that Isvarcandra translated it:

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29. B.H.C., op.cit., p.2.

(a) Though he occasionally attended school, and, as a journalist, came into contact with the westernised people, there is no proof that Gupta knew much English. In his satirical verse, particularly that related to English society, English is found; but not enough to warrant an assumption of sufficient knowledge to translate the Age of Reason.<sup>30</sup>

(b) The Sambād Prabhākar used to publish news from English papers. But, as an anecdote by Satyendranāth Datta about the life of Akṣaykumār Datta testifies, Iśvarcandra did not do the translating: he had an assistant for this purpose.<sup>31</sup>

(iv) The revival of Sambād Prabhākar. The gap between Gupta's leaving Sambād Prabhākar, which occurred about April, 1832, and his joining Sambād Ratnābalī, which commenced publication on 24th July (1832) may tentatively be fixed at four months; but the exact date of leaving the latter is not known. His study of Tantra during his

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30. Two transactions in English extant under Gupta's English signature (i) Application submitted to the Officiating Secretary to Government in the General Department, for permission 'to print in the Bengallee Languages entitled the Sambad Provakar' (Calcutta, the 17th January, 1831 - S.B.S.C., op.cit., p.21); (ii) A letter as a reply to the protest by Luckynarain Mookerjee, Secretary, Hindu College, (23rd April, 1831 - ibid, p.533) do not contradict this, for they might have been drafted by someone else.

31. S.B.S.C., vol.II, p.641.

sojourn at Cuttack bore fruit, for some of his religious poems carry traces of it.<sup>32</sup> The date of his return from Cuttack (April, 1836) indicates that he stayed there for quite a long period, but in absence of direct evidence the precise length of the period remains obscure.

The Sambād Prabhākar re-appeared on the 10th August, 1836 (27 Śrāban, 1243 B.S.), from which may be inferred that Gupta had to do much ground-work for giving the paper a second life. It was, originally, the property of the Pāthuriyāghātā Tagore family, though Gupta was alleged to be 'Editor Proprietor'.<sup>33</sup> Gupta presumably procured from them the right to revive the journal on three grounds: that his former patron Jogendramohan was now dead; that Jogendramohan's family were perhaps eager to keep his memory alive with the paper; and that much of the influence and popularity of the Prabhākar had been due to Gupta's dynamism. Though possessed of good-will in abundance, Iṣvarcandra lacked money. The Sambād Prabhākar was re-issued, so Gupta informs us, through the generous financial assistance of two Tagore brothers of Pathuriyāghātā:

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32. The following poems may be particularly mentioned: akārādya īśvarstuti, ākārādya īśvarstuti, mahākāṣṭab. (G.U., pp.29, 104.)

33. S.B.S.C., op.cit., p.533.

Kānāilāl Thākur and Gopāl Lāl Thākur.<sup>34</sup>

(v) The beginnings of Gupta's liberalism. Though differing in minor details with Bhabatoṣ Datta in regard to the evolution of Gupta's thinking during the decade 1830-1840, I am in agreement with him on the main points, namely that when Gupta first took up editorship in Calcutta he was staunchly orthodox and that towards the end of the decade he appeared to undergo a change of heart; he began attacking Dharma Sabhā to which he was once allied, for in support of his apparent change, The Friend of India for 8th November, 1838 can be cited:

'The Chundrika rose into notice on the shoulders of the Subha, and cannot fail, in some measure to participate in the effects of its prostration.

The editor has now a powerful rival in the Prubhakar which is supported by the influence of the liberal party and edited by a native of the medical tribe who has few superiors as a Bengali writer.'<sup>35</sup>

It is also true that Gupta afterwards became associated with the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā founded by Debendranāth Thākur.<sup>36</sup> I agree, as Datta states, that this apparent transformation

34. S.P., 1st Baiśākh, 1243 B.S. (K.S., p.28).

35. F.I., 8th November, 1838.

36. Thākur, Debendranāth, Ātmajībanī, p.64.

was induced by Gupta's acquaintance with the Jorāsāko Tagore family. I disagree with him, however, on the timing of this apparent change. Unlike Datta who states that it took place in 1838, I am inclined on the evidence of a report on the proceedings of the Baṅgabhāṣā Prakāśikā Sabhā to date it as commencing one year earlier (1837).<sup>37</sup>

I do differ with Bhabatoṣ Datta on one very important point, however. I regard Gupta's change of heart as merely apparent. Datta himself is aware of the large measure of inconsistency between Gupta's prose and poetry in regard to liberal attitudes. The prose often expresses views directly contrary to those contained in the verse satires.<sup>39</sup> It is my contention that the satires constitute a truer guide to Gupta's private opinions. His prose-attitudes were largely determined by Gupta's invidious position as a news-paper editor dependent upon both patrons and readers for a livelihood.<sup>40</sup> It has been noticed that the Prabhākar became hostile to the Dharma Sabhā immediately Gupta left it after the disagreement with his patrons over

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37. S.P.S.K., Vol.II, pp.290-292. According to Binay Ghosh, Gupta's change in outlook began during 1839-40. S.B.S.C., op.cit., p.29.  
 38. Datta, op.cit., pp.49-50.  
 39. S.P., Dated 20.4.1849, 7.5.1849, 15.12.1856, 3.9.1858. (S.B.S.C., ibid., pp.303-304, 305, 443-444.)  
 40. The extent of Gupta's dependence on Prabhākar's income is well-documented in an Appeal he made to his patrons, friends, subscribers and readers, requesting them for 'good advice'. (S.P., 15.12.1856, S.B.S.C., op.cit., pp.440-444.)

the Derozio affair which means that in all probability it was the Tagore family, the owners of the paper, who were liberal and opposed to the Sabhā, not Gupta. When Gupta acquired ownership of the Prabhākar in 1836, it was, I should think, probably on the condition that he would propagate the liberal attitudes of the Tagores. Gupta's opposition to liberals is, however, clearly expressed in his satires where he attacks Vidyāsāgar, Akṣay Kūmār Datta and the followers of Rāmmohan generally. It should also be noticed that Gupta's arch enemy Gaurīśankar was at one time a collaborator of Rāmmohan Rāy. Gupta's relations with this arch enemy will be discussed in the following chapter, which is based on a file of the Hinduratna Kamalākar<sup>41</sup> discovered by me in the British Museum.

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41. Facsimile, Appendix VI.

## Chapter IV

### The Dispute between Gupta and Tarkabāgiś.

The evidence bearing on the dispute between Išvarcandra Gupta and Gaurīsaṅkar Tarkabāgiś illumines aspects of, not only Gupta's personality but also the scurrilous world of mid-nineteenth century Bengali journalism. Both Baṅkimcandra and Brajendranāth state that the dispute was short-lived.<sup>1</sup> The fresh evidence I have found confutes this. The dispute did not terminate in 1847; it merely lay in abeyance till 1858, when it was resumed, with perhaps greater vehemence.

The dispute ceased abruptly in 1847, when the editor of Gupta's journal Pāsaṇḍa-Pīraṇ absconded with the letter-head block, and delivered it into the hands of Gupta's rival, Tarkabāgiś.<sup>2</sup> Recalling the incident in his article Sambādpātrēr Itibṛtta (A Historical Account of Newspapers) published in the April (1852) issue (1st Baiśākh, 1259 B.S.) of Sambād Prabhākar, Išvarcandra writes:

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1. (a) K.S., p.34. (b) S.S.C.M., Vol.I, Book 8, pp.23-25.  
2. K.S., p.33.



'The Pāṣaṇḍa-Pīraṇ was born at Prabhākar Press in the month of Āṣāṛh, 1253 B.S. (June, 1846). At the outset, it contained only articles of popular interest, but in the year 1254 B.S. (1847 A.D.) it was, in the course of suppressing heretics, itself suppressed by a heretic: i.e., an ungrateful person named Sitānāth Ghos, whose name was printed as the editor, joining hands with the opponents, fled away with the letter-head block in the month of Bhādra (August, 1847) that year.'<sup>3</sup>

The dispute was, however, resumed in 1858, as is evidenced by copies of Hinduratna kamalākar, discovered by me in the British Museum. Before presenting this fresh evidence, it is necessary, for the sake of clarity, to give a brief account of Gaurīśaṅkar's career and character.

(i) Gaurīśaṅkar Tarkabāgis's career and character. Born in 1799 at Pañcagrām, a village belonging to Itā parganā<sup>4</sup> of Sylhet district, Gaurīśaṅkar left home after his father's

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3. S.P., 1st Baiśākh, 1259, B.S., K.S., p.32.

4. Part of a district.



death and went to Naihāṭi where he studied Nyāy (i.e. Sanskrit logic) under Nīlmaṇi Tarkapañcānan, the maternal grandfather of Haraprasād Sāstri.<sup>5</sup> Since Pañcānan had no children, he cherished Gaurīśaṅkar like a son.<sup>6</sup> Gaurīśaṅkar came to Calcutta and joined Rājā Rāmmohan Rāy, assisting him in many endeavours, including the movement for abolition of Suttee.<sup>7</sup> He afterwards became a friend and protégé of Dakṣiṇārañjan Mukhopādhyāy, a student of Derozio. In 1838, when Dakṣiṇārañjan married the younger widow of the late Mahārājā Tejaścandra Bāhādur of Burdwan in a civil court at Calcutta, Tarkabāgiś was his witness.<sup>8</sup> Dakṣiṇārañjan brought out the Jñānānveṣaṇ (15th June, 1831)<sup>9</sup> as the spokesman of Young Bengal, appointing Gaurīśaṅkar as its editor.<sup>10</sup> The Timirnāśak sarcastically wrote of Dakṣiṇārañjan and his paper:

'He knows nothing of Bengalee literature; he cannot even speak Bengalee correctly, nor has he any pleasure in it. Yet nothing would satisfy him but becoming the Editor of a Bengalee newspaper.'

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5. Proceedings, Baṅgīyā Sāhitya Sammelan, (15th Conference), p.26, S.S.C.M., Vol.I, Book 8, p.7.
  6. Family Papers (1826-27) of H.P.Sāstri. S.S.C.M., Ibid., p.7.
  7. Proceedings, ibid, p.26.
  8. S.S.C.M., ibid, p.8.
  9. Ibid, p.11.
  10. Ibid, p.11-12.

Having some property from his grand-father,  
he lays out some of it for this paper, to  
deceive all...'<sup>11</sup>

Gaurīśaṅkar is referred to in the report as follows:

'Taking a frothy writer, a spirit-drinking fellow  
for a pundit, he has employed him. Being an infidel,  
a hater of religion, he has done nothing from the  
time he commenced his paper but abuse the very holy  
Editor of the Chundrika, and in his wisdom shewn  
that the Hindoo sastras are not good, and what are  
their faults...'<sup>12</sup>

Apart from associate-editorship in the Jñānveśan, Gaurīśaṅkar  
edited three other papers, Samhād Bhāskar, Samhād Rasarāj  
and Hinduratna kamalākar.<sup>13</sup>

Published in March (1839) from Simla, the Samhād Bhāskar  
bore as its editor the name of Śrīnāth Rāy, who died in  
October, 1840, at which time the Calcutta Courier observed:

'The death of Sreenath Roy will not, in the least,  
diminish the usefulness and efficiency of the Bhāskar,  
as an appropriate instrument for the cultivation of

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11. B.H.C., op.cit., p.2.

12. Ibid, p.2.

13. S.S.C.M., op.cit., pp.12-22.

the Bengally language, and a legitimate organ of at least a certain section of the Hindoo community. Sreenath Roy was not the principal editor of the paper. His contributions to it formed but a small part of the editorials. The individual to whom praise is due for the able manner in which the paper has hitherto been conducted, is still in the land of the living. He is the quondam Bengally editor of the *Gynnaneshun*...,<sup>14</sup>

Gauriśaṅkar was more than once fined and imprisoned for libellous attacks on public figures.<sup>15</sup> In 1856, when threatened by another such prosecution by Mahārājā Kamalkṛṣṇa Bāhādur, Gauriśaṅkar managed to save himself only by discontinuing the paper concerned, namely the *Rasarāj*, which ceased publication on the 2nd February, 1857.<sup>16</sup> By the 24th of that same month, however, Gauriśaṅkar had launched the *Rasarāj*'s successor, *Hinduratna Kamalākar*.

The first issue of *Hinduratna Kamalākar* seems somewhat at variance with what we know of Gauriśaṅkar's character; for it appeals to the Hindu community at large, denounces the antagonism of India's alien rulers towards Hinduism, and

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14. S.S.C.M., op.cit., p.13.

15. Caudhuri, Acyutcaran: *Srihatter Itibritta*, 1st ed., 1917, vol.II, p.65.

16. S.S.C.M., ibid, p.19.

expresses firm determination to uphold the cause of religion.<sup>17</sup> Assuming a tone of rank orthodoxy, Gaurīśaṅkar calls upon his readers to regard his new journal as the brahmāstra (an awful missile consecrated by Brahmā = a sure weapon) with which to bludgeon the irreligious. How far this assumption of staunch orthodoxy was symptomatic of the year 1857, the year of Mutiny, or how far it was a direct result of caution after so much litigation for libel, are matters for speculation; but that such orthodoxy was out of character with Gaurīśaṅkar is certain, for his assumption of orthodoxy was short-lived. Whether it lasted the year out or not, is difficult to say, for the issues of Hinduratna Kamalākar from the 24th of February, 1857 to the 13th of April, 1858 are not available.

By June, 1858, however, Gaurīśaṅkar was back in character scornfully attacking, in the issues of Hinduratna Kamalākar, for the 1st, 8th and 29th of June, 1858, the views of the orthodox as represented by Dharma Sabhā, and Samācār Candrikā and its editor, Bhabānicaraṇ Bandyopādhyāy.<sup>18</sup>

17. Ibid, p.22.

18. (a) H.R.K.K. (Tuesday, the 1st June, 1858) contains the following couplets against Bhabānicaraṇ:

kothāy candrikā burī dharma-sabhā cerī //  
dekhanā ki adharme laila rājya berī //  
kothāy o Bhagabati haila ki bherī //  
haibe Candrikā taba yabaner nerī // p.7.

(b) The attack made on him in the following issue, begins with the lines:

ki he bābū Bhagabati caṭṭa upādhyāy //  
kothā he īśvar dādā taba upādhyāy // etc. See

Except for his brief orthodoxy during the year 1857/58, Gaurīśaṅkar was one of the enlightened and dedicated workers, who in the early nineteenth century strove so hard to eradicate social abuses and religious superstitions and to establish man's rights to live and act with dignity, in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience. Of his talent and achievements as an editor and writer, the weekly Calcutta Courier writes:

'His writings, as far as we have been able to judge, are always characterised by good sense and a vigorous style. Being freed from his trammels of Hindoo superstition, he gladly embraces every opportunity of exposing the folly of the bigotted countrymen, and showing the great utility of cultivating European Knowledge.' 19

Thus in his general attitude to social reform and to western education, Tarkabāgīś was diametrically opposed to Išvarcandra Gupta, though there is evidence of their having

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footnote continued from previous page ....)

18. (c) The verse published on 29th June issue seems to be bitterest of all:

candrikār antadanta pariṇāche sab /  
haiṇāche lokmukhe burī burī rab // etc. App., ibid.

19. S.S.C.M., op.cit., p.9.

been at one time fellow-members of a particular action-group, called the Baṅga Bhāṣā Prakāśikā Sabhā.<sup>20</sup> During the Derozio controversy, they were each in opposite camps. The alignments of the Bengali press during the controversy are set out below:<sup>21</sup>

<u>Leftist</u> ( <u>bāmpanthī</u> )	<u>Liberal</u> ( <u>udārpanthī</u> )	<u>Conservative</u> ( <u>rakṣaṇśīl</u> )
<u>The Enquirer</u>	<u>The India Gazette</u>	<u>Samācār Candrikā</u>
<u>The East Indian</u>	<u>The Bengal Hurakaru</u>	<u>Sambād Prabhākar</u>
<u>Jñānenveṣaṇ</u>	<u>The Reformer</u>	
	<u>Samācār Darpan</u>	

Tarkabāgīś was the editor of Jñānenveṣaṇ and Gupta of Sambād Prabhākar.

The opposition between Tarkabāgīś and Gupta is seen clearly over three issues:

a) Young Bengal

Tarkabāgīś supported the movement: Gupta vehemently opposed it.

b) Female Education

Tarkabāgīś advocated it: Gupta satirised it.

20. Ibid., pp. 290-291.

21. Ghos, Binaṅ, op.cit., p.113.

c) Widow-Remarriage

Tarkabāgīś supported the campaign to institute it: Gupta considered it contrary to Hinduism.

Neither Bankim nor Brajendranāth were able to specify the cause of the first phase of the dispute between Tarkabāgīś and Gupta. The cause remains a mystery even now, and will continue to do so, unless the missing files of the Sambād Rasarāj and the Pāṣaṇḍa-Pīṛaṇ are discovered.

(ii) The Second Phase of the Dispute between Tarkabāgīś and Gupta. The exact date of the commencement of the second phase of the dispute between Tarkabāgīś and Gupta is also unknown, because the available copies of Hinduratna Kamalākar date only from 20th April, 1858, leaving a gap of one year and two months between that date and the date of the first issue.<sup>22</sup> The available file comprises only 19 issues, dating from 20th April to 3rd August, 1858. Of these 19, 11 contain attacks on Gupta. These attacks are of two types: editorial attacks and attacks made in the correspondence columns. The last of the<sup>23</sup> five editorial

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22. Hinduratna Kamalākar was first published on 24th February, 1857. (S.S.C.M., op.cit., p.22.)

23. H.R.K.K., 3rd August, 1858, p.3.

attacks sums up the causes of the dispute and states that, at the request of a Brāhmin correspondent who had visited Gupta at the Prabhākar Press, the editor had decided to discontinue the dispute.<sup>24</sup>

a) The editorial attacks on Gupta.

These editorial attacks on Gupta have to be read with caution. They were written by a man with numerous convictions for libel, as we have indicated earlier in our discussion of the character and career of Gaurīśaṅkar Tarkabāgiś. Nevertheless, they undoubtedly contained some truth about the character and behaviour of Śīvarcandra Gupta. At times they make rather amusing reading, and one may pardonably assume that the editor Gaurīśaṅkar Tarkabāgiś is exaggerating with satirical intent. At all events, it is clear, that at least in Tarkabāgiś's estimation the dispute arose from the following twelve causes.<sup>25</sup>

(1) In order to institute legal proceedings against the editor of the Hinduratna Kamalākar, Gupta had served him with a writ.

(2) Gupta had sent word to the Hinduratna Kamalākar

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24. Ibid., p.3.

25. H.R.K.K., op.cit., pp. 4-5.



informing that in the above suit against them, which was due to be heard at the current sessions of the Supreme Court, he had engaged to act for him Pleader Allen, at a cost of Rs.500, Counsel Richie at a cost of 16 Mohars, and Counsel Pearson at a cost of 12 Mohars.

(3) In connection with the case, Gupta had held a meeting at Prabhākar Press.

(4) In collaboration with the editor of Samācār Candrikā, Gupta had succeeded in persuading Kālīprasanna Siṃha to institute further proceedings against Tarkavāgīś.

(5) Wherever Gupta went, he reviles the editor of Hinduratna Kamalākar.

(6) When the Dēwān of the Gaṅgamaṅgal Estate of Rājā Kamalkṛṣṇa Bāhādur had, on the occasion of his son's wedding, been about to send gifts to Tarkavāgīś, then editor of Samḃād Bhāskar, Gupta had dissuaded him from doing so.

(7) By offering cut-rates, Gupta had obtained the contract to print the official papers of the Bhukailās Rāj Estate. This contract had previously been held by Tarkavāgīś.

(8) When a case involving Tarkavāgīś and Bābu Śibakṛṣṇa Bandyopādhyāy was being heard in the Supreme Court, Gupta had rushed to Calcutta from Chittagong in order to testify

against him; and had also made abusive comments against him in Sambād Prabhākar.

(9) When Tarkabāgīś discontinued publication of Rasarāj, Gupta had, in the presence, and on the life of Rāja Kamalkṛṣṇa Bāhādur, sworn to desist from attacking him, but no sooner had he returned to the Press, when he began composing abuse to publish the following morning.

(10) Gupta had harassed Tarkabāgīś, ever since he became editor of Sambād Bhāskar. Tarkabāgīś had only to develop a cold for his death to be reported in Gupta's columns. Gupta had recorded Tarkabāgīś's death no less than three times.

(11) When, during the Governorship of Lord Auckland, it had been proposed that Indians be appointed as Deputy Magistrates, Tarkabāgīś had written to the Governor requesting to be considered for such a post. The Governor had replied that the matter had not yet been decided, but that he had recommended that Tarkabāgīś be given such an appointment by Police Superintendent Dampier, as soon as the new rule came into effect. Tarkabāgīś was then living at Simha garden house. Some months later, the Police Superintendent had sent an infantryman to Tarkabāgīś,

asking him to come to see him about a Deputy Magistrate's post. Seeing the infantryman, a crowd of about five hundred Indians had immediately gathered, and a rumour had arisen that Tarkabāgiś was about to be arrested. Tarkabāgiś was not in at the time. When he returned, the infantryman handed him a letter, which intimated that Tarkabāgiś was almost certain to be appointed because he had been strongly recommended by the Governor. Tarkabāgiś replied, expressing his gratitude, but signifying that he no longer wished to be considered for the post. These were the facts of the matter. The following morning, however, a story had appeared in Gupta's Prabhākar describing the arrest and detainment of Tarkabāgiś by Dampier's men.

(12) Gupta had disclosed in the presence of Rājā Kamalkṛṣṇa Bāhādūr that he intended to purchase the Sam̐bād Bhāskar.

These twelve points outline the story of Gupta's strained relations with Tarkabāgiś. The first of these points indicates that the dispute was triggered off by a threatened action against Tarkabāgiś by Gupta, though presumably Tarkabāgiś must have offended Gupta in some way,

for Gupta to want to go to court. At all events, after this threatened court action, the dispute between the two editors was reactivated. Gupta seems to have got the better of it in the initial stages: he seems to have managed at various times to turn the editor of Samācār Candrikā, the Dēwān of the Gaṅgāmaṅgal Estate, Kalīprasanna Siṃha and also possibly Rājā Kṛṣṇakamal Bāhādur all against Tarkabāgīś. He also seems to have enjoyed a slight commercial victory against Tarkabāgīś, when he won from him the contract to print official papers for the Bhukailās Estate. However, towards the end of the dispute Tarkabāgīś's official stock seems to have risen: he was, so he alleges, even recommended by the Governor, Lord Auckland, for the first post of Deputy Magistrate. Iśvarcandra Gupta seems to have been driven to devise wild schemes to silence Tarkabāgīś, especially if his declaration of intent to buy the Sambād Bhāskar is true. Towards the end of the dispute Gupta seems to have become completely dispirited, if we are to believe the testimony of the Brāhmin correspondent of Hinduratna Kamalākar, who reported that at his visit to the Prabhākar Press he had found Iśvarcandra dejected.<sup>26</sup> When asked

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26. H.R.K.K., op.cit., p.3.

whether his dejection was due to the attacks against him in Hinduratna Kamalākar, Gupta is said to have replied:

'No, that doesn't grieve me. I am an old man now, and virtually powerless. I no longer dare continue the quarrel. The editor of Kamalākar was born a Brāhmin: his quarrels are rather like blessings on me. It is customary in our profession for colleagues to rally round to maintain any of us who fall on hard times. So if Prabhākar founders and I find difficulty in keeping myself clothed and fed, I shall naturally expect help from the man who is harming Prabhākar's rays. Please present my compliments to him and inform him of this. If he wishes to afflict my worn-out body with his arrows, then let him. I shall count them as a blessing of flower-offerings.'<sup>27</sup>

(1) The first of Tarkabāgiś's editorials. To clarify Tarkabāgiś's line of attack on Gupta, the contents of the editorials must be examined. The theme of the first editorial is Gupta's annual meeting at the Prabhākar Press, held on 12th April, 1858 (1st Baiśākh, 1265 B.S.). The editorial

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27. Ibid, p.3.

opens with the remark that Bābu Išvarcandra Gupta, the editor of the Prabhākar, lacking opportunities to speak at other meetings, used to organise a meeting at his own press, each New Year's Day, at which he read aloud his whole year's scribblings and shook his head admiringly; whilst the boys clapped. Gupta observed no other functions, nor even the śrāddha<sup>28</sup> of his parents, for he considered this New Year's function at the Press the highest of all. For a whole month prior to the event, he went around issuing invitations. This year, for example, he had done his utmost to get some eminent people to attend: he had absolutely worshipped Rājā Kamalkṛṣṇa Bāhādur for five consecutive days, though without obtaining that king's divine favour. He had similarly approached Rājā Apūṛvakṛṣṇa Bāhādur and Rājā Narendrakṛṣṇa Bāhādur with the same lack of success. He had sent his bosom-friend Bhagabati-<sup>29</sup>caran Bandyopādhyāy of the Candrikā, along to invite Kālīprasanna Siṃha, but the latter declined to attend. On the day of the function itself, when Gupta and two Brāhmins had urged Kālīprasanna to come, they had met with no greater success. It was

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28. Solemn obsequies performed in honour of the names of deceased ancestors.

29. Actually Bhabānicaran, the first part of the name being sarcastically replaced by Bhagabati, the other name of the Goddess Durgā.

alleged, though God alone knew how true it was, that ample wine, meat and fish had been served at the function to the boys who had attended it, and they had consequently become quite drunk. Had it not been for the timely intervention of the Police, the situation might have got alarmingly out of hand.<sup>30</sup> The editorial concludes with rhyming couplets lampooning Gupta, all of whose weak points are exploited, the first one being his little learning:

'Dāsgupta, you are the picture of illiteracy and stupidity; yet you cherish pride in your mind 'a great poet am I.' Tell me Dāsgupta, how qualified are you, to attain mastery in poetry?'<sup>31</sup>

The second attack is on Gupta's pedigree. Tarkabāgīś, as a Brāhmin, declares:

'You are the servant (dās), I am the 'master' (dviḥ - twice born). This is proclaimed everywhere. You will accompany me carrying my water vessel, O son of a slave. You will wash my feet and eat the dust of them; if you worship me devotedly, you would attain the Great Feet.'<sup>32</sup>

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30. H.R.K.K., Tuesday the 20th April, 1858, pp.6-8.

31. H.R.K.K. Ibid., Text: Appendix I.B.(i).

32. Ibid., p.8.



Sāstra-evidence is referred to, confirming Gupta's inferiority to Tarkabāgiś:

'See the sāstras: you belong to that caste which was fathered by a Dvij in the womb of a baiśyā. All the scriptures testify to this, it is expressed in the world. Listen to the evidence of the sāstras you slave of the slave caste. Proclaim whether this is true or false: if you don't, you will be ridiculed.'<sup>33</sup>

Quoting a śloka from the Amarkoṣa to the same effect, Tarkabāgiś calls upon Gupta to acknowledge his social inferiority.<sup>34</sup>

Other couplets rebuke Gupta for attempting to win the sympathies of youngsters and to amass money. Gupta is urged to exercise self-criticism in regard to these accusations. He should have recourse to the path of truth, abandoning malice and hatred, for none will stand by him at the final judgement.<sup>35</sup>

Gupta's apathy towards his wife provided scope for a scathing attack:

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33. Ibid, p.8.

34. 'śudrādiviśosta karaṇohambasṭho baiśyā dvijanman.', p.8.

35. H.R.K.K., ibid., p.8.



'Have you yet seen the woman whom you married reciting hymns from the scripture? How often has she, like a cakori,<sup>36</sup> called to you, yet you paid no heed to her call. Why should a man who has no kindness to his lawful wife expect victory in the world? Do you think your city disciples who are devoted to you, will offer pinda (i.e. oblation to a deceased ancestor) in accordance with the sāstras?<sup>37</sup>

(ii) Tarkabāgīś's second editorial. The second editorial covers much the same ground as the first, though with increased vehemence. It quotes from Gupta's A Discourse in Self-Criticism which was published in Sambād Prabhākar for April 13, 1858. The quotation runs: 'Considering this frail, fleshy frame eternal, I indulged in multifarious sensual propensities. There is no sin I did not commit. I kept evil company forsaking the good.'<sup>38</sup>

Accepting this confession at its face value, Tarkabāgīś

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36. The red-legged bartavelle said to subsist on a moonbeam.

37. Ibid, Text: Appendix Ibid(i)

38. H.R.K.K., Tuesday, the 27th April, 1858, p.3. Text.

congratulates Gupta on his veracity; then adds a query: if Gupta were so aware of his wickedness, why did he wish to sue others for publishing it?

Regarding Gupta's declared intention to buy the Bhāskar to stop its vilifications of himself, the editorial advises Gupta's friends to consult a European doctor on Gupta's behalf, for this declaration was a sure sign of insanity. Where on earth was Gupta to raise the money? For at the best of times Gupta never possessed more than three thousand rupees, and most of that must have been expended by now. The Bhāskar buildings alone would fetch as much as twenty thousand rupees, not to speak of the entire property.<sup>39</sup> How could Gupta cherish such aspirations? He did not maintain his parents; his wife lived off others; and with the sole exception of his New Year's celebrations, which were financed by sponging on the rich, Gupta never even entertained. Even his New Year function was not attended by gentlemen. Nevertheless, Tarkabāgiś urged Gupta to bring all his possessions, his wife included, if he so desired, to a public auction, where the whole lot would be purchased at a single bid.<sup>40</sup> The wife of this slave (i.e.)

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39. H.R.K.K., op.cit., p.7.

40. Ibid, p.8.

Gupta) would be appointed a maid-servant. The story of Rañjit Simha and Fakir is then quoted as an example of punishment for audacity.<sup>41</sup>

(iii) Tarkabāgīś's third editorial. The third editorial again mocks at Gupta's New Year celebrations and then alleges to expose the ulterior motive behind Gupta's various tours, to such places as Benaras and Chittagong. Gupta claimed these tours were made to improve his health: Tarkabāgīś alleges that their purpose was to improve his finances. According to Tarkabāgīś, reports had been received from the various places visited by Gupta and these reports described Gupta's disgraceful conduct. Gupta was said to have spent about four months at Burdwan, where, on his submission that he was accompanied by six or seven others, he had been granted by the rājā a daily maintenance allowance of three rupees. Gupta's claim about the number of his companions had been false. Gupta

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41. H.R.K.K., op.cit., p.8. The story, as described by the writer, runs as follows: A fakir intoxicated with hemp-smoking declared that he would buy the elephant and the kingdom of Mahārājā Rañjit Simha, who was then passing by with his cavalry. The Mahārājā ordered a search. All that was found was a half-rupee coin in the fakir's hemp-comb. While the search was going on, the elephant pulled down the fakir's hut and later crushed the fakir's head.

had saved two and a half rupees a day from his allowance. On his return to Calcutta, Gupta had boasted to his employees at the Press that he had been granted a monthly pension of three hundred rupees, receiving an advance of one thousand rupees. Hearing this, his employees had demanded their arrears in wages; but Gupta had remained deaf to their demands.<sup>42</sup>

The editorial concludes with a verse containing twelve couplets, of which the first three stanzas run as follows:

'Exposed are all your hypocritic deeds; what more I shall show in your incorrect verses: your education and intellect have become known. You stay abroad for begging. You prided yourself on being a great poet, but now your disciples, the children, know your worth.'<sup>43</sup>

(iv) Tarkabāgīś's final editorial. A bitter taunt for keeping silent, even at this outbreak of virulent social

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42. H.R.K.K., Tuesday, 11th May, 1858, p.7.

43. Ibid. Text: Appendix: Ibid, (V).

evils, is placed at the end of the next commentary, an invective against the whole of Calcutta Hindu society. A petite prostitute had recently arrived in Ballakhānā alley. She was rumoured to possess golden lower limbs. This rumour had drawn hundreds of clients: fathers and sons, gosvāmīs and disciples, all assembling there together; and some wealthy bucks paying her handfuls of gold at each visit as her pranāmi.<sup>44</sup> It was time for the virtuous to cooperate to arrest these social evils. Tarkabāgīś threw a challenge in favour of prompt action to Candrikā which was mockingly called the ceri (i.e. maid-servant) of Dharma Sabhā,<sup>45</sup> to Bhabānicaraṇ (who is sarcastically referred to as Bhagabati) and the Baidya the maker of the Prabhākar.<sup>46</sup>

b) Attacks in correspondence.

There are a number of letters but since they all deal with various aspects of the same topic, sometimes with repetitions and elaborations, I shall arrange the extracts

44. H.R.K.K., Tuesday the 1st June, 1858. Pranāmi - a present offered as a token of respect while making obeisance.

45. dharmā-sabhā ciri means one who serves the Dharma-Sabhā.

46. H.R.K.K., *ibid*, p.7.

from them below in a logical order rather than discuss the letters one by one. The attacks contained in them are of two kinds: personal and literary. Here only the personal attacks will be discussed.

(1) Social Outcaste. In some letters, Ísvarcandra is depicted as a person disliked and deserted by all.<sup>47</sup>

The meeting held at the Prabhākar Press on 12th April, 1858 (first day of Baiśākh, 1265 B.S.) is referred to as merely an 'assembly of boys' (bālak-sabhā), who went there for drink and food, not for any literary purpose.<sup>48</sup>

Ísvarcandra had used their services in his journals,<sup>49</sup> but avoided them in the evening since it cost money to entertain them.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, to avoid guests, he had set up a separate eating apartment in his press<sup>51</sup> but this also had been abandoned when he stopped cooking in the office.<sup>52</sup> Society's attitude towards him was said to be

illustrated in the following passages:

'You pride yourself on being a great poet, whose

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47. H.R.K.K., 3rd, 11th and 15th issues.

48. H.R.K.K., 3rd issue, Tuesday 27th April, 1858.

49. S.S.C.M., Vol.I, Book 10, pp.19-20.

50. H.R.K.K., Tuesday 15th June, 1858.

51. H.R.K.K., Tuesday, 20th July, 1858.

52. H.R.K.K., Tuesday, 6th July, 1858.

son you are, who knows you. The young boys don't go to your Prabhākari shop and no one in the baidya caste takes water from you.<sup>53</sup>

and

'Where is your father, where is your mother, where are your relatives. No one knows into which family you were born. The woman you call your wedded wife, has been sent by you to the forest. Tell us, you Gupta, who are in human form what kind of heart is this. You can't go to any distinguished man's house, you compose prose in the name of a physician (baidya) but you do not understand the pulse (without fully understanding the situation).<sup>54</sup>

(ii) A Cruel Boss. In violation of traditional practice, there was in Gupta's press, no arrangement for serving tiffin to his employees. Seasonal fruits came in and out of the market but he never bought any for his men. One day, his boy-servant and a pundit had eaten two mangoes, that

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53. H.R.K.K., 20th July, '58. Text: Appendix I.B.(xii).

54. H.R.K.K., Tuesday, 22nd June, 1858. Text: Appendix I.B.(viii)

had been sent to Gupta by Śrīgobinda and had been kept under lock and key. This had angered Gupta who had rebuked them vehemently.<sup>55</sup>

(iii) An Unwanted Guest. A letter signed by 'A Woman from Kācrāpārā' testifies that Gupta, for reasons not disclosed by the correspondent, had been turned out from the following places: Tagore House, Baṅgadūt Press, Benyātola, Dadhihātā, Madhusūdan Sānyāl's Residence, Wine Shop at Murshidabad, rented room at Benaras, Kṛṣṇanagar School, Baidya House at Chittagong and Wine shop at Dacca.<sup>56</sup>

(iv) A Man without Principles. Other letters paint Gupta as a man without principles, an opportunist who would espouse any cause, provided he got entertained lavishly by its adherents. In fact, he had no religion at all, except perhaps Guptaism.

'Listen O clever baidya, prose will no longer do, your verses smell. Prabhākar creates animosities between distinguished people and therefore puzzles everyone. You have spent your time in delusion

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55. H.R.K.K., Tuesday, 20th July, 1858.

56. Ibid, Tuesday 15th June, 1858.



spreading the net of illusion and in this way, have developed a large paunch. Other people fill your belly: you do not eat in your own house, your stomach has the capacity to hold twenty goose-eggs. Each day, you consume eight pints of milk: you can't afford to buy it yourself. Wherever you go, you boast of consuming so much milk and feed your face each day in the royal garden. You wandered from country to country and you finally ended up as a patient because of your stomach. To deceive by illusion you have taken to Khaddaha and garbhapūjā in Gosvami's house. Your hopes were on idolatry, you were the servant of Bhabānīcaran: this you, Dās, used to inform everyone. Thus you thought you had achieved something great and would be honoured among idolators. You used to abuse all the Hindus belonging to the Brāhma Sabhā, and used to go to everyone's house and declaim at the top of your voice as if you are the favourite in everyone's house. The Dharma Sabhā declined, your influence waned and you insinuated yourself into Brāhma Sabhā. Then you went to Devendranāth's house and after having fed your face, you wet your young beard

in crocodile tears. You went to Bakṣinārañjan's house to be entertained and Kiśorī's garden for the feast; but you found no entertainment there and got no refreshment, so you went to Rāmprasād's house. You fell at the feet of Bhāskar and saved yourself from lots of scrapes and got a little food <sup>into</sup> ~~with~~ the bargain. You stole verses, after having eaten snacks: you satisfied your aspirations with children. You joined the pācālī-group, binding a silk scarf round your neck: you went to Annadā's garden. That's a very difficult place, the master does not appear before his disciples, even the educated do not get to see him. You were speechless with pique so no conversation took place. You set out on wanderings in beggar's guise. Finding no happiness, you finally converted gardens into eating houses: you no longer cook in the Press. The illusion will be dispelled, where will you get your food later, this is the end of the road for you.<sup>57</sup>

Gupta's inconsistency was unique:

'When with idolators he calls himself an idolator and when with Brāhma's he states plainly that he is an enthusiast for Brāhmaism. He does not belong to

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57. H.R.K.K., Tuesday, 6th July, 1858. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (x).

any religion, nor does he want any religion.

His brand of religion is unique.<sup>58</sup>

(v) Afraid of Native Village. A student correspondent mockingly relates that he, accompanied by some of his firends, had made a visit to Kācrāpārā with a view to drawing a portrait of Tśvarcandra who supplied so much fun in faulty speech. When they arrived, they were told by the village folk that Gupta did not dare to come to Kācrāpārā for fear of his wife whom he had once called Mother and then deserted. The students were advised to look for Gupta at Hugalkuriā in Calcutta. The same theme is touched on in another letter:

'He calls the woman he married Mother; who can rely on such a man? Who amongst mankind is as dissolute as a man who has abandoned his married wife?'<sup>59</sup>

(vi) A Liar. In the Annual Number of the Prabhākar, Tśvarcandra had claimed that his paper was subscribed for from Burma, Nepal, Kashmir and other lands and had no

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58. H.R.K.K., Tuesday, 13th July, 1858. Text: Appendix I (XI).

59. Ibid. Text: Appendix Ibid (XI).

than  
less, two hundred readers and correspondents in the  
North- Western Frontier Provinces, Multan and Peswar.<sup>60</sup>  
This statement was challenged. Gupta was requested to  
produce the list of names and addresses of these subscribers.<sup>61</sup>  
The correspondent states that in his boyhood he had married  
a girl, who had however, renounced him, when he once  
jokingly called her Mummy. Now since Gupta had assured  
him that there was a postal system in Kashmir, he intended  
dropping a letter of search.<sup>62</sup> The implication here is  
that Gupta's statement was false since there was no postal  
service in Kashmir; secondly, Gupta's behaviour with his  
wife is also mocked at in the reference to the Mummy-episode.

(vii) A Pen Picture. A pen picture of Tśvarcandra Gupta  
was drawn in the versical part of the above correspondence,  
bracketing him with 'a monkey living in a big garden.'<sup>63</sup>  
He had no father, no mother. No woman lived in his house;  
he was for ever playing with monkey-boys. To quote from  
the verse:

'Let me describe his features: a tall figure, with

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60. H.R.K.K., Tuesday 4th May, 1858.

61. Ibid., p.3.

62. Ibid., p.3.

63. Ibid., Tuesday, 4th May, 1858.

Text:

e bānar kothākār kare bara āsā /  
biśāl banete nāki kariyāche bāsā //

a swollen belly; small head; on the right cheek a black mark; his buttocks are fleshless due to the rubbing of boys and he wears endless guises to conceal his monkey looks. He wanders around and drinks liquor, where he can; and hankers for a higher status. Who is he, whose son and whose grandson? To what race does this Prabhākar editor belong?<sup>64</sup>

(c) A Review of some of the Charges directed against Gupta.

It seems to me fairly certain that both the editorials and letters were all either composed or directly inspired by Tarkabāgīś. Both stylistically and thematically, they appear to be the work of one hand. They are all, therefore, treated below as being the attacks of one single person against Īśvarcandra Gupta.

Īśvarcandra Gupta must have been an easy target for attack. In a society, such as Bengali Hindu society, which is centred on the family and its interrelations with other families of similar standing and background, here was a man with no acknowledged family background, who had

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64. H.R.K.K., Tex: Appendix Ibid(iii).

defied his father, struck his step-mother and abandoned his lawfully wedded wife; a lonely, isolated man; who, having no private income, had to live on his wits and talents.

Nevertheless he had done well. At nineteen he was an editor: an almost incredible achievement. He enjoyed a wide reputation at an early age as a poet and wit. Naturally such a man would inspire envy, especially in people of greater learning, but less talent. And since Gupta had achieved standing before maturity, it would not have been unlikely if he had behaved at times with the impetuous arrogance of the immature. Thus one can easily imagine that he had enemies and detractors; some perhaps, deservedly; and some inspired merely by envy of his success.

Many of the personal attacks made on Gupta by Gaurī-śaṅkar Tarkabāgiś are, in view of the circumstances of Gupta's life, the type that one would have expected: they concern mainly his lack of formal education, his isolation from his family, his desertion of his wife, and the inferiority of his caste in comparison to the brāhmin status of Tarkavāgiś. Against such attacks as these, Gupta had

no defence, because they were obviously true. One charge was, however, unexpected; it is contained in the lines: 'His buttocks<sup>are</sup>/fleshless due to the rubbing of boys.' Was this perhaps a veiled allusion to homosexuality on Gupta's part?

There are constant references in these attacks to Gupta's being surrounded by 'boys' but this is the first hint at a darker relationship. Gupta's acknowledged aversion to women, his abandoning of his wife, his dislike of his step-mother, could all be interpreted as lending weight to a charge of sexual inversion on Gupta's part. Furthermore, there is no evidence of Gupta's ever having any liaison with a woman. Despite this circumstantial evidence which may give rise to suspicions about his sexual make-up, it ought to be borne in mind that there is on the other hand no concrete evidence of inversion. The only positive grounds for suspicion are his constant association with 'boys'; and this association is mentioned only by Tarkavāgīś, a man with previous convictions for libel. In all likelihood the 'boys' referred to by Tarkavāgīś were in fact young men, like Baṅkimcandra, Dīnbandhu, Dvārakānāth and Raṅgalāl, young literary

enthusiasts whom Gupta encouraged. Possibly Gupta was a latent homosexual, though he himself may have been unaware of the fact.

The other charges brought against Gupta are inter-related and are again the type of charge one would have expected:

- a) that he was an opportunist;
- b) that he was always on the look-out for money from potential patrons.

One should remember that Išvarcandra was no Rabin-dranāth, composing verse on an adequate private income. Gupta was an editor and needed patrons, especially at that initial phase of Bengali journalism.

His earlier brush with Jogendramohan over the Derozio affair, which had cost him his editorship of the Prabhākar, must have taught him that in order to stay in business he must compromise. As an editor Gupta was under pressure from three directions: one, from financial backers, who would naturally desire a say in the general policy of the journal; two, from readers, who generally desire only to find their own prejudices and opinions expressed with eloquence and cogency; and three, from advertisers, who would tend to patronise only such journals as would further



their own interests. Caught in such a mesh of conflicting pressures, there can be few men who would not become, at least on the face of it, an opportunist.

The need to capture advertising contracts necessitated cultivating well-placed individuals in society. This was particularly true of Government advertisements. It was whilst on a visit to Haramohan Datta, who was in charge of Government contracts for the Supreme Court that Išvarcandra first met Akṣaykumār Datta. It was also by securing a similar contract that Gupta offended Tarkabāgīś. In fact, it may be true to say that it was the need to secure such contracts, which not only exposed Gupta to charges of opportunism, but which also to some extent inspired them.

One can well imagine that, when hobnobbing with potential advertisers and backers, there would be times when 'with idolators he calls himself an idolator and with Brāhmas he plainly states that he is an enthusiast for Brāhmaism.' Gupta's behaviour may not have been as blatant as that, though it may at times have been expedient at least to let it be assumed that his sympathies lay with his interlocutor. And why not? He had been an idolator: he had become a virtual Brāhma. He knew both sides of the fence: he could therefore at moments sympathise with men on

either side; it was only as a poet freed from these vexatious pressures that he expressed a narrower, more personal view.

Gupta was no more guilty of opportunism than the rest of the Hindu community of Bengal during his life-time. At the time the Dharma Sabhā was founded, most of his fellow Hindus were like Gupta opposed to Rāmmohan Rāy, whose position was far more liberal than that of his so-called successor Debendranāth: Rāmmohan regarded Hinduism, Islam and Christianity as of equal importance and equally worthy of study and respect. When the Tattvabodhini Sabhā was founded, most Hindu intellectuals rallied round Debendranāth, who in the main captured their sympathies, though very few were prepared to declare themselves Brāhmas. Actually, in swinging from a position of opposition to Rāmmohan Rāy to one of support for Debendranāth, very little fundamental change is involved. Hindu society is generally opposed to alien, non-Hindu influences. In 1830, Rāmmohan decidedly represented such an influence and was opposed by Hindu society. In 1839, Debendranāth was opposed to the missionaries, an alien, non-Hindu influence. Naturally he captured the sympathies of a large section of the Hindu community, but, since there was nevertheless much in his

Brāhma Samāj which was essentially non-Hindu, very few of the people who attended his meetings were willing to be initiated as Brāhmas. The number is no more than eighteen. Thus the change in Gupta's position was slight: he began as a staunch orthodox Hindu opposed to liberal reformers like Rāmmohan and alien influences like Young Bengal; he became through association with Debendranāth, slightly less orthodox and somewhat attracted by Brāhma theological principles, though he never declared himself to be a Brāhma. During his life-time, however, the majority of his countrymen probably underwent a similar change: Gupta's swaying towards liberalism was thus symptomatic of his times and precisely the kind of modification of opinion that one would expect of a young editor, who could only express, not dictate changes in public opinion. Though Gupta's change of position in this regard coincided with a similar change on the part of a section of the general public, this does not necessarily imply that his altered opinions were not genuine: he may have been marching in step with his times; he need not necessarily be put down as a cynical opportunist.

What Gupta remained true to was his love of Bengal, of her language, her poetry, her cultural and religious

heritage: what he opposed was alien influence, as exemplified by Young Bengal and the missionaries, as will be seen in the following chapters.

Part Two

Subject-Matter

## Chapter V

### Religion

A study of the available materials on Gupta's life reveals him to have been a jolly, convivial man who craved company. His high-spirits, his joking and boisterousness demanded a constant audience to applaud and sustain him. The charm, gaiety and vivacity of young men were like a drug to him: he needed to see their eager faces gazing up at him - dazzled by the gymnastic brilliance of his verses with their bouncing puns, pinging alliterations and sparkling satires. He enjoyed having them sing to him or write for him, so that he might magnanimously sprinkle a few coins of praise before them: coins whose value was immeasurably enhanced by his own prestige. He enjoyed being lionised: enjoyed having people discover his identity and smother him in effusive praise and adulation. His greatness was a great consolation to him. It made up for the absence of a home-life. Like an adoring wife and children, it warmed and sustained him, but unfortunately it was all a shadow-show that could only be enjoyed in the mirror of other men's eyes. When Gupta was alone, the gayness ended.

It was then presumably that Gupta turned to the only audience left to the lonely man: God. His poetic

'correspondence' with God far exceeds his output in any other direction:<sup>1</sup> the prolixity of his serious religious verse is indeed prodigious. Though of necessity almost totally devoid of his greatest asset, wit, Gupta's religious verse is not devoid of interest. It reveals him struggling to modernise his essentially medieval faith.

Īśvarcandra Gupta was born in 1812 and died in 1859. During his life-time great events took place. Round about the time of his birth Rāmmohan Rāy was busy with his study of the Vedānta and conceiving his translations of the Vedas and Upaniṣads.<sup>2</sup> As the first serious student of comparative religions, Rāmmohan was about to reveal the similarities between the three major faiths of Calcutta: Hinduism, Islam and Christianity; and was searching in the Vedas and Upaniṣads for the monism he saw clearly in Islam.<sup>3</sup> Gupta

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1. Incidentally, all three of his sustained works have religious themes. The Probodh Prabhākar, through a dialogue between father and son, advocates that there is no other way of attaining 'permanent happiness' (nityasukh) except through scriptural knowledge of truth (śāstriya tattvajñān). The truth is that 'Īśvar himself is the substance (bimba) and the jlb is His Shadow' (pratibimba) (Probodh Prabhākar, p.119). A persistent tone of didacticism prevails also in Hita Prabhākar. The Bodhendu Bikāś through its allegory lays stress on advaita, i.e. non-duality between God and man. (Bodhendu Bikāś, p.274.)
  2. Vedānta Grantha, Rāmmohan's first Bengali work, was published in 1815 A.D.
  3. Collet, Sophia Dobson, The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy, London, 1900, p.7.

was later to accept Rāmmohan's monism but to abhor his placing of the Vedas and the Koran on an equal footing: anyone capable of such a confusion was, in Gupta's view, not a Hindu.

When Gupta was in his late teens, the hullabaloo about Suttee burst upon Hindu society. Gupta's reactions to this are not recorded. Never having shared his bed with his wife, he was unlikely to have wished to share his funeral pyre with her, but he decorously allows posterity to draw its own conclusions. He was however opposed to the logical consequence of the abolition of Suttee<sup>4</sup>, namely widow-remarriage. Indeed, he seemed opposed to most reforms and reformers. It is difficult at this late date to determine which came first: his dislike of the kind of people who wanted reforms or his dislike of the kind of reforms desired by educated people associated with the Brāhma-Samāj; but there is no doubt at all about the fact that he disliked both the reforms and the reformers and equally condemned both.

This may have been because he failed to gain acceptance with this particular section of society, to whom he appeared an anachronism: a medieval poet in modern dress. When with the sophisticated young the poetry of the revolutionary

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4. The Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck passed the Regulation abolishing the rites of Suttee (4th December,



Byron was all the rage,<sup>5</sup> Gupta was reading with rapt attention such old-fashioned Bengali poets as Rāmprasād Sen. Possibly Gupta's literary and social isolation from the sophisticated young of his day led to his religious alienation also.

At all events Gupta's religious outlook though characterised by many modern features, falls outside the main streams of his day. It would seem that Rāmmohan had in his own way been trying to create a climate of mutual tolerance and trust between the three religious communities of Calcutta: Hindu, Muslim and Christian. His attempt had failed, largely because of the bigotry of the orthodox Hindus and Christians who resented his interference with their faiths. Rāmmohan's Ātmīya

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(.....Contd. from previous page)

1829). A memorandum in support of Suttee was submitted to him (14th January, 1830) by Gopīmohan Deb, Rādhākānta Deb, Nimāicād Śīromani Haranāth Tarkabhūṣan, Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy, Kālikṛiṣṇa Deb Bāhādur, Gohulnāth Mallik Bhabānīcaran Mitra and Rāmgopāl Mallik, the leaders of orthodox Hindu society. See S.S.S.K., Vol.I, pp.288-290; Samācār Candrika, 3rd Debember, 1829, for details see Chapter VI: Hindu Society.

5. Derozio's 'Fakeer of Jungheera' (1829) was, for example, according to a review of Calcutta Gazette, 'altogether upon the strained and extravagant model of Lord Byron's poetic romances of love and murder....' See The Days of John Company, Selections from Calcutta Gazette, 1824-1832, pp.420-427.

Sabhā,<sup>6</sup> which had begun as a kind of theosophical meeting-place of people of all faiths and persuasions, thus degenerated into the Brāhma Samāj, a mongrel rejected by the pedigree-conscious orthodox of all three major faiths; yet one which because of its position as a half-way house between the religions of Europe and Asia was to prove for a while exceedingly popular with young Hindus whose education and training led them to a similar cultural half-way house. It was in short to be predominantly associated in the mid-nineteenth century with the enlightened, western-educated society of Calcutta.

Gupta's outlook has much in common with Brāhamism: he opposed idolatry and caste-distinctions, was a monotheist and greatly valued the Upanisads and Vedas. But instead of the vague, impersonal Brahma, his boisterous temperament was in its calmer moments more attracted to the lofty oblivious Śiva who mountain-like sat immersed in icy meditation like the mighty Himālayas dominating Bengal. And between him and this inaccessible mountain, with which he yearned to merge, his imagination pictured the play of the sun-light

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6. Founded (1815) for discussing scriptures and reading from the Vedas, it stopped functioning due to a controversy over religious ideology. In 1821, Rammohan established Unitarian Society in order to propagate Christian monotheism, but without success. Then he began a new association, called Brāhmasamāj, the first meeting of which took place on 20th August, 1828. It was open to all religious communities including Hindu, Muslim and Christian. See the review of Mary Carpenter's The Last Days in England of Rāja Rammohun Roy, by Kīśorīcāḍ Mitra (Calcutta Review no. LXXXVII, p.232).

strands of qualities (gunas) in the magical mists of Māyā obscuring and misleading his gaze. Having presented my picture of Gupta and his God with as much poetry as I can muster, it is time I descended to a more prosaic statement of the case.

(i) Gupta's monism.

- a. The oneness of God. Despite occasional lapses, Gupta's conception of divinity was predominantly monist.

'Needless to ponder, O my mind, needless to ponder. There is none except the One. All issue from the One. All exist in Oneness, All are One. There is none except the One, none except the One. Listen, O my heart, all else is false. When absorbed in the One ... you'll find all else false, only the One is true. All else is false. All else is false.'<sup>7</sup>

Fifty-eight epithets<sup>8</sup> throughout the poems testify to Gupta's belief in a Qualityless Universal Being, a Nirguna Brahman,<sup>9</sup> drawn mainly from the Upaniṣads,

7. G.B., p.77. Text: Appendix 1.C.(i).

8. Appendix, *ibid*, (ii).

9. Saṅkara's advaita affirms that paramātmā, jīb and jagat are not separate entities, but one. Only one Universal Being, Brahman or Paramātmā truly exists and it is Qualityless. It is, according to his commentary on the Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad, 'neither cause, nor not cause, nor both cause and (contd. on next page...)

but having a close affinity with the non-dual divinity of the Vedas.<sup>10</sup> This qualityless Universal Being is the only Reality.

- b. The identity of the One. Gupta identifies the One variously, in most instances simply as Iśvar (God), frequently as Śiva, rarely as Brahmā or Viṣṇu, and as Nārāyaṇ, only once.

'The Lord of the Universe is Maheśvar (Śiva) and its soul is Nārāyaṇ (Viṣṇu). They are according to the scriptures but one single being. I may not possess much divine knowledge, but my fixed devotion goes to Him who wears the crescent moon as His ornament. The enlightened great meditator is absorbed in incessant meditation and therefore my heart languishes for His love.'<sup>11</sup>

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(contd. from previous page)

not cause.' (The Philosophy of the Upanisads and Ancient Indian Metaphysics, by Archibald Edward Gough, 3rd edn., London, 1903, p.39.) Thus, it is 'of an absolutely homogeneous nature; it is pure 'Being', or, which comes to the same, pure intelligence or thought'. (The Vedānta Sūtras with the commentary by Śaṅkara, translated by George Thibant, Part I, Oxford, 1890, p.XXIV.)

10. An unqualified monism is the general trend of the Upaniṣads, but Veda also, in spite of its conception of different gods, contains this note. Referring to its manifold names such as Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, Yama and Mātriṣvan, the Rgveda declared 'to what is One, sages give many a title' (ekam sad vipra bahudhā vadanti Rgveda, 1.164.64).
11. G.B., p.39. Text: Appendix I.C.(iii).

This Śiva is not merely the Rudradeva of the Vedas, nor is He simply the rustic Śiva of early Bengali poetry. He is both and yet He is more; for He is the One, the Supreme Being, the Ultimate Reality; and being the One, He is all gods and Brahmā is but one of his many names.

c. Māyā: The barrier to the realisation of the One.

The nature of Ultimate Reality is obscured by Māyā (illusion).<sup>12</sup> The universe is but an insubstantial shadow-show, a theatrical illusion.

'These coloured lights, the sun and moon, are lit. All duties are assumed and discharged by Nature, who is the stage-manager. The clouds provide the percussion and the melodious winds the strings. Each person modulates his mein to suit the six seasons and strides the stage like a comedian. The Sole Proprietor is God, the Preserver of the Universe.'<sup>13</sup>

The illusion is impenetrable. It is God's will that remain uncomprehended.

'Nothing of Māyā comes near to knowledge. The One is playfully performing His drama in the world's market-place, behind the closed doors

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12. Gough, op.cit. pp.49-50. See Sankara's introduction to his commentary on the Svetasvatara Upanisad.

13. K.S., Part I, p.22. Text: Appendix I.C.(IV) Though  
(Contd. on next page.....)

of illusion. I can see only the outer shadow-show, but am ignorant of what lies behind the closed doors..... I am powerless to penetrate these doors and enter in.<sup>14</sup>

Those three strands (gūṇa), the qualities of sattva, rajas, and tamas, which were said to permeate human and divine nature, were according to Gupta but imaginary figments deriving from the play of Māyā. Thus such qualities as virtuousness and nobility (deriving from sattva), folly, ignorance, pride and worldly delusion (deriving from tamas) and passion or worldliness (deriving from rajas) were all illusory. Both God (Śiv) and man (jīva) were in reality linked not by their qualities, but by their absence of them. Both were essentially nirguṇa (qualityless): it was only Māyā (illusion) which through the ignorance (avidyā) it generated led one to suppose otherwise.<sup>15</sup>

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(.....contd. from previous page)

Gupta had no acquaintance with English literature, it is probable that he heard about the famous Shakespearian dialogue 'All the world is a stage'.

14. G.B., p.45. Text: Appendix, *ibid*, (V).

15. Ray Chaudhury, A.K., The Doctrine of Maya, Calcutta, 1950, p.120.



'Just as the sun in the sky is changeless and eternally true to his own nature, so the Supreme Soul remains ever immutable. It is only man's ignorance (avidyā) which makes Him appear mutable.'<sup>16</sup>

Similarly it was Māyā which misled man into assuming that he was a separate entity from God, when actually man was but God's 'reflected image' (pratibimba). The worldly existence of man was thus a 'confined state' (paddhadaśā), which ceased as soon as the mirror of Māyā was fragmented.

'Jīb remains jīb by the bindings of Māyā, and jīb becomes Śiva by being freed from Māyā.'<sup>17</sup>

It was therefore erroneous for man to assume he himself originated anything or performed any act: man was not a free agent, but the instrument of divine will.

'Such claims as 'I do this'; or 'I enjoy that'; or 'I am thin and ungainly' are all

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16. G.B., p.93. The metaphor is borrowed from Saṅkara's interpretation of the Highest Self (Gouch, op.cit., pp.49-50).

17. G.B., p.103. Text: ei jīb thāke jīb māyār bandhane /  
ei jīb hay śiva māyār mochanē //

equally erroneous, originating only from ignorance (avidyā).<sup>18</sup>

'Thou art The Will. Thou doest what Thou Wilt and art directing the universe according to Thy Will. I live as Thou guidest, I speak as Thou Wishest; for after all what is there that I may call mine?'<sup>19</sup>

It was therefore foolish to desire anything, for in reality neither the desirer nor the desired existed - all was but Māyā. It was illusion that gave rise to covetousness, concupiscence, desire and greed.

'You have come to the world's fair. See how absorbed people are in their desires.'<sup>20</sup>

'Look at this illusory world. It is but a symbol of a mind deranged. Māyā adorns the world; Māyā infatuates everyone; Māyā possesses all. Māyā emanates from Him, who is the Illusory Supreme Soul. Eminent Prakriti Māyā, who is the Wife of Iśvar, yearns constantly for her Husband.'<sup>21</sup>

18. Ibid, p.93. Text: āmi karttā, āmi bhoktā, āmi kṛśa sthūl / e sab ārop mātra avidyāi mūl //

19. Ibid, p.2. Text: tumi nāth icchāmay kara yāha icchā hay, iccāy cālicha e saṁsār / ye kale cālāo cali ye bale balāo bali sambhābanā ki āche āmār //

20. Ibid, p.3. Text: āsiyācha jagater melā darāṣane dekha dekha dekha jib, jata sād mane //

21. G.B., p.109. Text: Appendix, op.cit., (VI).



God was Māyīn: possessed of the illusory power to conceal Himself beneath the veil of His gūṇas; but He was also, as Śiva (and Brahmā), the Husband of Māyā, or Mahāmāyā (Durgā). Since Māyā was Śiva-Śakti or Divine Power, she naturally yearned for union with Him. It is perhaps this yearning which intensified the other desires distracting the universe.

Since the whole universe was both illusory and ephemeral, so that nothing one desired or possessed was real or durable, and since man's very sense of separateness, of individual existence, of being of unique entity with separate desires and a separate will were all equally illusory and ephemeral, the only sensible course was, to abandon all striving and seek only the nearness of God. It was, Gupta tells us in Samsār-jāta, only the fishes who jumped and leapt that ended up caught in the fisherman's net (God's net of illusion), whilst the ones who politely nestled near the fisherman's feet found refuge and attained salvation.<sup>22</sup> Gupta produces beautiful images to express man's love-drama with God. In the following lines he depicts God as a jaunty, playful bird constantly

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22. K.S., part II, pp.70-71.

eluding man's grasp, despite having nested  
beneath the very eaves of man's heart.

'You nest hidden in my soul, yet fly away  
frequently. How am I to catch you?  
Will you make my soul your nest and still  
deceive me?'<sup>23</sup>

Gupta's efforts to tame the divine bird are  
fruitless:

'Though you nest in my soul, still you are  
not settled. What must I do to please you?  
What must I do to cherish you? Binding  
you with a chain invites great peril: for  
you may snap the chain and plunge me in  
perplexity.'<sup>24</sup>

Yet finally with exultation Gupta realises that  
it was only his own firm faith which could keep  
the divine bird permanently perched in his soul:  
it was doubt alone that drove the bird away; and

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23. K.S., op.cit., pp.65-66. Text: keman kuhak bājī, nā pāi  
bhābiyā  
antare lukāo kothā, antare  
thākiyā?  
theke theke ure yāo, puṣe  
kise rākhi /  
āmār antare theke, āmārei  
phāki?

Similar imagery occurs in Bāul songs.

24. Ibid, p.66. Text: sthīr rūpe tumi nāhi, bās kara mane /  
tuṣiba tomāy kise, puṣiba kemaṇe?  
duri diyā bādhi yadi, ghaṭe ghor dāy /  
śikal kātiyā kara, bikal amāy //

so Gupta proclaims his faith unequivocally:

'Yea, Thou art in my soul. There is no reason to think that Thou wert beyond it. I have spent my life in vain, roaming pointlessly about. All my erstwhile tears were uncalled for; for verily Thou art in my soul.'<sup>25</sup>

(ii) Paths to salvation.

Thus though the human soul was part of the Supreme Soul (God), it was prevented from realising the fact by the Divine Illusion (Māyā), which through multifarious miasmatic manifestations gave to the universe and to man himself so convincing an appearance of reality and furnished it and him with such a profusion of seemingly desirable aims and objects, that man was all too frequently ensnared in a passionate pursuit of them.

Man's prime difficulty therefore was in discovering a path out of this bewildering maze of illusion and into a realisation of the Godhead both within him and without, so that he might once more merge back into that all-pervasive stream of divinity and escape the necessity for rebirth.

'The water of the river (the godhead in my soul) will carry me to the water in the ocean (the

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25. G.B., p.101. Text: Appendix, op.cit., (VII).

godhead in the Supreme Soul)'.<sup>26</sup>

- a. False Paths: yoga, rituals and idolatry. When standing at the cross roads pointing out the falsity of false paths, Gupta gives us a glimpse of the satires to come. With yogis and sannyāsīs he is at his scathing best. Renouncing all desires for worldly comfort and living on virtually no food and just a little water was no way to worship.<sup>27</sup> If nakedness were the criterion of the sage, then asses in the jungle would be entitled to that appellation. The ascetic's frenzied waywardness and consumption of unclean, inedible roots and fruits reminded Gupta of nothing more than indiscriminate pigs. Outward signs of devotion such as the smearing of the body with dust and ashes, the wearing of sectarian marks and clothing imprinted with sacred names, and all ceremonies, rituals and sacrifices were all equally vain, and utterly incapable of inspiring in man a consciousness of his oneness with the One.

'How you esteem your brazen Gopāl! you  
chisel stone to make your Śiva! you smear

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26. K.S., op.cit., p.5. Text: miśābe jaladhijale, jaladhir  
bāri //

27. K.S., Part I, pp.31-37.

sandal paste on a piece of brass and think it Nanda's child! If handling brass and stone makes one a saint, then why aren't the blacksmith and the stone mason revered as such?'<sup>28</sup>

Gupta clearly implies, though he nowhere states, that the only temple should be the human soul and the only ceremonies should be conducted there. This implication is discernible in the same poem from which the above extract was taken and in which he later states: one should worship with 'the flowers of the soul' and not 'the flowers of the wood'.<sup>29</sup>

- b. True paths: bhakti, abandonment of ego-consciousness, and all other distinctions, control of appetites and passion. For Gupta the human soul - the nest of the divine bird - held latent within it true religious knowledge. Thus enlightenment was to be found not outside in barren exercises, rituals, symbols and observances, but inside through one's own love for, and faith in God, which in India can

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28. K.S., part I, p.36. Text: Appendix, ibid, (VIII).

29. G.B., p.47. Text: banaphule bidhi naṭ tomār arccan //  
man khule mana-phuṭe puṭiba caran //

be summarised in the one word: bhakti. The degree of intensity required for the realisation of the godhead both within and without was characterised for Gupta in the image of insects so attracted by flames as to be finally consumed in them.

This image symbolises burning away of all the meaningless Māyā-induced paraphernalia of existence and the merging of the human soul with that of the Supreme.

Among those meaningless paraphernalia that must be burnt away was ego-consciousness (ahamkāra), for it was this consciousness of individual uniqueness, summarised in the word 'I', that separates the human soul most profoundly from the Supreme. This 'I'-ness was but part of the Māyā-induced illusion, that one's body was co-terminat with one's self (one's soul) and that man-made things were objects of enjoyment. But in fact 'life is as unstable as a rain-drop' and 'one's body is a mere machine, admittedly attractive, but decidedly undurable'.<sup>30</sup> Like all other machines, this machine too would one day stop and fall apart. It was pointless to lavish care upon such disposable consumer goods. Like all other objects of the senses, one's body,

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30. K.S., part I, p.29. Text: Appendix, op.cit. (IX).

one's wife, one's children, the whole of one's mundane existence was ephemeral. It was sheer folly to bother one's head about them.

Similarly, all social and caste distinctions were equally ephemeral and unreal, being induced in men's minds by the all-deluding Māyā.<sup>31</sup> Status was merely another form of self-deception. It was extremely regrettable that man should be led by Māyā up the thorny garden path of sin in search of meaningless distinctions and comforts. Before the Supreme all souls were equal: 'every hāṇi and mucī is holy' Gupta sings.<sup>32</sup>

Thus one should endeavour to control the soul's six enemies which chained one to the wheel of meaningless mundane pursuits: lust, anger, avarice, delusion, pride and envy, the whole brood were hatched by Māyā and housed themselves rent-free and illegally in one's body, obstinately refusing to be evicted. To bring them to subjection, one must wield in one's hands the weapon of true knowledge and skillfully stave off the drowsiness of error. The cultivation of charity and loving kindness was indispensable to success in this

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31. Ibid, part II, p.47. Text: brāhmaṇa kṣatriya, baiśya,  
śūdra cātustayi //  
abhimān sarmātra, kichaito na //

32. Ibid, p.62. Text: jagate hāṇi mucī sabai suci

endeavour. Thus the conquest of the selfishness which epitomised the six enemies, lay through the cultivation of selflessness: universal brotherhood and the service of humanity.

Though not entirely free from inconsistencies,<sup>33</sup> Gupta's religious attitude represents a scheme, which is systematised above as clearly as possible. Gupta apparently believed in a Pure, Self-Enlightened and Released Brahman, who in the form of the soul was inherent in all sentient beings. This accords with Vedāntic philosophy. At the same time, however, in order to explain the relation between God and man Gupta quite explicitly followed the pratibimbabāda, e.g. he says 'all these jībs are the shadows of Iśvar'.<sup>34</sup> His ideas about the attainment of truth and the emancipation of the soul conform to the same system, in as much as they lend credence to the empirical reality of the world in the light of its transcendental unreality. Gupta like Śaṅkara repeatedly laid stress on tattvajñān, concluding that the performance

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33. There are occasional striking inconsistencies as for example the line in which Gupta clearly agrees with idolatry (G.B., p.47), a practice which he repeatedly condemns elsewhere; and there are also, as might be expected from a poet, occasional logical flaws and fallacies, as for example, the inconsistency between his belief that each man was responsible for his own karma (G.B., p.65) and had to endure his own fate, when he (Gupta) had clearly implied elsewhere that man was not a free agent but an instrument of divine will.
34. G.B., p.72. Text: Iśvarer pratibimba ei jīb sab.



of religious rites had no direct relation to mokṣa,<sup>35</sup> i.e. the Vedic karmmakāṇḍa had only limited validity. It could not ensure one's final release; because every act, however meritorious, led to new forms of embodied existence.<sup>36</sup> The emphasis in Gupta's moral code on sadācār<sup>37</sup> indicates his apparent knowledge of other scriptures. Such observances, as are performed with things and consist in knowledge, were conducive to purity; and one who, thus cleansed, had a pure mind, attained knowledge spontaneously.

Gupta's nibṛtti is apparently not synonymous with mokṣa. Neither is it the passing into lower Brahman, as explained by Saṅkara, where one continued to exist as a distinct individual soul. On the other hand, it might be considered as the state immediately prior to mokṣa, whence one realised the Highest Self. Gupta's apparent silence about the nature of this final release leads one to the positive conclusion, that cessation from one state means accession to another.

Couched in flat, prosaic verse, Gupta's religious poetry represents an argument rather than a broad spirituality. Affirmation of Vedantic monism was necessary to counter the pressure of Christianity on Hindu society. Hinduism

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35. Thibant, op.cit., pp.27-29.

36. Ibid., p. XXIV.

37. G.B., pp.7-9, 26-27, 28-29, 35-40, 43 etc.

needed to be restored to its original purity and comprehensiveness, in reply to Brāhmas who though accepting monism, rejected the doctrine of Māyā because of its inherent destructivity.<sup>38</sup> Gupta's adherence to Māyābād may have had a deeper implication, originating in part from his personal life, which was marred by unusual frustration.

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38. See Rāmmohan's letter to Lord Amherst, protesting against inclusion of certain Vedantic texts in the syllabus of Hindu College. (The English Works of Raja Rammohan Roy, Vol.I, p.427.)

## Chapter VI

### Hindu Society

Iśvarcandra Gupta's views on Hindu society found spasmodic expression in satiric verse. In this chapter an attempt will be made to formulate those views, by presenting them in logical order. It should be stressed, however, that the logical order is ours, not his.

Gupta was fundamentally a conservative. One of his main themes was therefore the decay of Hinduism during his times. 'Time', he maintains in Acārbhramśa (The Overthrow of Conventions), 'has made everything ... topsy-turvy.'<sup>1</sup> Brāhmins now dined off chicken and meat (formerly Muslim fare), whilst mullāhs were content with sweets (to which brāhmins were once partial). Though still worshipping the household gods before meals, the young now ate at tables in, Gupta implies, a most non-Hindu way. In a series of antithetical statements he then illustrates the clash of the generations in regard to: whether the sacred thread should be worn or torn; the sacred cow adored or devoured; whether worship be

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1. K.S., Part I, pp. 132-133.

accorded to Śiva, the Lord of ghosts, or to the ghosts themselves, the trouble-makers of Gupta's times; and whether eulogy be due to Kṛṣṇa or to Christ. The outcome of this clash was, Gupta pessimistically concludes, that 'Hinduism is on the way out, and nothing of it will remain.'<sup>2</sup>

In the closing lines he presents in characteristically comic form a profound comment: at the root of Hinduism's decay was the loss of India's independence.<sup>3</sup> He pictures time personified as a grim, emaciated mortal casting his eyes about for something to allay his hunger and lighting upon Hinduism as the only tasty morsel left.

'O Time, with your frightful death-like face  
and your tight lips as you sit upon the swan,  
how many gods and goddesses did you destroy  
when you devoured the independence of India?  
It is, I presume, because you are unable to find  
anything else, that you are out to fill your  
stomach with Hinduism. I beg of you, Time,  
content yourself. Get up. Get up and rinse  
your mouth.'<sup>4</sup>

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2. Ibid, p.133. Text: yāy yāy hīduyānī, ār nāhi thāke.

3. Ibid, p.133.

4. Text: Appendix I.C. (X).

The exposure of Hinduism to alien influences through the loss of India's independence is implicit in two further poems: Snān Yātrā (The Bathing Festival) and the Durgā Puja (Worship of Durgā).<sup>5</sup> Both poems dwell on the desecration of Hindu festivals through foreign wine. The first half of Snān Yātrā hints darkly at the profligacy underlying the merry-making at the festival and the second half lets fling at the drunkenness.

'They have all become dedicated śāktas<sup>6</sup> and behave with complete independence, indulging their senses and particularly their erotic ones without restraint, easily gratifying themselves. With glasses in their hands to the beat of the tabla<sup>7</sup> they drink savouring the liquor to the full.<sup>8</sup> Since their desires are thus fulfilled, why should they care about witnessing the bathing? Their bathing and drinking take place in the self-same spot. They do not stint themselves.

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5. (i) K.S., Part II, pp. 86-91; (ii) G.B., p.310.

6. Referred to ironically since some śāktas (the worshippers of Śakti, i.e., Durgā etc.) attempt spiritual attainment by arousing and fulfilling physical desires.

7. A small kettle-drum, the indispensable rhythmic instrument to Indian music.

8. Text: paripāṭī khān kose kose /

They drink their fill and long for more. When the foreign liquor runs out, they immerse themselves in floods of indigenous toddy, being by then completely befuddled. At first they drink quietly but gradually they grow uproarious, till eventually no inhibitions remain, and they come out on deck, publically and brazenly singing kabi-songs to the great delight of passers-by. The more licentious of them take boats and slowly roam about the shores, singing their songs whenever they spot (ladies of ill repute).<sup>9</sup>

Obviously Gupta's target here is the newly rich bābū class, who were constantly being pilloried by conservative Hindu society. In Durgā Puṣā it is presumably at this class that he is aiming, though he also censures to some extent Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy, one of the arch enemies of the bābū, and also the Dharma Sabhā of Rādhākānta Deb for countenancing such unorthodox abuses as the presence of sahebs at the puṣā, the wearing of slippers in the presence of the gods, and sacrilege or sacrileges, the importation of Christian wine into the precincts of the puṣā.<sup>10</sup>

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9. K.S., Ibid, pp. 90-91. Text: Appendix, Ibid (XI).

10. G.B., p.310. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XII).

'Why do you ... invite mlecchas?

Why a feast ... anathema to the pūjā?

Why all this false display to please the sāhebs?

Why into the place where Śiva and Kālī are seen have  
you imported Christian wine?'<sup>11</sup>

The answer Gupta accusingly supplies is:

'Whilst worshipping you think in your heart like  
this: if the sāhebs drink wine, you will win  
salvation.'<sup>12</sup>

That is, the newly-rich upper-classes of Calcutta were  
prostituting Hindu festivals to their own material advantage.  
Such behaviour was foolish, Gupta maintains, for sāhebs were  
two-faced: at the festival they would profess friendship  
towards their Hindu hosts, but the moment the entertainment  
ceased, they would despise them.

'That warmth conceals a deadly knife. As long as  
they (the sāhebs) are present eating bananas, they  
will ... sing the virtue of love, but when they ...  
take their leave, they'll mutter: 'Foolish damn  
niggers'.<sup>13</sup> [Gupta's English].

11. G.B., p.310. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XIII).

12. Ibid. Text: pūjā kari mane mane bhāba ei bhābe //  
sāhebe khāile mad muktipad pābe //

13. Ibid. Text: yatane prañayē āna āpanār purī //  
se nāy prañay sudhu prañayēr churī //  
yataksan barttamān marttamān kheye //  
tataksan thāke baṭe premgun geṇe //  
mukh muche yāy ses bidāy haiyā //  
foolish foolish damn nigger baliyā //

Gupta's prayer to the leaders of his society was therefore to 'cease inviting sāhebs to the pūjā.'<sup>14</sup>

A further source of the alien influence eroding Hinduism was of course English education. The English-educated therefore attract a number of Gupta's barbs. His attitude to them wavers between contempt and fear, and his aim is somewhat erratic. At times he sees them as spoiled children:

'... spoiled boys who have studied the A.B.C. ... Afraid of going to garden houses (where rich men carouse with their mistresses) because of their parents, they have instead to be satisfied with rice pudding.'<sup>15</sup>

and at others as rather alarming young men, who

'behave like potentates, mouthing supercilious English and beating up priests and teachers with slippers ... foul-mouthed drunkards ... (who when asked for alms by poor brāhmins) clench their fists and ... say, 'you're healthy. Work for your living. Why the hell should we support you?'<sup>16</sup>

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14. Ibid. Text: pūjāy karo'nā ār mleccha nimantran //

15. K.S.P.I.p.97. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XIV).

16. Ibid., pp. 120-121. Text: Ibid, (XV).



Sometimes one senses that he regards them as Brāhmas and followers of Rāmmohun Rāy:

'They are neither Hindu nor Mussalmān. They don't care a fig for religion.'<sup>17</sup>

'They make no distinction between the Vedas and the Korān.'<sup>18</sup>

and at others as boorish bābus whose behaviour is dictated not by deliberate perversity, but by sheer ignorance:

'you will see them entering temples with slippers on their feet and dogs in their wake.'<sup>19</sup>

There are perhaps two ways of interpreting this blurring of identity between Brāhmas and bābus: one may possibly ascribe it to the inevitable overlapping and intermerging of social groups whose fringes are forever indeterminate, no matter how distinct the central core of their characteristics may be; or one may take it as a deliberate lumping together of a heterogenous mass of undesirable elements polluting the purity of Hindu society. We tend to the latter view: for Gupta the main point was that these people were in their several ways opposed to the

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17. Ibid, p.128. Text: erā nā 'hīdu' nā 'mocholmān',  
dharmmadhaner dhār dhārenā //

18. Ibid, p.121. Text: erā ved korāner bhed mānenā

19. Ibid, p.121. Text: dhuke thākur-ghare kukur niye,  
juto pāye dekhte pābe //

traditions of what he regarded as pure Hinduism and, since they were opposed, they deserved no further differentiation. Indeed, his last line lumps them together even with Christians:

'All the young children have through worshipping  
Jesus become damned in Duff's tub.'<sup>20</sup>

Since people 'polluted' by English education aroused Gupta's spleen, it is not surprising that those 'polluted' by foreign blood and foreign faith should find his spleen equally excitable. The incongruity between the poverty and arrogance of the Anglo-Indian community is cruelly captured by Gupta in the following lines:

' ... the Anglo-Indians flock about with great  
pomp ... They look fresh and attractive and speak  
superciliously, shaking their black faces. Though  
poorly fed, they cut a dash with white women and  
though housed cheaply in cramped alleys, they live  
with ostentation. Whenever they spot a Bengali,  
they show off their English, saying, 'keep to your  
place, you coloured natives.' Their ankle-length

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20. Ibid, p.121. Text: yata dudhe śiśu bha'je īśu,  
dube ma'la daber tabe /

boots cause them excruciating discomfort, and though penniless, they display disdainful monkeyism. At Christmas they dress like dandies in high style, as if they've just got off the boat. These half-breeds are little better than untouchables: their empty pomp is nauseating.<sup>21</sup>

The poverty of the Bengali Christian community, as depicted by Gupta, was palpably greater: they had not even pride to cling to.

'... the converts ... dance about yearning for happiness. Though the noose of wretchedness dangles round their hearts, in public their lips bear a forced smile. Wearing torn, rotten, sleeveless shirts, they trot about like hatless bābus. Setting out their dishes on a broken-down bench, they clap hands and eat in commemoration of Jesus; yet their hearts are heavy with regret, and at nights they weep, longing for the good rice and cakes of the Bengalis.'<sup>22</sup>

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21. Ibid, pp. 95-96. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XVI)

22. Ibid, p.96, Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XVII).

Though attributing the decay of Hinduism to alien influence, Gupta was not unaware of the defects in Bengali character which afforded inroads for that influence. Among these defects were the susceptibility of some Bengalis to flattery and the concomitant talent of other Bengalis in catering for this susceptibility. The cure for both defects was the same: 'coming face to face with truth',<sup>23</sup> and presumably Gupta saw his task as effecting this confrontation. In Toṣāmude (Flatterer) he accordingly holds up a mirror to flatterers.

'Flatterers are all worthless .... Though both applauding and singing fine songs, their thoughts centre only on money .... Whatever the bābu (their potential victim) says gains confirmation from them. 'Nabīn, the brāhmin, isn't a very good sort, is he, Gobīn?' the bābu may happen to say and Gobīn (the flatterer) replies, 'Exactly sir, exactly. The fellow hasn't a scrap of knowledge or intelligence in his head ... (Conversely the bābu may say,) 'Gobīn, have you heard that Nabīn

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23. K.S., Part II, p.187.

eirūp yata āche toṣāmude-dal /  
bābu kābu karibāre kare yata chal //  
sākṣāt nā kare keha satyer sahit //  
adharmmer car haye karaye ahit //

is an aristocrat? He's a very learned, well-spoken, fine gentleman and he behaves like a proper Hindu, doesn't he?' Hearing this Gobin replies, 'Yes, sir, yes. What you say is all true. They have always been universally respected. They have a fine brick-built house and plenty of money. They are both good-looking and talented. They know both Persian and English and are well-versed in the scriptures. They head their community and are leaders of their village. They give generously to those in distress. Whenever I go to Nabin's house, they do me proud on butter, milk and curds.'<sup>24</sup>

The bābu ends by saying that a dwarf has arrived with three-foot horse and Gobinda by capping this with

'Yes. I've seen it. They say the horse can fly.'<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, however, the Bengali talent for flattery had, Gupta implies, more serious consequences than the fleecing of foolish bābus; for the bābu might happen to be a misguided philanthropist, and the flatterer a brāhmin

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24. Ibid, p. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XIX).

25. Ibid. Text: Gobin kahan, 'bate dekhiyachi tāre se ghorā ākāse nāki ure yete pāre //

with a reputation for scholarship. In the Meki Brāhman Pandit (Counterfeit Brāhmin Pandit) Gupta suggests that it was precisely this combination that lay behind the widow-remarriage movement. He makes the flattering brāhmin say:

'Only the ignorant and stupid ... state that the scriptures forbid it.'<sup>26</sup>

and end his boastful diatribe with:

'Just promise me one thing, that my family will not starve.'<sup>27</sup>

i.e. in return for an assurance of subsistence for their families, some brāhmins were prepared to defend any proposition, no matter how detrimental to Hinduism it might be.

Gupta devotes two full poems to the theme of widow remarriage.<sup>28</sup> The first of these, Bidhabā Bibāha (Widow-Remarriage), opens by stating that society was tumultuously divided over the issue; arguments, both for and against, were being sought in almanac and scripture; and the younger and older generations were tending to oppose each other over it.

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26. Ibid, p.184. Text: śāstra ei, bidhi ei, arbbācinmūrhūyei  
bale sei ithe nei bidhi /

27. Ibid, p.185.

28. Ibid, pp. 79-81, 81-85.

Gupta's position is entirely one-sided: he quotes no argument in favour of the proposal; and in arguing against it, concentrates mainly on its ludicrous implications, posing such questions as:

- How could widows with kids scrambling all over them walk up the aisle?<sup>29</sup>
- Where was the decorum in proposing marriage to old, toothless, worn-out women, who were about to be taken to the river-bank on their biers?<sup>30</sup>
- Bangles were for brides and fish for women whose husbands were alive. What flaccid-fleshed, grey-haired widow could be tempted by such things?<sup>31</sup>
- Even if she could be tempted, would bangles and fish smooth from her brow the wrinkles of age, care and grief and rejuvenate her?<sup>32</sup>

As a fitting climax to these questions, Gupta comments:

'I can't for the life of me imagine who by virtue of his mother would get whom as his step-father'?<sup>33</sup>

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29. Ibid, p.80.

30. Ibid, p.80. ghāṭe yāre niye yāba, carāiṃyā khāṭe /  
śārīparā, curī hāte, tāre nāki khāṭe?

31. Ibid, p.81. śārīr pareche jhulī, culguli pākā /  
ke dharābe māch tāre, ke parābe śākha?

32. Ibid, p.80. porāmukh porāiṃyā, kon porāmukhī /  
'dukhi' 'sukhi' meṃ phele kēce habē khukī?

33. Ibid, p.81.

Text: jñānhārā hāṃ yāi, nāhi pāi dhyāne //  
ke pāribe 'satbāp', māyer kalyāne //



His second poem on the theme, Bidhabā Bibāha Ain, (Widow Remarriage Legislation) presents a reasoned argument against the legislation successfully introduced by Colville authorising the remarriage of widows.<sup>34</sup> Gupta makes the following points:

- legislation should have the support of public opinion:

'Without making an inquiry into the matter, it has now become law. Hundreds and hundreds of subjects are distressed about this, because their representations have gone unheeded.'<sup>35</sup>

- the Government had no right to legislate in religious matters:

'One should allow those to decide this matter, whose religion and customs it concerns ...

Why should the King interfere in other people's religions? ..."<sup>36</sup>

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34. Act XV of 1856, being an Act to remove all legal obstacles to the Marriage of Hindu Widows. (26th July, 1856)

35. Ibid, p.81. Text: se biṣaye kṣatāksat, nā kari biṣeṣ /  
karilen ekebāre niyam nirddeś //  
śata śata prajā tāy, byathā pāy prāṇe /  
tāder ārdhāś nāhi, śunilen kāṇe //

36. Ibid, p.82. Text: yāhāder dharmma ei, ār deśācār //  
paraspar tārā āge, karuk bicār //  
... ..  
rājā haṇe paradharmme, kena den kar //



- the legislation undermined traditional concepts of chastity and legitimacy:

'How can I call a woman who has married twice chaste? And how can you prove that the offspring of a widow are legitimate?'<sup>37</sup>

- legislation was powerless to produce social change: social change resulted from action, not words.

'I humbly ask each one of these formulators of ethics who wish to save widows what effect this legislation will have? All the prominent people ... are hereby requested to state the number of widows ... in their homes. Select any one ... and confidentially enquire whether or not he is prepared to arrange his widowed mother's remarriage. If he is, then my heartiest congratulations to him ... If, on the other hand, no one dares arrange his mother's remarriage, then obviously the legislation is pointless ... It's no good wasting time in public meetings. Words are meaningless,

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37. Ibid, p.83. Text: bibāha kariyā tārā, punarbhavā habe / satī bole sambodhan, kise kari tabe? / bidhabār garbhajāta, ye habe santān / 'baidha' bole kise tār, karibe pramān?

only actions speak ... No one is willing

to put his convictions into effect ...

Everyone expects others to do it for him.<sup>38</sup>

The principles Gupta enunciates here are admirable; and would gain instant approval in almost all modern democracies, but one should not overlook the tendentiousness of his case, nor the abuses he was seeking to justify. Throughout he talks almost exclusively of the remarriage of mothers, not of child-widows whose marriage had never been consummated. It was the lot of child-widows with which the reformers were concerned, not the remarriage of near-grandmothers as Gupta would have us believe.<sup>39</sup>

Widow-remarriage was, however, only a single issue in a wider movement. Gupta was to some extent right in indicating that his times were characterised by a clash of generations; the urban educated young favouring change, the old both urban and rural clinging to tradition; but the changes desired by the young were of the kind that would bring India in step with Europe. The old, like Gupta, were seeking to keep India asiatic. The treatment

38. Ibid, p.83. Text: Appendix Ibid (XX).

39. Though in general opposed to widow-remarriage, Gupta did however favour the remarriage of those who were virgins ('aksatayoni'). S.P., 1.10.1263 B.S., S.B.S.C., Vol. I, pp. 217-219.

of women was thus a prime issue in this conflict: were they to remain uneducated and subject to male dominance or were they through education and <sup>the</sup> possibility of remarriage to be granted fundamental rights to think independently and pursue their own happiness?

Gupta sided with the reactionaries and conservatives, and his doing so was probably one of the main causes of his posthumous decline in popularity with the educated middle classes, who saw him as out-of-step with his times. It should be stressed, however, that it was only the urban middle-classes who were out of sympathy with him. The following poem on female education would, strange as it may seem, still be read with approval and amusement in rural areas, where the primarily agricultural economy has preserved a traditional asiatic outlook on the position of women in society:

'Formerly girls were good: they performed their penances. But along came Bethune and single-handed ended that.<sup>40</sup> That kind of girl is no longer to be

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40. Though elsewhere he called upon 'Hindus of noble origin' (Bhadra kulodbhaba Hindu) to patronise the Girls' School founded by Bethune. Gupta's reasoning was this: it was preferable that widows should be educated, so that they could look after their own interests and decide their own future, including, if necessary, remarriage. Ibid, p.217.

found. Flighty now, the girls swing gaily along with books in their hands. Dressed as ladies and versed in the A.B.C., they insist on mouthing foreign speech. It's no good expecting such girls to perform evening prayers and eat from low wooden piri. They're bound to end up eating with knives and forks. O my friend, if you live much longer, you're certain to see them out on the Maidan to take the air, driving a carriage with their own little hands. As long as a few old fellows like us remain, something may persist, but brother, as soon as we are dead, it's finished: everything will absolutely cease. Death alone will check them. There'll be no putting Him off. But I suppose by then they'll go off to heaven with a hoot, wearing boots and smoking cheroots.<sup>41</sup>

Oddly enough, though so staunch a conservative, Gupta favoured reform in respect of kaulinya, nobility of lineage. Since the reform envisaged here was a social levelling-down to Gupta's advantage, one suspects he favoured it for this reason, and not, as his poem on the subject would suggest, on humanitarian grounds.

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41. K.S., Part I, pp. 121-122. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XXI).

'One kulin's death results in the widowhood of a hundred wives, so how can you expect me to honour nobility of lineage? A man, who has grown feeble and leans on a stick, marries a girl in arms. And a child, who still has milk-teeth, marries a woman old enough to be his grandmother. Such disparity<sup>ies</sup> in age preclude satisfaction and give rise to adultery. Nobility of lineage may admittedly have points in its favour, but<sup>since</sup> it spawns evil, why should I countenance it? My prayer to All-Merciful God is that He destroy the practice of kaulīnya in this country.'<sup>42</sup>

Being a man of strong convictions, Gupta naturally had opponents some of whom became the target of his satire. Of his own society, there were three main figures: Vidyāsāgar, Akṣaykumār and Gaurīśaṅkar. In his defence of poetry,<sup>43</sup> he makes great play of the word sāgar (i.e. ocean) and behind

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42. Ibid, Part II, pp. 85-86. Text. Ibid, (XXII).

43. See Chapter X, p. 359. Inspired undoubtedly by some statement of Vidyāsāgar's on the nature of poetry which may even have incorporated a direct attack upon that of Gupta's work, the poem Kabitā o Kabi embodies the quintessence of Gupta's thoughts upon poetry and its place on the contemporary literary scene.

this extended metaphor lay an attack against Vidyāsāgar which at the opening of the poem had been more obvious; there he inveighs against him for lack of euphony, poverty of ideas and ignorance of human good;<sup>44</sup> and when writing of widow-remarriage, Gupta's invective against Vidyāsāgar was equally biting.<sup>45</sup> Gupta also attacked another agent of modernisation: Akṣaykumār Datta, whom he had once befriended. Datta was an unhappy spirit, who like many intellectuals seems to have been plagued by persistent migraine headaches and experimented to cure them. One of his experiments seems to have involved the temporary exclusion of animal protein from his diet.<sup>46</sup> This gave Gupta his opportunity for satire.<sup>47</sup>

Throughout the world, Gupta claimed, martial glory had derived from the consumption of meat. When India ate meat, it enjoyed wealth, prestige, fame, good fortune

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44. K.S., Part II, pp. 298-299.

45. In this respect Vidyāsāgar is referred to thrice: (i) 'Some citing Parāśar state one thing is right and others point out the waves sent up by sāgar (i.e. ocean or Vidyāsāgar)' (Bidhābā-Bibāha, K.S., pp. 79-81); (ii) ... 'Only if sāgar goes outside his limits will remarriage take place.' (Bidhabā-Bihāha-Ain, K.S., p. 84); (iii) 'Vidyāsāgar possesses immense knowledge and his waves displayed it, nevertheless the boat of widow's honour finds no shore, then their honour finds no shore in its vast extent. Had their boat of honour remained by the shore, then their honour would have been saved. But that ocean is without solace, terrifically extensive and its black water is extremely salty.' (Durbhikṣa, K.S., p. 129.)

46. Bīśvās Nakurcandra: Akṣaycarit (or An Illustrated Life of the Late Babu Akṣaykumār Datta), Calcutta, 1887, p. 50.

47. K.S., Part II, pp. 164-166.

and happiness.<sup>48</sup> Texts amply testified to meat-eating by all the four Hindu castes, and doctors throughout the world extolled the virtues of animal protein. Even Śiva expatiated upon it. Meat-eating was an ecological law: there was a natural relationship between the predator and the prey. God intended that man should eat meat and furnished his mouth accordingly, with a set of teeth top and bottom, just like the lion's. Despite all this evidence to the contrary, Akṣaykumār Datta had persisted in believing that meat was not to be eaten by man.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, however, Akṣaykumār had seen the error of his ways:

'Indeed, he had travelled around Nadiyā, Śāntipur and Hugli, and consumed all the snails there. A vegetarian diet has taught him much; his head swims, drowned in nonsensical scribble. Where is his relationship between 'Man's nature and external objects?'<sup>50</sup> It seems to have become terribly distorted. Cholic and piles torment him, and day and night his head swims. He is constantly unwell. To

48. Ibid, p.163. Text: bharate yakhan chila, byabahār kīr /  
boddhā chila, yoddhā chila, sabe chila  
bir //

49. Gupta's argument is an answer to the propositions put forward by Datta against eating meat in his famous book Bāhya Bastur Sahit Mānab Prakṛtir Sambandha Bicār (5th ed., Calcutta, 1860, pp. 181-216).

50. The above work referred to as Bāhya Bastu Mānab Prakṛti ('Man's nature and external objects').



propagate his ideas he once wrote a book, but now even reading is beyond his powers. The lifting of a pen sends his head whirling, and when he tries to compose, words refuse to come. He used to live on meat and fish; when he reversed this, he got his just reward; his strength and intellect forsook him, leaving him a feeble buffoon, the laughing-stock of society. He had been in a strong position, but he withdrew his piece and landed into difficulties. So he reverted to his former ways. But this time it wasn't only meat and fish that sustained him. He added something else. It is unfair to expose him, but betel (pān = also 'drink') is very spicy.<sup>51</sup>

Gupta's arch-enemy was of course Gaurīśaṅkar Tarkavāgiś, against whom he directs two satires, Thoṭkāṭā (The Brazen One) and Kāṅkāṭā (The Shameless One).<sup>52</sup> Both are linked by similarities in refrain and both are written in the first person, the first as a monologue, supposedly spoken by Gaurīśaṅkar and the second as its reply by Gupta.

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51. K.S., op.cit., pp. 165-166. Text: Appendix, Ibid (XXIII).

52. Ibid, pp. 179-182; 182-183.



The opening verse of The Brazen One lumps Gaurīśaṅkar with Gupta's conception of irreligious Young Bengal:

'I was born of good family, but am not a gentleman, for I always consider Brahmins and Muslims to be alike.'<sup>53</sup>

The second verse alludes to Gaurīśaṅkar's imprisonment:

'I have made prison my father-in-law's ... when in my cage, for a while, I behave well, but as soon as I'm released, I'll display my qualities. My powers will set the world in turmoil ... '<sup>54</sup>

The third to his lecherousness:

'The older and greyer I get, the more I assume the guise of a gallant. I had scarcely emerged from the egg and was still beardless when I abandoned home for ever.'<sup>55</sup> I ejected the sacred images and imported a prostitute, to be cooked for

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53. Ibid, p.179. Text: bhadra kule janma lai, bhadra nai jije / yabaner sama sadā, jñān kari dviije //

54. Ibid, p.180. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XXIV).

55. A reference to Gaurīśaṅkar's forsaking his ancestral home at an early age. (S.S.C.M., Vol.I, Book 8, p.6.)

and tended by my wife. My conduct stupefied  
 my spiritual preceptor (Bābājī), so being  
 immeasurably intelligent I advised: go to hell  
old fox, you damned fool ...<sup>56</sup>  
 [Gupta's English]

and the fourth to his promiscuity:

'Not only my face, but also my speech, are  
 loaded with charm. I seduce housewives like  
 clock-work ...<sup>57</sup>

The refrain throughout is:

'In fighting and scuffling I am unequalled'<sup>58</sup>

and to this Gupta replies in Shameless One:

'In fighting and scuffling are you really unequalled?  
 ... come on, come on. Let's fight it out.<sup>59</sup>

The bravado and posturing Gaurīśaṅkar and his cronies

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56. K.S., Ibid, p.181. Text: Appendix, Ibid (XXV).

57. Ibid. Text: eketo mohan mūrti, mukhe miṣṭa madhu /  
dam diyā bār kari, kṛtā kulbadhu //

Probably a reference to Gaurīśaṅkar's role as a Mukteer to  
 Mahārāṇī Basantakumārī, on whose account he stayed for some  
 time at Burdawan. (S.P.S.K., Vol.II, 1830-1840, pp. 269-271.)

58. Text: lāthālāṭhi kṛtākṛti, kise āmi kam?

59. Text: lāthālāṭhi kṛtākṛti, kise tumi kam?

bābā kise tumi kam?

fight laregā pher come, come, come //

may be such as to dismay even Death, but Gupta is undaunted:

'In no respect am I inferior to the image of yourself that you have publicised. Elephants and horses without number have I despatched to destruction, and now you, a sheep, shake your tail and bleat: 'See how strong I am.' Compared to me, you're naught.'<sup>60</sup>

Gupta then states that it was he who got Gaurīśaṅkar imprisoned, for he (Gupta) is a veritable giant who drinks brāhmin's blood like brandy and rum. Considering the way Gupta had treated his own wife, the final verse comes as a surprise:

'You have become a laughing stock and lost your reputation. That man's life is vain whose wife is averse to him. Within my heart reigns a lady of incomparable charm and talent. Who is my

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60. K.S., Ibid, p.182. Text: Appendix, ibid,(XXVI).

equal?<sup>61</sup>

One would have thought that here Gupta was laying himself open to an unparriable thrust. Gaurīśaṅkar's reply, if he made one, was perhaps too unprintable to be recorded.

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61. Ibid, p.183. Text:

hāsāili sab lok dūbāili nām /  
jīban br̥thāy tār, bāmā yāre bām //  
nirupamā manoramā, guṇadhāmā bāmā /  
hr̥daye birāṇj karē, tuiyā kebā āmā?

Possibly Gupta was here referring to his own poetic muse.

## Chapter VII

### European Society

In this chapter an attempt will be made to present Gupta's views on European society and civilisation as witnessed by him in India. His viewpoint was, of course, highly subjective and his approach gently satirical. If there were any truth in his views, then it was a mainly subjective truth, but one which was likely also to awaken sympathetic responses in many of his fellow-countrymen, who perhaps felt that here Gupta was their spokesman.

(i) White superiority. The first feature about Gupta's portrayal of the British in India was his gentle mockery of their alleged superiority to which he apparently paid lip service:

'Men of England are enthroned in power, wearing jackets and shirts over their white bodies; and whatever they do is regarded as splendid, because they are sāhebs. We black natives are consumed with envy.'<sup>1</sup>

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1. K.S., Part II, p.192. Text: rājpadē abhiṣikṭa bilāter nar /  
jacket-kāmi-j-parā, śvetkalebar //  
yā kara tā śobhā pāy, sāheb /  
baliyā /  
'black native' yata mariche /  
jvaliyā //

Yet there was<sup>a</sup> certain pointlessness about "whatever they do", that excited Gupta's ridicule. This<sup>was</sup> apparent even in his innocent description of a journey by balloon made by a European named Kite.<sup>2</sup> It opens with congratulations to the European on his bravery, then describes how the people of Calcutta stood watching the ascent of the balloon as it 'rose swaying, shaking, dancing and trembling at great speed above and beyond the clouds,'<sup>3</sup> The poet then grows fanciful describing the delighted embraces bestowed upon the balloon by the clouds: imaginative people fancied that the balloon intended to visit the court of Indra, the king of gods, so as to escape the trammels of this sinful world. Others said that it was headed to the regions of ice and snow to escape the heat of the earth and some assumed that its intention was to ensnare the moon and by consuming to the full its nectar, to escape the hungers of the world. Others said that it hoped to hunt on the moon and snatch away the tame deer from the moon's lap.<sup>4</sup> Growing more fanciful, Išvancandra imagines the balloon ousting the

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2. Ibid, p. 194: Byomyān.

3. Ibid, p.195: Text: hele dule, nece nece, cale thare thare / mahābege cariyāche megher upare //

4. The spotted surface of the moon is traditionally conceived as a 'shadowy deer' (chāyāmrga).

moon from the affections of the stars, its wives,<sup>5</sup> so that having lost its beloveds, it was in shame and regret that the moon was swathed in darkness and remained unrisen; it was not due to its waning at all. Išvarcandra later states that the descent of the balloon was due to bite of a kite and comments playfully that there was a saying in the sāstras that 'after having risen very high one is bound to fall.'<sup>6</sup> It may perhaps not be too fanciful to imagine that Gupta saw in the rise of the balloon the rise of the puffed up aspirations of the arrogant rulers of India and in its descent the decline of those same rulers once their puffed up pride had been pricked. At all events Gupta was only too ready to provide the prick.

Passages in two of his poems, Grīṣma (Hot Season) and Barṣār Adhikāre Grīṣmer Prādurbhāb (The Ascendancy of the Hot Season over the Rains) record what Gupta imagines to be the European reaction to tropical heat. He writes:

'All the white poeple that live in the South of the City, have wrapped their houses with screens made

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5. The moon is said to be the husband of a group of stars.

6. Ibid, p.197. Text:

keha bale āche ei, śāstrer bacan /  
ati ucce ũhilei paścāte patan //

of khas<sup>7</sup> on to which they constantly pour water from skin bags.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, their bodies are not cooled. Saying, 'O God, O God', they climb into their tubs, removing the shirts from their charming goose-like forms. They drink brandy, yet it fails to refresh them. The only choice left to them is ice. The lotus faces of their ladies, have withered. 'Water me dear', 'water me', 'water me', 'water me'.<sup>9</sup>

Like the scorching sun, Gupta has no pity for his European masters; but rather rejoices in depicting their ignominious retreat from the sun's harsh rays, behind dampened fibre-screens of their primitive air-condition<sup>ing</sup>g, out of their sweat-soaked shirts, and into their bath-tubs, where even brandy and ice fail to refresh them. Meanwhile, to add to their miseries, their lovely ladies, whose beauty ought to have refreshed their eyes, shrivelled like flowers

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7. The root of a fragrant grass whose screens were used to cover the doors of houses to keep the air within cool in summer.
  8. Masak (skin) was a traditional skin-bag carried by bhistis (water-carrier) for supplying drinking waters from the ponds to houses. (See Rāmtanu Lāhirī O Tatkalīn Baṅgasamāj, by Sibnāth Śāstrī, 2nd ed., p.54.)
  9. Ibid, p.149. Text: Appendix, ibid, (XXVII).



in drought; and wailed and whimpered with nagging insistence to be watered back to full, feminine freshness.

The second extract recreates the same image with almost the same set of observations:

'The sāhebs are finished, taking off their shirts they say, 'O God, O God, it's damned hot.' They mix ice with water and pour it on their cheeks without ceasing, yet nevertheless their throats are always dry. The doorways are covered with khas screens on to which they sluice water, but that water seems like fire. They constantly drink soda but to their fair (sic) mouths it tastes brackish. The ladies languish.'<sup>10</sup>

This lack of variation, this harping upon the removal of shirts, the swearing (damn), blaspheming (God), the dryness of throats, the splashing of water about, and the languishing of the ladies, indicate a paucity either of inventiveness on Gupta's part or lack of intimate knowledge of European society. One suspects that it was due to the latter. The detail he gives is such as might be picked up from a servant. Gupta uses it well to create in his

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10. Ibid, pp. 160-161. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxviii).

readers' mind a comic picture of Europeans in private life, as vulgar, undignified creatures, in contrast to their public image, so scrupulously maintained, of fashionably-dressed demi-gods 'wearing jackets and shirts over their white bodies'.

Gupta's final sally on white superiority is contained in Bāji (Fireworks). It describes a firework display held to celebrate the suppression of the Sepoy Mutiny and the promulgation of Queen Victoria's Proclamation.<sup>11</sup> The display would seem to have been a disappointment: there was more smoke than sparkle:

'It was an occasion of immense pomp and of no less smoke. Lots of people came to the City by land and sea, thinking to themselves how they would enjoy the fireworks. The two edges of the Maidan were crowded with people, great and small, who swarmed about like rows of ants. Yet crane their necks how they would, they could see nothing but smoke.'<sup>12</sup>

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11. According to a Police notification published in The Bengal Hurkaru and The India Gazette (dated November 23) the fireworks on the Maidan 'is to take place on the 26 November.' A commentary on the fireworks appeared in the paper on Monday, November, 29. (See B.H.I.G., November, 1858.)

12. K.S., Part I, p.191. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxix).

Judging by Īśvarcandra's poem one would have thought that the occasion had been heralded in the European press as a great success.<sup>13</sup> Īśvarcandra himself was not, however, impressed. The occasion was praised, he implies, because Europeans were in charge of it. Had the display been organised by Bengalis, it would have been admitted to be the fiasco it actually was:

'The fireworks they have displayed are incomparable.

We admit our defeat. Had you been Bengalis, you would have seen what fun it was: you would have been put out of countenance by our applause.'<sup>14</sup>

(ii) Emancipated European women. During Gupta's life-time the Muslim practice of purdah was still observed in Hindu society. The comparative freedom of European women was therefore bound to excite his scorn; but there was a further feature about that freedom which excited him even

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13. But the actual reports were rather critical, as is evidenced by two extracts quoted below. (i) The Hurkaru comments, "How about the fireworks?" - our Mofussil readers will be asking. "The less said the better," would, perhaps, be the appropriate reply. Kieutenant Pearson's programme turned out to be of the "great cry and little wool" order. (B.H., d. Dec., 8). (ii) The Englishman's comment was: "A brilliant commencement illustrated by resplendent feats ... which suddenly changes to confusion, disappointment and sluggish commonplace ... (Quoted by Hurkaru, d. Dec.8,1858).

14. K.S., *ibid*, p.192. Text:

ye bājī karecha tār, upamā to nāi /  
mānilām parihār, balihāri yāi //  
dekhite kemaṇ majā, haile bāṅgālī /  
thōtāmukh bhōtā hota, kheye karatālī //

more: the constant deference of European males towards their ladies. In Endāwālā Tapsyāmāch (The Eggy Mango-fish) Gupta gives playful rein to his scorn for the European male, because of this perversion of deferring to females; and in doing so he manages to avenge himself on the females as well; for the charms of the Bengali mango-fish so exceed their feminine allure that it was in the hope of enjoying the fish, not the females, that the European bachelors exercised their wiles.

The mango-fish was of course no mean fish: when cooked, its flavour was so enticing, that Gupta imagined it had absorbed all the nectar from <sup>the</sup> god's churning of the ocean.<sup>15</sup> It is small wonder that European ladies enjoyed the fish so much.

'All the misses get fishes  
for filling up their dishes  
and putting them in their mouths  
piece by piece enjoy many kisses.'<sup>16</sup>

The fish too were fortunate: they were not only housed

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15. According to Hindu mythology, the Devas and Asuras churned out the amṛta (nectar) from the ocean. See Kāśīdāsī Mahābhārat, ed. Dinescandra Sen, Calcutta 1828, Adiparbbā, pp. 9-11).

16. K.S., Part II, p.94. Text: dish bhore fish laý, miss  
bābā yata /  
piece kore mukhe diye, kiss  
khāy kata //

in the sanctity of lovely European bellies, but also had sherry to splash about in.

'You set up house in their holy stomachs ... Holding you in their lips, how their pleasure increases. From time to time they put their mouths to sherry glasses.'<sup>17</sup>

Then on to the scene came the European bachelors

'... cherishing in their hearts evil designs, they sit close up to them with smiles on their faces. Saying 'take fish' they offer plates to the ladies, thinking themselves to have enjoyed heaven whilst still in the flesh when given the chance to eat their ladies' orts.'<sup>18</sup>

Gupta too was now beside himself with lust, though only for the fish, of course. In mock despair he cried:

'Alas, O cruel God, shame on you, why did you make me a black Hindu? Had I been a white man, I would

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17. Ibid, p.94. Text: tāder pabitra peṭe, tumi kara bās /  
(ei kaymās ar, nāhi khāy mās ///  
tomāy adhare dhari, bāre kata sukh /  
mājhe mājhe sherry-r, gelāse deṅ mukh //
18. Ibid, p.94. Text: bachelor yārā tārā, prasāder tare /  
rānnāghare dhannā diye, āyojan kare //  
hese hese ghēse ghēse, kache giyā base //  
peṭe hārāmer churi, mukh bhārā rase //

shout with joy and, mounting my heart's carriage,  
would go and eat at table like a devil.'<sup>19</sup>

Gupta's final anguish is masterly:

'In the joy of her love the young miss piece by piece  
devours you. You beggar description, O mango fish.'<sup>20</sup>

Fully to appreciate the humour of this fanciful piece of satire, knowledge of Bengali life is necessary. Firstly, though in India free-mixing of unmarried people was not permitted, had it been permitted, the men, unlike the European bachelors, would naturally have been more interested in the ladies than in the mango-fish. Secondly, in Hindu society males ate first; and if anyone ate left-overs, then it was the wife, who ate the husband's, because they were considered to be part of the same body (ardhangini). Under no circumstances would an unmarried male have eaten the left-overs of an unmarried woman. The idea was not only preposterous to a Hindu: it was both nauseating and irreligious. Thirdly,

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19. Ibid, pp. 94-95. Text:

hyādere nidaý bidhi, dhik dhik tore /  
ki hetu black Hindu, korechis more?  
gorā hole hurra mere, core manorathe //  
table-e yetem hete, devil-er sāthe //

20. Ibid, p.95. Text:

premānande piece kari, sukhe khāý miss /  
balihāri yāi tore, ore mango-fish //

despite the fact that the bachelors were prepared to debase themselves in this way, the ladies, unmoved, went on eating the fish with relish. Fourthly, the last pitiful touch to this humiliating sketch of European manhood, the fish was not even properly cooked: it was merely half-boiled, and completely unspiced.

Gupta continues the same theme in Imrāji Nababarṣa (The English New Year). In the first half, he mocked at the dress of western beauties<sup>21</sup> and longed to become a fly in order that he might get greater intimacy with them, i.e., kiss the glasses from which they had drunk sherry and sit upon their gowns and faces, and sometimes flutter his wings upon their wet bodies.<sup>22</sup> The European quarter might be aloof as Kailās or Amarābati,<sup>23</sup> but when he described those heavens, Gupta's disgust was palpable. He spoke of the very best sherry, being placed first into the hands of ladies. Since wine was, despite Gupta's personal weakness for it, anathema to Hindu society, this image of a lady accepting wine in public

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21. This stanza is, however, one of the finest pieces of Gupta's poetry.

22. K.S., Part I, pp. 70-71. Text:

dhanya dhanya ksudra jīb, dhanya tui māchi /  
tor mata guṭi dui, pākhā pele bāci // ...  
khanār table-e basi, kari khub tul  
eto karā sherry-r, glass-e dii hul //  
kakhano gown-e basi, kabhu basi mukhe /  
mājhe mājhe bhiḥe gāy, pākhā nārī sukhe //

23. The residence of Siva and Indra, respectively.

would have been to his fellow countrymen one of depravity.

In the second part, Gupta spoke as if he were an Indian Christian, inviting his lady-love out to make merry in the western hotels and shops, which were filled with a profusion of cakes, wines, beers, brandies and sherries. Inviting her to eat and drink her fill, Gupta says:

'Go and mix with the white men and talk merrily,  
sitting leaning hard against European women ....  
Don't care for Hindu ways, don't give a damn.'<sup>24</sup>

He then imagined a white man seeing this native lady amongst them with her hair dishevelled and wearing a sāri. The white man's reaction was:

'black native lady, shame shame shame.'<sup>25</sup>  
[Gupta's English]

The Indian Christian (Gupta) went on to say that native ladies being always confined to the house experienced much hardship: they never saw another man's face (i.e. the face

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24. Ibid, p.72. Text: gorār dangale giyā, kathā kaha hese /  
thes mere basa giyā, bibider ghese //  
rāngāmukh dekh bābā tene lao ham /  
25. Ibid, p.72. don't care Hinduānī damn damn damn //  
25. Ibid, p.72.



of any male unrelated to them). Remaining constantly in the dark they might preserve their religious practices, but were deprived of the light of happiness.

'Listen all you native ladies wherever you may be, how much longer will you remain like animals (i.e. caged in the dark.) Blessed be the red liquid living in the bottle. Blessed be the strength of western civilization. I do not believe in <sup>the</sup> native Kṛṣṇa. Long live Jesus Christ (who grants merriment and issues from Mary).'<sup>26</sup>

(iii) Duelling. Another feature of European life with which Gupta found himself out of sympathy was its needless aggressiveness. Duelling<sup>27</sup> was not, according to Gupta, to be viewed as isolated phenomenon, but as a deep-rooted trait of western civilization.

'O Western Civilization, I am powerless to describe ~~Thee~~. Such wonderful fashions have no parallel elsewhere. One moment there is laughing and joking

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26. Ibid, p.73. Text: kothāy native lady, bali śuna sabe / paśur svabhābe ār katakāl rabe? dhanyare bottle bāsi, dhanya lāl jal / dhanya dhanya bilāter, sabhātār bal / diśi Kṛṣṇa mānineko, Rṣikṛṣṇa joī / merry-dātā Mary-sut, very good boy //

27. Gupta's friend Bhabānīcaran had already ridiculed European dwelling - 'When a European quarrels with anyone, he virtually makes war.' (Kamal, op.cit., p.100).

in endless profusion, and the next nothing of this remains. Thou art always boastful of Thine own qualities and on the slightest pretext started<sup>est</sup> duelling. At fighting and dying Thou art most skilful. Thou hast a terrible temperament and not the least feeling for Thine own life. In Thine arrogance, the world becomes no more than a dish, and Thou alone art stronger than six.<sup>28</sup>

A struggle to demonstrate strength of wrists became within moments a duel which ended in the clash of swords.<sup>29</sup> What a strange behaviour!

'In streets and in carriages, Thy people butt and slap each other with slippers.<sup>30</sup> This is one of their characteristics and in itself is not reprehensible. How can you call it a fault, how can you

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28. K.S., Part II, pp. 192-193. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxx).

29. Duels at Calcutta were usually fought for trifling reasons, though in accordance with a strict code: when a man was insulted he would call for 'personal satisfaction', issuing a challenge either by letter or by word of mouth. A choice of weapons was available, either pistols or swords. Each duellor had an assistant, known as his 'second'; (Tin Sataker Kalkātā, by Nakul Caṭṭopādhyāy, Calcutta, 1965, p.22.)

30. Europeans were of course unlikely to strike each other with slippers. This was a Bengali practice. But to a Bengali being struck with a slipper was the highest insult.

call it? They have merely the temperament of snakes, without the hissing. They first of all strike each other with sarcasm and on the duelling ground with kicks and fisticuffs. They are both red inside and out, without the least trace of black, and red makes red redd<sup>er</sup> and looks absolutely wonderful.<sup>31</sup>

To a Bengali, who had traditionally fought mainly with words and in recent times also in print, the behaviour of the Europeans obviously seemed comic. Here Išvarcandra forgets the pride of his own race, and pokes fun at the arrogance and touchiness of Europeans, whose sense of honour could send them suddenly from the gay conversation of the drawing room to the cold morning mists of the duelling ground beneath the 'trees of destiny'.<sup>32</sup> The most honourable, respectable and unlikely people appear to have been involved in these affairs of honour — from the all-powerful Hastings, who risked his life for a woman, to the 'weeping tiger of

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31. K.S., Ibid, p.193. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxi).

32. The row of trees at the southern corner of the Maidān, under whose cover the Calcutta duel took place. (Tin Sataker Kalkātā, Ibid, p.22).

Hedua<sup>1</sup> who was apparently invited to risk his over a convert (though there is no record of his having accepted the invitation).<sup>33</sup> Obviously when men of the Church such as Duff could be challenged to duels, it was not surprising that Gupta should find amusement in the theme. Bengalis called white men 'red' (lāl), and since fair white skins were regarded by Bengalis as beautiful, Išvarcandra could not resist commenting that by battering each other to an enhanced state of redness, the Europeans were improving their looks.

(iv) European sacrilege. Gupta saw in the European celebration of Christmas a greater element of merriment than sincere religious fervour, as his poem Bara Din (Christmas Day) demonstrates. The first four couplets give a general view stating that the birthday of Christ was known as Christmas Day. As the festival approached, Calcutta beamed with joy. In order to gain favour, native clerks, dewāns and assistants all sent to the houses of their sāheb superiors presents of bhetki-gish, oranges,

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33. The duel between Warren Hastings and Philip Francis was fought at 5 a.m. on 17th August, 1780, nearby the Belvador House. (Ibid, p.23). Langeville Clark, Bar-at-Law and the then world-famous chess-player, threw a challenge to Alexander Duff over a former student of Hare School, Brajanāth Ghos, who was converted allegedly by the missionaries. (Ibid, p.26.)

sugar-candy and peanuts, carefully selected and bought at pretty prices.<sup>34</sup> The white men were very merry. The Catholics consumed with love, placed an image of the child Jesus in the lap of mother Mary: a most enchanting spectacle, like Gopāl lying in Jaśudā's lap.<sup>35</sup> After citing the origin of the Catholic version of Christianity, Gupta then described the contemporary scene:

'To save sinners, He, the Merciful, relinquished His life on the Jewish Cross. Since then the devotion of His disciples has been in the ascendance. Oh, their multiform emotion on attaining the love of the Lord. Thus are the Christians aquiver with emotion, like the shaven-headed crowd of Vaiṣṇava men and women, mad with love of Gora<sup>36</sup> (Caitanya).'<sup>37</sup>

The missionaries ate heartily. Arranging their dining tables, they swelled with emotion and took bread and wine in memory of the Lord.

The Protestant bishops beamed, as Christmas approached. On getting leave, the military, civil servants and traders ran hither and thither. Clad in pomp and accompanied by

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34. K.S., Part I, p.91.

35. Ibid, p.91.

36. 'The white one'.

37. Ibid, pp. 92-93. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxii).

their beauties, they rode to Church in carriages. Bowing to the bishop, they touched the Testament, though only mementarily; for once the service ceased, they were off. 'Bring in the carriage, you coachman, damn hurry up.'<sup>38</sup> They returned home excitedly sucking the tips of their fingers. Inviting each other, they prepared various kinds of food, decorating their tables with multifarious fare. The Sahebs were surrounded by a net woven of bibis (ladies). While eating, they engaged in delightful tête-à-têtes. Taking meat and wine, they devoutly imagined holding heaven in their hands. In the field, market-place and street, the uniformed whites shouted and passed orders; and arranged parties at their camps, where pretty women would display their fashionable dresses. Before being served to others, everything was instantly brought near the lovely lips. Gupta here introduces a perplexed native, who, seeing all this, longed to be a 'cook' in an European household so that he might gaze in rapture at these ravishing beauties. Or if God so wished, he would be the 'coachman' and ride on top, ahead of all, driving the horses.<sup>39</sup>

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38. Ibid, p.94. Text: sahis bolāo bogey damn damn hoot.

39. Ibid, p.95.

Set in a two-level scheme, the poem at first sight appears to give a faithful verse report of the event, but the emphasis seems to be on the second level where Gupta tends to expose the hollowness in the European observance of their most important festival. Christmas occupied a significant place in Christian life, and though an occasion for family reunion and rejoicing, had also its sacred aspects. One was on this remarkable day, through worldly happiness, to seek spiritual solace. But the irony in this poem is that Christmas Day was taken only as a pretext for merry-making. Secondly, instead of Christian humility, these Europeans displayed pride and arrogance, considering themselves superior to Indians, though not hesitating to accept bribes from them in the form of presentations, and sometimes, even indulging in immoral trafficking with them.<sup>40</sup>

What troubled Gupta most was that the Europeans had, so he imagined, brought the same hollowness to the Hindu Durgā Pūjā, a sacrilege he found it difficult to forgive.<sup>41</sup>

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40. Ibid, p.96: diśi saha bilātir, yogāyog nānā /

41. See also Chapter VI, Hindu Society; Durgā Pūjā is described there, pp.135-136.

Having in Sārādīya Parbba (Autumn Festival), his poem on the festival, described all the merrymaking, Gupta with mock solemnity sang the praises of Calcutta, which epitomised man's fall from grace, summed up for a Hindu in the term kaliyug.

'Long live Calcutta which upholds the umbrella of this quarrelsome age (kaliyug). Praise be thy new fashions. Lots of festivities are being celebrated, without a break in their rhythm. My salutations to the feet of Bengal.'<sup>42</sup>

The last part of the poem presents a parody of the Hindu Durgā Pūjā. All the terminology associated with such a pūjā was used, but ironically applied to a European situation: the 'Rājā' referred to would seem to be the Lieutenant Governor; and the cessation of spiritual torments in the three worlds referred to in tritāp was possibly a reference to worries connected with one's job: i.e., by being present at the Lieutenant Governor's festivities a Hindu's promotion prospects would improve, and by eating beef, he would gain the material

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42. G.B., p.222. Text: dhanya dhanya kalikātā, dhareche kalir  
chātā,  
dhanya taba naba byabahār /  
haiteche kata raṅga, nāhi mātra tāl  
bhaṅga,  
Baṅgadeś-pade namaskār //



equivalent of the merit accruing from one hundred horse-sacrifices.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the words ghṛtāhuti and svāhārab were applied to the opening of the champagne and the consequent jubilation. The Reverend Wilson was referred to as a 'puruhit' and the word dhanya was applied to Calcutta and its new fashions<sup>44</sup> with biting irony; i.e., Tśvarcandra condemned both with clamorous praise.

(v) The missionaries. In view of the hollowness with which Europeans observed their own religions and also of the other features of their civilization of which he disapproved, it is perhaps not surprising that his invectives against the missionaries<sup>45</sup> should contain more anger than argument.

In Chadma Missionary (Disguised Missionary), Gupta comparing a missionary to a snake, observed that although a snake might be fierce, there was no need to fear it, because a remedy could be found against him in charms and medicine.

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43. Ibid, p.222. Text: tritāp haibe śūnya, śata aśvamedh-punya,  
lābh habe gomedh kariyā //

44. The theme of the new Calcutta fashions was widely utilised in all literary genres from Kabi to mainstream literature. (Samudra Gupta, op.cit., pp. 203-208.)

45. There are five such poems: Chadma Missionary, Bābu Candīcaran Siṃher Khr̥ṣṭānurakti, Burā Siver Stuti, Duribhikṣa and Man Missionary.

The missionary, however, was a white snake, and any person bitten by his venomous teeth was absolutely finished. Though people might fear a tiger when they fell into his clutches, there was no reason to fear one, when sticks or weapons were at hand, to ward the tiger off. Nevertheless, one became terrified upon hearing the name of the man whose face was as white as a weeping tiger on the banks of the Hedua tank;<sup>46</sup> for this tiger was lying in wait, meditating, and if he got hold of the throat of religion, he would tear it with his claws. Moreover

'I have heard of kidnapping in my childhood, now I have direct evidence of it. It pains me to express my mental anguish, the missionary kidnappers take the children and devour them. I have learnt of bogies (jujus) from my mother's lips. Now I take it these white people are all bogies. Be quiet children, you must all take care of the ear-cutter ... may cut off your ears. Go to sleep, go to sleep, dear, rest in peace. I will give you a box of betel, you can eat to your heart's content. I will give you sugar, I will give you ksir, I will give you candy-cakes,

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46. Alexander Duff, who lived in a house on the bank of the Hedua tank.

don't leave our ancestral home, my darling child; who knows what may happen, you are not yet intellectually mature; there is a danger of bogies, don't go there, my darling.<sup>47</sup>

The young were advised to remain illiterate at home, holding to the path of religion. There was no point in studying at school. A fervent call was also made to fathers to control their children because the times were very bad. The missionaries might be white-bodied and sweet-tongued, but, as far as the Indians were concerned, they lacked the virtue of pity:

'You are the treasure of your father's heart, but the missionaries do not think of you as he does. Emptying the storehouse of the mother's heart, they take away her darling son. With the magic of their words and the sayings of Jesus Christ, they break the young woman's heart by taking away her husband. His wife's arms are empty and her spirit depressed. Alas, to whom shall I make this lament? On the pretext of education, the missionary Duff has spread well his irreligious tub. Showering

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47. K.S., Part I, pp. 81-82. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxiii).

sweet words to inform us of his love, he converts all our children to Christianity. Our children regard Duff as the Saviour, falling into the opposite of love, they drown in his tub.<sup>48</sup>

This, like the others, is intended to be a satirical verse. By comparing the missionary Duff to all that was hateful in Bengali eyes, Ísvarcandra was attempting to create a feeling of hatred towards Duff, whom he compared to such loathsome creatures as snakes, tigers, kidnappers, and the bogies with which parents sought to frighten children into behaving well. Admittedly, to westerners and city-dwellers, snakes and tigers might be objects of curiosity rather than terror. But to people who have lived in rural Bengal, the image of the snake and the tiger evokes great fear. Though Ísvarcandra's intention was satirical, his feelings against Duff and the havoc he was bringing to family-life in Bengal, were perhaps so intense that he seems to fail in his artistic intention: on reading this poem, no one would laugh; one is moved to pity rather than laughter. The poem is therefore more pathetic than satirical.

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48. Ibid, pp. 82-83. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxiv).

The next poem, recording the conversion to Christianity of Candīcaran Simha, a young man of a well-known/vaiṣṇava family in Calcutta, commented on the tactics of the missionaries and extended an anxious call to Candī to go back to his own religion, which was capable of meeting his every requirement. The missionaries were attacked as

'where the child's thinking is contrary, there the missionary is most strong. Spreading his enchanting net, he gathers in the fruit, for why should he forgo such a tempting tit-bit. The bananas stand ripe on the tree before his eyes, why should he go without, leaving them through want of intelligence.'<sup>49</sup>

Candīcaran was reminded of his pedigree and home where attractive food lay in abundance:

'you are but obedient Candī, the son of/<sup>a</sup>vaiṣṇava, where will you go forsaking these charming sweet-meats; why should you,<sup>a</sup> Hindu, become a disciple of the sāhebs. Your stomach will not be able to tolerate their meat and wine. Eat milkpudding,

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49. Ibid, p.89. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxv).

cream and butter, become plump: don't drink water from that irreligious pond. Even though though you may feel like drinking it, come home, come home: have no fear. With what great care will I feed you: go to hell don't care, who will forbid you? We will sit together and eat sarputi - this will be our pleasure. If anyone says anything we will give him a blow. Who is there to fear in regard to eating and merry-making?<sup>50</sup>

Being returned, Candīcaran should not be anxious of religious sanctions because

'If the Dharma-Sabhā rejects you, there is always the Brāhma-Sabhā. We will become the king of Russia by our own valour, we will sit at table and eat with rings on our fingers. We will say the gāyatri<sup>51</sup> every Wednesday. Breaking the bounds of our illusory bodies, we will realize the Supreme Being housed in our bodies. Possessed of the staff of illusion, why should you be subject to punishment? Refuting Christianity, become a Hindu as before, the

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50. Ibid, p.90. Text: Ibid (xxxvi).

51. A Mantra of the Rgveda which is to be recited daily by the twice-born.

order of the Hārījhi Caṇḍī (sic), is to come home,  
Caṇḍī.<sup>52</sup>

This poem is only slightly satirical and in the main a sincere appeal to one Caṇḍīcaraṇ Siṃha, a free-thinking young man, to consider the errors of his ways. Išvarcandra Gupta says that such free-thinking men, like ripe bananas, constituted a temptation to missionaries who were hungry for such tasty converts. He appeals to Caṇḍī not to forsake his culture and to return to Hinduism, suggesting that though orthodox society might not welcome back such a wayward youth, there nevertheless remained an alternative in the Brāhma Samāj.

Burā Siver Stuti (Eulogy to Old Śiva), is an interesting account, dedicated to Marshman, on the occasion of his departure for England. Except for some minor incongruities, the poem draws a perfect parallel between Marshman in contemporary times and the Śiva of Bengali mythology. It begins in striking style:

'In what respect are you less great, blow your  
British horn, sacred Srīrāmpur is the peak of  
Kailās, the most charming in the whole world.

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52. K.S., Part I, p.90. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxvii).

Established by the Company, you are the Old  
 Śiva and reign there bringing salvation to  
 our creatures. You are the white-bodied Lord  
 of the Spirits (Bhūtanāth), the Oblivious Great  
 Lord (Bholā Maheśvar) on whose head flows the  
 Gaṅgā, sometimes turbulently and sometimes with  
 tranquillity. In what respect are you less  
 great, blow the British horn ...<sup>53</sup>

In the following passage the analogy seems almost flawless:

'Seated on The Friend of India, your Bull, you  
 are adorned with pride and embellished with snakes.  
 Partiality is your garland of bones, your constant  
 ornament. Lies, pretence and flattery make the  
 trident that you hold. Your printing press is your  
 pipe and the flames flicker upwards. At every  
 moment, you are active, never taking rest.'<sup>54</sup>

A sketch of Śiva can never be complete without his  
 attendants, whose prototypes are also found here:

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53. Ibid, pp. 134-135. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxviii).

54. Ibid, p.135. Text: Ibid, (xxxix)..



'Townsend and Robertson<sup>55</sup> are your Nandi and Bhr̥ṅgi; they are constantly with you, holding straws in their teeth. They are adorned with ashes and eat your left-overs. They make noises with their cheeks and proclaim their superiority. They are the devils at each side of you, holding the table; their behaviour is very shameless, yet they are favoured by the Government. In what respect are you less great, blow your British horn....<sup>56</sup>

The elaboration continues without suffering any serious break:

'Your tiger's skin is made of insults; your bag of deprivation: on one head you have five faces. Is it for nothing that I call you Śiva? You grant reproaches as rewards, you have matchless wealth, yet when you yourself are censured you become like a corpse. Evil designs (kāli-ink) reign in your mind as Kālī (Goddess Kālī-Śiva's consort), stored up in your house are quilts made of all the corpses

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55. Meredith Townsend, the editor of Samācār Darpan at Serampore; Robertson, the then Government translator.  
 56. K.S., Part I, p.136. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxx).

in creation. Your strength conquers three worlds. In what respect are you less great, blow your British horn ...<sup>57</sup>

As the Eulogy proceeds, comparison gives way to commentary:

'Just as Dharmmataḷā (lit. 'the place of religion') is void of religion, being the place of cow-slaughter, similarly your name is Friend of India (i.e. you are the enemy of India). What else can I say of your special greatness, being our friend you have eaten all your friend's possessions<sup>5</sup>? How hypocritical you are, how hypocritical - when the king kills, you sing his praises. You have no hesitation in treading the path of injustice. In what respect are you less great, blow your British horn ...<sup>58</sup>

Siva's great power is rightly remembered in describing Marshman's manifold abilities:

'You make black white and white black; you make light darkness and darkness light. You make earth

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57. Ibid, pp. 136-137. Text: Ibid, (xxxxi).

58. Ibid, p.138. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxix).

into sky and sky into earth. You make water into fire and fire into water. You make the unripe ripe and the ripe unripe. You make the true false and the false true. You bring distress to the wretched and death to the Bengalis. In what respect are you less great, blow your British horn ....<sup>59</sup>

The Eulogy is concluded with a reference to the immediate circumstances:

'I hear, O Siva, that you are determined to go to England to testify. Placing my hands together, I request you, O Lord of Creatures, don't go there and oppress us subjects. Take with you all your ghostly companions; why should you stay here any longer and eat our heads. In what respect are you less great, blow your British horn ....<sup>60</sup>

As in the poem Śaradiya Parbba, here all the imagery and epithets associated with Siva, are used to mock Marshman. Generally speaking, in Bengali poetry, Siva is depicted as

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59. Ibid, p.138. Text: Ibid, (xxxxiii).

60. Ibid, p.139. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxxiv).

somewhat unattractive, being old, dressed in a tiger's skin, adorned with ashes and attended by a host of ghostly spirits, but this picture elicits from the Bengali-mind a response, not of horror, but of affection. But here, all Siva's hideous disagreeable aspects are highlighted as features of Marshman's involvement with the British administration, in order to evoke distaste on the part of the audience. To our mind, Išvarcandra well succeeds in his intention.

The portions of the poem Durbhikṣa (Famine) concerned with missionaries appear to indicate that their proselytizing had reached its highest peak, reducing the orthodox to helplessness. Išvarcandra Gupta therefore appeals on behalf of Hindu society to Queen Victoria, entreating her to honour the pledge of religious toleration expressed in her proclamation (published at Allahabad on the 1st of November, 1858).<sup>61</sup>

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61. The provision referred to reads as follows: 'Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our Royal will and pleasure that none be in anywise favoured, none molested or disquieted by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects, on pain of our highest displeasure.' (Royal Proclamation: See The Annual Register. 1858, London, 1859, pp. 258-259.)

'O Mother Victoria, forbid all your white children to get angry and forbid any of them to attack the caste and religion of your subjects, so that the promise, made in your Proclamation, may be upheld: namely that we should each be allowed to worship in our own way. The jewel of religion is a priceless possession, second to none. See what mischief the missionaries make when they come to this country. Blowing into the ears of children the Jesu-charm, they mislead them. They roam around the markets, river-sides, the roads and open spaces, up to various tricks in various ways. They say abandon your native Kṛṣṇa and worship Jesus Christ. O Mother, in Hedua's grove the weeping one wanders, people are scared to death of him. By his side the owl-like Humo (sic), who destroys the caste of sleeping boys. All the whites are bogies, like old women with matted hair; each one of them is a child-stealer. They snatch away the babies from their mother's lap. They die with religion on their lips, but they none of them understand what religion means. They think that by taking away others' religion the cause of religion will be advanced, as if they can't practice their own religion without destroying

that of others. End their freedom to practice this religion, altogether end it. What magic they know, for with their advice they can render people blind. O Mother, how many children have eaten their food, putting paid to the pinḍa of their ancestors! They are not subject to you, they are independent, so how can you restrain them? We can understand this, Mother, but ordinary people can't. Since you are the Sovereign, angrily forbid them, then they won't have any route to escape by with their things.<sup>62</sup>

This seems like a genuine appeal to give legal force to the vague sentiments of religious toleration expressed in Queen Victoria's Proclamation. Gupta's point is that absolute freedom to practice religion was impossible since the right of Christians to practise their religion necessarily involved interference with the religion of others, for Christianity was a proselytizing religion. It had therefore to be to some extent restrained, in order to guarantee the right of others to practise their religions. The poem also expresses Gupta's faith in the Supreme Power of the Queen to

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62. Ibid, pp. 124-126. Text: Appendix, Ibid (xxxxv).

control missionary activity. He states that these people were now not subject to Her and behaved independently, but Gupta sincerely believed that if she were to issue some edict, the missionaries would be bound to obey it.

(vi) Finally, European partiality and in consequence Gupta's plea for justice. The two poems<sup>63</sup> we are now to consider are to some extent political and could have been considered later in the chapter on Gupta's political attitude. We review them there, however, because firstly, they concern Europeans and secondly, Gupta's political attitudes to Europeans of necessity overlap. What he disliked mainly about Europeans was their arrogant assumption of superiority: the assumption that everything whites did was of necessity good and everything blacks did was of necessity bad. It was this assumption that led to prejudice and perhaps even worse indifference. Tory O Whig deals with this latter theme, and Imrej Sampādak to some extent with the former.

Though the whole of Gupta's title was devoted to Tories and Whigs in England, very little of it concerned them. And

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63. Namely (i) Bilāter Tory O Whig, (ii) Imrāj Sampādak.

they seemed very little concerned with the plight of the country of which Gupta was speaking, namely India. The differences between Whig and Tory, though presumably meaningful for certain sections of English society, were, as far as Indians were concerned, largely irrelevant.

'O God, have pity on my ignorance, I have no idea what constitutes a radical or what a Tory. My ears have never heard the meaning of the word Whig. No matter who is greater, the Whig or the Tory, as far as you and I are concerned, my friend, they are all the same.'<sup>64</sup>

As Gupta says continually in his refrain, his concern was not with political niceties but justice:

'I praise their virtues and blame their faults, but all we really want is justice. This is our one and only attitude. We want justice.'<sup>65</sup>

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64. Ibid, p.278. Text: kichumātra nāhi jāni Rām Rām Hari //  
kāre bale radical kāre bale Tory //  
Whig kāhāre bale kebā tāhā jāne //  
Whiger artha kabhu suni nāi kāne //  
Tory ār Whig-er ye han pradhān //  
āmāder pakṣe bhāi sakal samān //  
65. Ibid, p.278. Text: guṇe kari guṇān doṣe doṣ gāi //  
sudhu subicār cāi sudhu subicār cāi //  
āmāder mane ār anya bhāb nāi //  
sudhu subicār cāi //



In view of the indubitable loyalty of the people the king's<sup>66</sup> attention was drawn to their present plight, saying that the king's attitude towards his subjects 'should be the same as that of the cātak bird towards the cloud.'<sup>67</sup> He was appealed to to make peace with those who were in revolt against the Government.

'All around, flicker the flames of war. Extinguish them, my Lord, with the waters of treaty. The loss of life on the battlefields is a source of sorrow; span the oceans of dissention with the bridge of unity. Grant us by treaty the juices of peace so that all the world's people may succumb to love and the fragrance of the praise-flower may diffuse everywhere.'<sup>68</sup>

An appeal to rectify the faults in legislature and also to put an end to oppressiveness by crooks, bandits and indigo planters is made in the last stanzas, which seem part of a recurrent theme.

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66. Gupta almost invariably uses the word 'king' when meaning 'Government'.

67. Ibid, p.279. Text: cātakeḥ bhāḥ yathā jaladeḥ prati /  
serūp Rājār bhāḥ amādeḥ prati //

68. Ibid, p.279. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxxvi).

Imrej Sampādak (The English Editor) was presumably written after the Mutiny. Īśvarcandra opens, with a eulogy to British editors in India, sarcastically admitting their superiority in various respects:

'All you white editors in this country, are like big brothers to us: in every respect you are superior to us, being members of the Ruling Class, dear to the king and possessing regal status. You are steady, you are courageous - in both these respects you are strong; and in every way you are greater than us. Hearing of your conduct, I have finally taken up my pen to write on editorship. In no way am I comparable to you, neither in courage, bravery, nor strength: I am powerless. You are ahead of us and above us: we remain below, lying on one side. We became low in comparison to you, we have no regrets: if we out-weigh you, then we laugh ourselves to death. You are the great ones, of that there is no doubt, and everywhere your great reputation is proclaimed.'<sup>69</sup>

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69. K.S., Part II, p.188. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XXXXVII).

But eventually he inveighs against them for their partiality and insincerity:

'Only one thing causes us concern: why do we see a divergence between your inner and outer man. Externally you are gleaming white and dhobi fresh, but internally you are filled with squelchy mud. God's will prevails, yet how marvellous it would have been, if inside and out, you had been the same.'<sup>70</sup>

Though he well knows the uselessness of words he yet lays before them a few candid ones:

'I hope now that you are ensconced in editorship, you will not become drunk with the wine of pride. Relinquish sinful partiality, arrogance, pride, anger and animosity. Remaining constantly in your hands, why should the quill pen be partial? In editorship, virtue must prevail and one shouldn't give rein to gossip. Sitting upon the seat of virtue, make a point of advising the king fairly.'<sup>71</sup>

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70. Ibid, pp. 188-189. Text: Ibid, (xxxxviii).

71. Ibid, p.189. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (xxxxix).

The British press in India stood like a window between Parliament and Bengal, and Ísvarcandra feared that this window was presenting a distorted picture, condemning the whole nation for the faults of a few:

'Is it right to be angry with the whole nation just because one of its members was fated to commit a fault? After all, does one cut the whole of a body, when only a part of it is affected? Did anyone ever smash all his teeth with a pestle, because one of them hurt for a while? Nānā being guilty of various sins, should be punished for them: but does the whole Hindu nation remain guilty on that account?'<sup>72</sup>

The British press had presumably been recommending the Governor to take repressive measures against Bengali Hindus after the Mutiny,<sup>73</sup> and Ísvarcandra is protesting against this: 'you may have might,' he says to the British editors, 'and thus you speak as you please', but 'do you have right' was the question he raised. As editors, it was the duty

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72. Ibid, pp. 189-190. Text: Ibid, (xxxxx).

73. Gupta had, in an editorial comment, brought the same allegation against 'some Englishmen' and 'English editors' who were allegedly advising the Government against the Hindu community. (S.P., 13th April, 1858. S.B.S.C., Vol. I, p.238.

of these British journalists to abandon partiality and to stick to the facts:

'Just remember all you have seen, why do you go on as you do, taking good for its opposite and thinking this thing that.'<sup>74</sup>

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74. K.S., Ibid, p.189.

Text: daraśan karitecha ye sab byāpār  
se sab smaraṇ bhāi kara ekbār //  
tomāder kena hay eman byāpār  
hite bhebe biparīt eke bhābo ār //

## Chapter VIII

### Political Attitude.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the political attitudes of Išvarcandra Gupta, as revealed in his poetry. Gupta wrote a number of poems that are illuminating in this respect. These poems fall into three main groups, depending on whether they deal with

- (i) Wars: the Afghan, Sikh, or Burmese,
- (ii) The Mutiny, or
- (iii) Political comment - a) on British rule and  
b) Queen Victoria's Proclamation.

#### (i) Wars.

(a) The Afghan war (January, 1842). The poem Kābuler Yuddha (War at Kabul) appears to have been composed at the height of the British débacle near Kabul.

'Prestige has been smashed, hardship endlessly endured and a great burden of pain has descended on British hearts.'<sup>1</sup>

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1. K.S., Part I, p.239. Text:

hayēche sambhram naṣṭa      sayēche aśeṣ kaṣṭa  
bayēche duhker bhār buke.

The Afghans had routed the British, inflicted massive slaughter, abducted their womenfolk and taken numbers of prisoners who were 'uttering obscene oaths.'<sup>2</sup>

The carnage was so great that

'Lovely white bodies are strewn about as corpses ... Jackals and dogs by the dozen and kites and vultures by the hundred ... are over-faced by the profusion ... it seems almost as if by some freak of nature corpses have rained down from the heavens.'<sup>3</sup>

The full extent of the British humiliation is seen in the hardship to which man and beast were reduced.

'Distressed by lack of food, the surviving soldiers tear at raw flesh and eat it ... yet nowhere is there fodder. Jumping and <sup>w</sup>shinnying and keeping alive on ropes and pegs, the horses gaze tearfully at the troopers.'<sup>4</sup>

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2. Ibid, p.239: Text: kaŷeche kubākya kata mukhe.

3. Ibid, p.239-40. Text: Appendix I.d(i)

4. Ibid, p.241. Text: Ibid, (ii).

Yet despite the British débacle,<sup>5</sup> Gupta's sympathies clearly lay with them, for he refers to the Afghans only by contemptuous epithets: yaban and nere<sup>6</sup> both of which imply alienation from the Hindu. Though recording the Afghan success in crushing the British, he nowhere praises them and towards the end predicts that their ultimate doom was certain:

'Despite all, there can be no other outcome;  
death is certain: ants grow wings only to die.<sup>7</sup>  
The yabans will be completely eradicated ... The Governor is blazing with anger ... Shah Shuja<sup>8</sup> is playing a trick! Now survival is unlikely, however much the enemy blusters. The white armies are mustering their power ... the sepoys

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5. Thompson, Edward: Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, London, 1934, pp. 348-349. 'The entry of the Kabul Pass was marked by a massacre ... only 450 Europeans remained alive'. (p.349). See also (i) The Military Operations at Cabul, by Lieut. Vincent Eyre, 1st ed. London, 1842. (ii) A Journal of the Disasters in Afghanistan, 1841-2, by Lady Sale. (iii) The Bengal Hurkaru, Monday, January, 24, 1842 and Friday, January 28, 1842).
  6. Derived from 'Ionian' (native of Ionia) the term yaban used to identify the Greeks, probably during and after the invasion (327-326 B.C.), of India by Alexander the Great, but it came later to mean 'Muslims'. Nāre (< nāriyā) lit. 'shaven-headed' applied initially to the Buddhists, but afterwards to Vaisnavites and Muslims, as a term of contempt.
  7. Bengali proverb: pipirār pākhā uṭhe maribār tare.
  8. The deposed ruler of Afghanistan whom Lord Auckland decided to reinstate after driving Dost Muhammad from the throne.



will ... seize all the Afghan wives and cattle.

Oh, you bearded neres, you can watch out from now on!'<sup>9</sup>

(b) The Sikh war. (December, 1845). The first great combat with the Sikhs was fought at Moodkee (18th Dec.) about twenty miles from Ferozepore. In to Gupta's description of the fighting Moodkeer Yuddha there crept a note of comic opera grossly exaggerating the terrifying aspect of the British and their effect upon the Sikhs.

'tears flow from their eyes wetting their chests.'<sup>10</sup>

'The British army has assumed a terrifying aspect, wearing battle-dress and bearing weapons in their hands. 'Kill, kill' they shout as they march to battle, shaking the earth.'<sup>11</sup>

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9. K.S., Ibid, pp. 241-242. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (iii). This hope was largely fulfilled since a subsequent victory over the Afghans was won through the operations of Lord Ellenborough, who succeeded Lord Auckland as Governor-General (1842-1844).

10. K.S., Ibid, p.229. Text:  
baŷeche cakṣer yoge bakṣe bāridhār /

11. Ibid, p.230. Text: dhareche imrāj senā murti bhayāṅkar //  
pareche karāl bastra astrayukta kar //  
baliche badane śuddha marmār dhvani //  
caliche samare sabe taliche dharanī //

The same good-humoured praise of British arms is heard again in Ferozepore Yuddhe Jay (Victory at the Battle of Ferozepore).<sup>12</sup>

'Thank you Lord,<sup>13</sup> congratulations to you, you have set the fields of Ferozepore streaming with Sikh blood. One handed, you managed this. There is no knowing what would have happened if you had two hands. Nowhere do you have an equal in military strategy. Your greatness knows no limit. Together with the Duke,<sup>14</sup> you defeated Bonaparte and preserved the land of Britain. Compared with you, no one possesses might or intellect. Determination is dear to your heart and your success is due to your courage. With your own hand, do you protect your land. Fie upon the Sikhs, how could they hope to stand against you? Bent on war, they came in lakhs, but disappeared in a twinkling ... All our soldiers killed them and

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12. The battle was actually fought (21st & 22nd December), at Ferozeshah; not at Ferozepore. (i) The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars by Charles Gough and Arthur D. Inne, London, pp. 86-106; (ii) B.H.I.G., d. 23-27 December, 1845).
  13. Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief of the British army.
  14. Gough was disabled at the battle of Nivelle (10th Nov., 1813), while serving under Lord Wellington's army.

beat them off with war-like cries ... Anger  
 impairs intellect and cannon balls crush hope:  
 all the beards and moustaches of the Sikhs were  
 burnt.<sup>15</sup>

The same comic-opera episodes appear again:

'Go to hell!.. Damn!..' the British hoot. Abandon-  
 ing their camels, the Sikhs take to their heels ...  
 The bugle is sounded. 'Fire! Fire! you men of  
 foot. Fie upon the enemy. Damn them!' - the white  
 men call. 'where are you off to? We'll have your  
 head!' the sepoys shout. There is a fierce tumult  
 of battle. Smoke rises to the skies. No one can  
 sleep.<sup>16</sup>

The last sentence - 'no one can sleep' - pokes like a  
 sane man's finger of fun at the whole insane comedy of  
 war, and reveals that much as Gupta sided with the British,  
 like all artists, he sided more with humanity: a sane man  
 required sound sleep, and wars like mosquitoes were an awful  
 nuisance.

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15. K.S., Ibid, pp. 232-33. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (IV).

16. Ibid, p.234. Text: Ibid (V).

Nevertheless, tongue-in-cheek Gupta continues to sing the praises of British arms:

'the pride of the white soldiers increases, as they cry again and again: 'kill them! kill them!' Praise be to the Lord Governor,<sup>17</sup> praise be to the Commander-in-Chief, praise be to all other commanders, praise be to all soldiers, praise be their praises, and praise be to the king of England.'<sup>18</sup>

But the old finger of fun is there again, like a baton in a subtle symphony of jeers, giving that extra flick in 'and praise be to their praises' which through its very excessiveness deflates the rest to farce.

Having celebrated the victory with 'all due solemnity', Gupta then splashes on his canvas a few dashes of tomato-sauce blood in order to convey the full horror of the Sikh defeat.

'The Sikhs are doomed. In the blood-red waves of the Ravee, Corpses float in the stream. The wind

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17. Governor-General of India, Sir Henry Hardinge.

18. K.S., Ibid, p.235. Text:

śvet-sainya sabākār brddhi halo ahaṁkār,  
bār bār mār mār bale //  
dhanya Lord Governor dhanya Chief Commander,  
dhanya dhanya anya senāpati //  
dhanya dhanya sainya sab dhanya dhanya dhanya rab  
dhanya dhanya Britisher pati //

washes them ashore. Their hideousness is indescribable. The ... jackals and kites and vultures are over-faced.<sup>19</sup>

He ends with the same farcical image, as he had used when describing the catastrophe at Kabul: As if battles were fought merely to provide banquets for parasites - banquets of such sumptuous proportions that even the greedy, gobbling scavengers of earth and sky, the jackals and the vultures, are outfaced. It is a wonderful cartoon image and also a crushing comment on the fatuousness of war.

Gupta's comments on the Sikhs are scathing, but he mitigates them by appending to them a sacrilegious picture of the British celebrations:

'The Mahārāṇī, the ruler of the Sikhs, cuddles her infant son and grieves pathetically day after day. In the shrine of Guru Nānak, she prays that peace be made with the English. Tej Singh ('Power Lion') himself is greatly enfeebled: where would he get such power? Golāb Singh ('Rose Lion') is a stick without fragrance. And fie upon Ranjor Sing ('Strategy

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19. Ibid, 235. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (VI).

Lion')<sup>1</sup>, he has no strategy. All his war-like bluster is in vain. Lāl Singh ('Red Lion') made his eyes red (i.e. looks very fierce) and beating his shield menacingly, brought his men to the field of battle, but seeing the way Smith,<sup>20</sup> attacked, he stopped in his tracks, turned tail and ran. The Court of Lahore will soon fall to the British, whose preparations are all complete. All the able English, having ~~s~~<sup>e</sup> stayed these devils, will set their tables to dine with the generals. The Chaplain<sup>new</sup> will read aloud the sermon, and the white men of all ranks, holding sherry glasses, will call 'Hip, Hip, Hooray!'<sup>21</sup>

Gupta ends the poem in a sincere plea for peace. The rollicking fun is over. He is now serious. Addressing the Governor he pleads:

'The Sikh-ruler is a child-in-arms. What point is there in oppressing him. O mine of virtue, benevolence, as all the world knows, is never vain: have mercy,

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20. Major-General Sir Harry Smith, Commander of the First Division (Infantry).

21. K.S., Ibid, pp. 235-36. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (VII).

have mercy. Fight no more. End the war.'<sup>22</sup>

The same sort of comic opera atmosphere permeates Sikh Yuddha (The Sikh War), where once again the naughty Sikhs were up in arms:

'All the Sikhs came, laughing confidently and dancing by the hundred. They uttered brave words and struck powerful postures and boasted to their hearts' content.'<sup>23</sup>

These are undoubtedly the villains of the piece, but Gupta introduces them as boisterous, boastful children about to get up to a few pranks and then to be spanked and sent to bed. Their aggression is portrayed in such a manner as to evoke not sorrow but laughter.

'Assuming the guise of death-bringing Yama, they had taken many lives and progressed alarmingly; many people had borne distress; when the Sikhs and their

22. Ibid, p.238. Text: Ibid (VIII).

23. Ibid, p.230. Text: Sikh sab esechila, khal khal hesechila  
necechila senā śata śata /  
ka tubhās bhesechila, bal kari  
thesechila,  
śesechila abhilāsmata //

leaders shook their beards.<sup>24</sup>

And their ultimate defeat is recorded in the same good humour, the loss of heads and singeing of beards being regarded as events of equal gravity:

'With murder on their lips and the power of cannons in their chests, the British penetrated the enemy positions ... Sikh heads flew off and beards and moustaches were singed as they fell holding their swords.'<sup>25</sup>

And the ending is that of a fairy-tale, with the Sikh Queen<sup>26</sup> pondering a fitting punishment for the recalcitrant Sikhs:

'News of the enemy retreat spread far and wide, and their Queen grew angry at heart. With laden breast and in deep remorse, she prepared

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24. Ibid, p.231. Text: kālbeś dharechila, prānpūñja harechila,  
karechila bhayāhak gati /  
bahulok jvarechila, cakṣe jal jharechila  
marechila bahre senāpati // ...
25. Ibid, pp.231-32, Text:  
mār rab mukhe chila, byūhamaddye dhukechila ...  
buke chila kāmāner jor / ...  
Sikh munda urechila, dārī gop purechila,  
thurechila dhari tarbāl //
26. Rani Jindan, a favourite wife or concubine of Ranjit Singh; she had borne him a son named Dhuleep. (A History of the Sikhs by Joseph Davey Cunningham, 2nd ed., London, 1853, p.238).



a harsh punishment.<sup>27</sup>

In Sikh Yuddhe Imrejer Jay (Victory of the English in the Sikh War) Gupta, in jubilant mood, continues his comic-opera description of the Sikh defeat. By now his attitudes are more clearly crystallised: towards the Sikhs he is satirical and towards the British decidedly chummy. Piling up images of impossibilities he derides Sikh aspirations, which are as vain as a dwarf reaching for the moon, an ass outpacing a hare, a heron slaying the greatest serpent of all, the earth-bearing Bāsukī,<sup>28</sup> and a crow entering in a song-contest against a cuckoo. Gupta's belief in the invincibility of British arms is inherent in these images.

Gupta's derision of the Sikhs is complete:

'The Sikhs wanted to destroy the British ...  
Entering the field, their courage failed and  
their faces blanched ... All the big leaders  
among the enemy drowned their bewildered sorrows  
in hemp-smoke. In Lahore before their Queen they  
stood with head bowed ... All the Sikh lions ... are,  
in comparison to us, like jackals. 'We have had our

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27. K.S., Ibid., P.232. Text:  
śatnedal haṭechila, deśe deśe ratechila,  
cotechila mahiśir man /  
duḥkhe buk phetechila, nāk kām ketechila,  
ētechila kariyā śān //

28. The King of the serpent race, who, according to Hindu mythology, supports the earth on his expanded hood.

noses rubbed in war' they tell each other ...  
 All the bearded sardars forsake the battlefield ...  
 Their turbans flutter from their heads ... and in  
 their panic, their beards and moustaches became  
 dishevelled. Having been beaten resoundingly  
 by the sepoys, they fall trembling on the earth  
 and have not the strength to get up again.<sup>29</sup>

Gupta, it seems to us, perhaps goes too far in  
 depicting the humiliation of the Sikhs, who were said to  
 run so fast their turbans were lost and their beards dishevelled  
 - the ne-plus-ultra of humiliation in Sikh eyes. But his  
 exaggeration in this direction is only an expression of the  
 extent of his - and presumably of his readers' - identifica-  
 tion with the British, to whom he refers as us and whose  
 forces he calls ours.

'The strength of our armies increased. With  
 terrible mien, they gave vent to throaty roars.  
 Courageously and angrily they fired the cannons.'<sup>30</sup>

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29. K.S., Ibid, pp. 225-26. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (IX). The  
 Sikh losses were, however, not so great as Gupta indicates,  
 and British casualties were quite heavy, 3,250 being re-  
 ported killed or wounded. (B.H.I.G. Monday, Jan. 12, 1846.)

30. K.S., Ibid, p. 225. Text: amāder senāder bāhubal bāre /  
bikaṭ badane ghor simha nād chāre //  
bedhe hope ka're kop dile top dege //

The victory was, therefore, not only British, but also by proxy Bengali and Gupta rejoices in it:

'All you subjects of this land, united in happiness, sing the praises of the King. Praise be to the Commander-in-Chief. Praise be to the Lord. The British prestige increases. Give thanks to God. The soldiers should be included: praise be to them as well. The honour of the Lord is saved. Thanks be to God. God in this war has revealed His Mercy.'<sup>31</sup>

(c) The Second Sikh War (November, 1848). Ísvarcandra

Gupta's mood during the Second Sikh war remained jovial.

His sympathies still lay with the British cause, and though he called upon his fellow-Bengalis to participate on the British side, he remained realistically aware of the martial spirit of his readers.<sup>32</sup> One wonders at times whether in fact the following is really a call to arms at all or whether

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31. Ibid, p.227. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (X). This stanza echoes the announcement by the Governor-General after the victory, in which he 'congratulates the Commander-in-Chief...' rejoices 'in recording the gallant exploits of the Army' ... and 'invites every British subject ... to return thanks to Almighty God' 'who is the only Giver of all victory'. (The Bengal Hurkaru, postscript, dated Calcutta, Friday morning, January 9, 1846).

32. This refers only to Gupta's contemporary readers, of course, who at that time did not normally join the armed forces.

it is not just one more ricochet in the prolonged battle against the bābu that has characterised Bengali literature since it launched itself into print in modern times. The poem is quoted in full:

'All you people of India are weak and inexperienced. How much longer will you go on eating your rice, fish and lentils and sleeping away your time? Remember the old saying: 'one must bear the blows of one's provider.' Prepare for battle and assist the King.<sup>33</sup> The Sikh army in Lahore are exceedingly strong. It is no longer fitting to idle away one's time. Some of you take up the battle axe, some the shield and some the staff, equipping yourself as best as you can. The subjects of Lahore are ranged in battle to fight fiercely against us. We shall hold them back and, tugging their beards, shall strike their breasts. If we occupy the land of the Sikhs, then our King will be pleased with us. You will fight courageously, yet not without intelligence, never coming within range of cannon-balls. Through the post

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33. It is interesting to note that Gupta was calling upon Indians to fight against Dewan Moolraj, a 'warlike specimen of the mild Hindoo' (B.H.I.G., d. Saturday, January 27, 1849) who staged the rebellion at Mooltan.

even infirm and incapacitated officers are being mobilised for war. March with them in procession, placing the bel-leaf on your heads and crying Hari, and wearing your cāpkāns and slippers, and turbans and white dhuties. Bind your loins with care, lest in the heat of battle you trip. Roaring 'Kill, kill', advance no further than specified above.<sup>34</sup>

(d) Conflict in Burma (April, 1852). When the Burmese War broke out, Gupta opened his old box of tricks to relate in his usual tongue-in-cheek fashion what he imagined the course of events would be. He conceived the Burmese to be as deluded as the Sikhs and the Afghans, and predicted an equally 'dire' punishment for one of their leaders: he would be transported, converted and induced to become an alcoholic like the British.

'The Governor of Rangoon will be defeated,<sup>35</sup> captured and chained by the leg. Shouting 'Hurray!', the

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34. K.S. Ibid, pp. 227-28. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XI). Though written tongue-in-cheek, this may actually have been a sincere call for reinforcements to the British army. The report on the 'bloody battle' at Cheleanwala (13th January, 1849), contains a line as follows: 'We are so weakened in officers that it is doubtful whether we could risk another engagement without reinforcements'. (B.H.I.G., d. January 29, 1849, p. 114).
35. By combined attacks of Naval and Military forces, Martaban and Rangoon were captured on the 5th and 14th April respectively. For details see (i) Life of the Marquess of Dalhousie by William Lee-Warner, London, 1904; (ii) The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence, 1852-56, London, 1932.

white soldiers will either feed him on paddy or cut him to pieces. What is Prince Jambubān to do? His days of fortune are over. At the hands of the British in battle will he find deliverance, for he is a frog posing as a snake. Not for a moment can he conceive how to save his nation, family and prestige. It would have been well, if the Burmese and British had been equally matched, but where is the comparison between a blade of grass and a mountain? He will be kept a prisoner, but will not die. He will take up residence in Van Diemen's Land.<sup>36</sup> There, becoming Christian, he will be stuck like a husking log, instructed in Christian doctrine by a counterfeit cleric, who will initiate him in drinking alcohol.<sup>37</sup>

Inventing a fresh pile of impossible images, Gupta derides Burmese aspirations: the Burmese were insects leaping into a fire; swine entering a beauty competition against

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36. One of the earliest British settlements in Australia, founded by settlers from Norfolk Island and the district of New Norfolk. The settlement of Van Diemen's Land is described by W.C. Wentworth as "infested for many years past by a banditti of runaway convicts who ... are known in the colony by the name of bushrangers" (Description of New South Wales, p.132).

37. K.S., Ibid, pp.243. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XII).

elephants (the epitome of grace to an Indian); rabbit racing against horses; glow-worms imitating the sun; and herons impossibly yearning to slay the earth-bearing Basukī.

'The ugly Burmese wish to drive away the British ... But if these red-faced ones (the British) display their powers fully, then the twisted black-faces (the Burmese) will become even more black.'<sup>38</sup>

As for all enemies of the British, for the Burmese also, Gupta has nothing but contempt: they are 'ants that grow wings only to die'; 'sparrows boasting before eagles'; 'idiots'; 'their bodies are all painted'; 'their behaviour is curious, like two-legged animals'; and their leader is a 'stupid lord of idiots', who, 'screaming 'tiger' ... will foolishly flee.'<sup>39</sup>

By now it must have become clear even to non-historians, that Gupta's purpose was in no way to give an authentic description of the wars to which he refers. Once actual

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38. Ibid, p.244-45. Text: Ibid, (XIII).

39. Ibid, pp.244-46.

historical allusions to persons and places have been removed, the remaining portions of the poems become virtually interchangeable, and indeed Gupta repeats lines and ideas from one poem to another; e.g., the jackals and vultures being overfaced with the profusion of corpses; ants growing wings only to die; and the use of a whole pile of images indicating impossibilities. No, Gupta's purpose was definitely not descriptive: the following passage from Yuddha Sajjā is in this respect a perfect negative example.

'A war-like sentiment has taken root in the mind of the King. The British army dashes to do battle in Rangoon ... death is certain for the scheming Burmese ... The flower of error has blossomed in the woods of destruction ... The sounds of war are spreading. The earth is trembling. Danger is imminent. The King remains unaware of it. The English have been angered ... and are paying back his ferocity with their claws. The King's minister has gone on tricking people. The fires of anger have blazed up in their hearts. These fires are not to be extinguished with treaty waters. The English army is on the march. The earth is trembling. 'Kill them! Kill them!', this sound alone



issues from their lips. They have donned the clothes and raiments of destruction. They have abandoned love of their lives ...<sup>40</sup>

Except for the line, 'the flower of error has blossomed in the woods of destruction', there is scarcely a phrase or idea that is not repeated or echoed elsewhere. Indeed, in this single passage 'the earth trembles' twice.

The whole passage is in fact a conventional Bengali description of the prelude to war: the enemy were 'scheming'; their minister was 'tricking the people'; their 'death is certain'; there was to be no escape via 'treaty waters'; the British were tigers, as is implied in 'claws'; they were calling 'kill them, kill them', as the heroes always did in Bengali verse; and they were clad in 'the raiments of destruction'. What in fact we have here is a typical Bengali prelude to a just war: it could equally well have been used to describe Rām setting out for Lāṅkā to destroy the evil, scheming Rābaṇ; or Durgā setting off on her lion mount to despatch yet another impious demon, who had to be destroyed at her hands in order to <sup>gain</sup> final salvation.

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40. G.B., pp.297. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XIV).

Thus Gupta is deliberately, purposefully repetitive: he wished to awaken in the minds of his readers unconscious echoes from the Hindu epics, the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārat, in order to convince them of the justness of the British cause and the inevitability of their triumph, for just as when any Hindu deity smashed a demon, he did so for the demon's good, similarly when the British destroyed, they did so for the good of those they destroyed. It was this message of the benevolence and justness of the spread of British power that Gupta through these repetitions and deliberate echoings was seeking to convey. He clearly felt that British expansion in India would benefit Bengalis, and perhaps all other Indians also.

(ii) Mutiny. Sipāhī Yuddhe Śānti Prārthanā (A Prayer for Peace in the Sepoy Mutiny). This opening poem on the mutiny brings a complete change of tone. Gupta's faith in British arms was temporarily shattered. He turned in complete sincerity to God, who alone seemed capable of averting further calamities.

'O Saviour of the poor, be merciful. Remove from us, O Lord, the fear of the enemy ... Let King and

subject by Thy Grace be happy ... The burden of pain imposed upon us by the oppressive acts of these wicked men is no longer bearable. Property, lives and honour are all laid waste. Why, O Lord, art Thou so angry with India?<sup>41</sup>

'... Being in our hearts Thou seest all. By Thy mercy end the unrest there ... I remember Thy feet. I meditate upon Thee. In my heart I call upon Thee plaintively. Restrain any anger Thou mightest be feeling ... Dispense true justice. Thou art the Ruler and Preserver of the Universe. Prove worthy of Thy great name. The sinners and unbelievers are ... murdering women and children without reason. I am blocking my ears to all these tales, for I can't bear any more. How, except by being callous, can I go on living, after having witnessed all this? There is nothing more for Thee to see, for Thou art the Sun and the Moon. Thou knowest all that happens within the hearts of Thy creatures ... how couldst Thou have remained

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41. K.S., Part II, p.208. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XV).

inactive so long?<sup>42</sup>

This is a prayer for the Sepoy Mutiny to be ended. Gupta clearly did not sympathise with the sepoys, for he branded them as 'wicked men' (durjjan)<sup>43</sup> who had imposed an unbearable burden of <sup>pain</sup> ~~chance~~ upon the hearts of their fellow-country men.<sup>44</sup> He apparently felt that the Mutiny in some way expressed God's anger with India.

'Why, O Lord, art Thou so angry with India?'<sup>45</sup>

He beseeched God to prove worthy of His merciful name and of His reputation as Ruler and Preserver of the Universe, by terminating this mutiny in which

'Sinners and unbelievers ... are murdering women and children without reason.'<sup>46</sup>

The tales of atrocities were indeed so great that Gupta closed his ears to them, saying that unless he himself

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42. Ibid, p.209. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XVI).

43. In Prabhākar editorials, they were condemned as being 'irreligious' (adhārmik), 'disobedient' (abādhyā), 'ungrateful' (akṛtajña) etc. and termed as 'ants' (pipirā), 'mule' (aśvatāra), 'lamb' (meṣāābak), 'dogs' (kukkur), 'mouse' (muṣik), etc., compared to the great martial power of the British. (S.P., d. 20.6.1857, 22.6.1857, 29.6.1857 etc. S.B.S.C., Vol.I, pp. 226-241.)

44. The Mutiny was considered as an attempt to revive the old Yaban administration which had oppressed the Hindus in various ways. (S.B.S.C., Ibid, pp. 226-227, 236-239.)

45. K.S., Ibid, p.208. Text: Bhārater prati nāth, kena eta kop?

46. Ibid, p.209. Text: pāmar pātakī, pāsanda yata ... ramani bālak kariche hata //

became as insensitive as stone, he would not be able to live any longer. Yet the inactivity of Omniscient God bewildered him.

The next two poems Allahabāder Yuddha (Battle at Allahabad) and Nānā Sāheb mark a return of optimism. The tide of British fortune was on the turn: 'the sepoys ... at Prayāg have been rendered absolutely powerless;<sup>47</sup> and Nānā Saheb has been lured into a trap - 'At first you saw the dove, now at last you see the snare.'<sup>48</sup>

Dillīr Yuddha (The Fighting at Delhi). In this poem Gupta is back on form again, praising the British and condemning the mutineers: the British were now lions and the mutineers mere pups.

'When they heard the lions' roar, they made off one by one, yelping like puppies.'<sup>49</sup>

The theme of contempt, started in the simile 'like puppies' continues throughout the remainder of the poem.

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47. K.S., Ibid, p.223. Text: Prayāgete chila yata, sipāyer dal / ekebāre sakaletē, holo hatabal //
48. Ibid, p.212. Text: āgete dekhecha ghughu, sēse dekha phād //  
(Bengali proverb).
49. Ibid, p.222. Text: simhanād śune gela, eke eke sore / gheu gheu, pheu pheu, kheu kheu kare //

The bravado of the mutineers was as empty as the autumn clouds, which not only contained no rain but were quickly dispelled by the sun's rays, which symbolised British might, about to roll back the clouds of tyranny. The mutineers were so cowardly that Gupta no longer saw them as men: they quit Delhi 'shrieking like cats'; 'they roam the forests empty-handed'; 'they die of terror at the fear of being caught'; 'no longer able to return to human habitations, they have made the grass their bed and the forest their home like animals.'<sup>50</sup> The mutineers were in fact seen by Gupta as so unmanned at the approach of the British army that he asked almost incredulously, 'O all you wicked low fellows, whose encouragement was it that sustained you?'<sup>51</sup> Gupta's final damnation of the mutineers is voiced in the closing couplet:

'God is eternally averse to all who foolishly refuse to be satisfied with their own stations.'<sup>52</sup>

Underlying all the poems on the mutiny so far mentioned is a single theme: British rule was right in the eyes of God.

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50. Ibid, pp. 221-222.

51. Ibid, p.223. Text: ore torā narādhām, yata duṣṭa /  
kār bale hoṃechili, eta puṣṭa

52. Ibid, p.223. Text: yata mūrha nij pade, nahe tuṣṭa /  
cirakāl tāhāder, bidhi ruṣṭa

In Sipāhī Yuddhe Śānti Prārthanā, Gupta expressed bewilderment that God, who was the Ruler and Preserver of the Universe, whose eyes were the Sun and the Moon, and who was therefore Omniscient, could have remained inactive so long in the face of such irreligiousness. Again in Nanā Saheb Gupta attributed Nānā's rebellion to the darkness of irreligiousness which blinded him to the consequences. And in Dillīr Yuddha the same theme recurs in: 'God is eternally averse to all who foolishly refuse to be satisfied with their own stations;' i.e., Gupta was clearly implying that British rule was morally justified and rebellion against it was not only criminal, but sinful.

This same theme emerges again in Yuddha Śānti:

'Our fears are over ... Delhi has been recaptured, and the Bādśah and the Begum both incarcerated. Two of their beloved sons have died as a result of their own purposeless misdeeds and oppression ... where now is their bravado and courtly splendour? All buried beneath the clod ... They have reaped a terrible harvest from their deeds; yet still the sun and moon alternate and still truth persists and religion prevails ... still Thou dispensest justice from the skies. None but Thou could have granted

victory. The evil-doers have been duly punished. We salute Thy feet.<sup>53</sup>

Now that God was once more in His heaven and all was right with the world, Gupta again painted one of his cheerfully grizzly pictures of the horrors of war: the blood and the kites and the corpses all popped up once more, like old friends, and once again Gupta was apparently enjoying himself:

'The waters of the Jamuna are no longer as before. They are filled with blood. How am I to bathe?'<sup>54</sup>

Once more he was the sane man on the field of battle, perplexed by domestic difficulties:

'How am I to drink these waters, when thirsty? Corpses are floating on them everywhere and sepoys are leaping in to drown. Both banks are smothered in ashes and all around I see only dogs and jackals. Vultures and kites come sweeping through the skies and their thirst is

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53. Ibid, p.225. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XVII).

54. Ibid, p.226. Text: Jamunār jal ār, pūrbbabat nāi re /  
hayēche rudhire bharā, kenanete nāi re //



slaked on the blood of princes. They are over-faced and can drink no more.<sup>55</sup>

A fastidious bābu, Gupta had difficulty in finding a standing room on this scene of holocaust.

'Here and there corpses lie in heaps. The stench assails my nostrils. Where am I to stand. There is scarcely a spot left unpolluted. Where am I to eat, lie down and sleep in peace? Wherever I look the same sight greets my eyes. Nowhere in this land is free from violence. Death walks the Jamuna's shores, with hideous lips spread in a yawn. I am speechless to express my gratitude to the King of Righteousness, who has dispelled these perils. Come, brothers, let us sing the British victory. Come, let us joyously praise God.'<sup>56</sup>

In Agrār Yuddha (War at Agra) it at last begins to become clear why God - according to Gupta - was averse to the Mutiny. The Mutiny was associated with Islam. It

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55. Ibid, p.226. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XVIII).

56. Ibid, p.227. Text: Ibid, (XIX).

was an attempt perhaps to re-establish Mogul rule, and as such was to be resisted.

'Drums have sounded at Agra and the earth shaken with martial feet. All those who plotted have taken fright and fled. Shouting and looting the forts of Delhi, they strutted with proud arrogance. Where now is that shouting and that pride? Who now arrogantly displays the splendour of his beard? Abandoning the contest, they now call out, 'O Allah, we have fallen into jeopardy.' All the mullahs are about to loose their trousers and are wailing with remorse. He, the leader of them all, who first took up the chalk in Delhi's fort to reckon his spoils, that chief lord, who with stick in hand issued orders from astride his fleet-footed steed, who cruelly bursting into the treasury looted all its wealth, and who in his heart envisaged the sacking of Laṅkā, has looked around and seen the rope twisted in readiness. Where is he now, that Kālnemi, the uncle of Rābaṇ, who dreaming of an empire first beat the drum and displayed his martial prowess, flinging sticks and stones, and who, when

assuming royal robes, wore the shirt and cap?'<sup>57</sup>

Kānpurer Yuddhe Jay (Victory at Kanpur). By the time of his final poem on the Mutiny, Gupta was back in fine, satirical form, firing his arrows of invective at Nānā and his crowd. Having praised Bajī Rāo Pāsā as 'a virtuous man' and Mahārāstra as a 'great country venerated in this world', he indicates how the Pāsā came to adopt Nānā as his son and then continues:

'that great rascal Nānā ... called him Father, just as the young of the cuckoo dwell in the nest of the crow ... He ought to be done away with before he does us harm. Did Nānā obtain the kingdom by right that he should throw his weight about so much? ... If he was the son of a Pāsā, why does he behave like a peasant? ... He may be a Hindu, but his faults are boundless ... '<sup>58</sup>

This obviously was the sore point with Gupta. Nānā was a Hindu, yet he misbehaved himself. Gupta had, however,

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57. Ibid, p.224-25. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XX).

58. Ibid, p.213. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XXI).

solved this problem earlier, by alleging that Nānā was 'blinded by the darkness of irreligiousness.' He continues the same idea here:

'No, No, Nānā is a sinner; everyone should cease talking about Nānā. Cease writing, O my pen, for you must needs enthuse with constant love ...',<sup>59</sup>

Gupta directed the same charge against Kumār Singh:

'Everyone is bound to acknowledge that his treason was most sinful and he will not escape its consequences, the poor wretch, even if he flees the country, for his deeds and irreligiousness have damned him.'<sup>60</sup>

Amar Singh too was guilty in the same respect:

'He was loyal, but he will die, because of his stupidity which led him into sin.'<sup>61</sup>

The Queen of Thānsi was also condemned:

"... the Queen of Jhānsi has become a brazen crow  
... Nānā is her husking log and she is a snarling

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59. Ibid, p.216. Text: Ibid, (XXII).

60. Ibid, p.217. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XXIII).

61. Ibid, p.217. Text: ...karmmadose dharmmadose, adhahpāte  
yābe /

bitch who consorts with cow herds ... being  
the grandmother of Nānā, the Queen must die.<sup>62</sup>

But when condemning the Muslims, Gupta is on safer  
ground and really lets himself go:

'Now all the big neres with goatees are coming  
to confront us: jump on their backs and slap  
them hard, hitting to the bone. In the West  
mia mullāh with his trousers coming down is  
atoning for his sins. Angrily blast him with  
your cannon till he is all burnt up. They have  
wicked designs, yet in deeds they are sheep, all  
these shaven-headed ones. There are none so vile  
and low as the neres. They are like hot burnt  
chillies, full of badness from beginning to end.  
Clad in rags and seated on sacking, they scorn  
the whole world, as if it were a small disk. They  
are grass-snakes, yet make to strike like cobras.  
Not one iota of ~~of~~ poison do they possess, yet  
their hoods are as large as elephants' ears.'<sup>63</sup>

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62. Ibid, p.218. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XXIV).

63. Ibid, pp. 218-219. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XXV).

Then to complete his Mutiny series in the real Christmas spirit, Gupta turned finally to the barbaric British and the benevolent Bhagabati:

'Get ready, all you white men, and shouting 'Hurray', pursue and catch the neres. Plundering their throne, fiercely drink their blood. Drink as much sherry as you can and be merry, holding a glass in your hand. Dance about and shout, 'Hip-hip-hurray!' It's very cold these days. So take a little rum and brandy, and sing the praises of Jesus to your heart's delight. The fear of the enemy is over. Victory has been gained, thanks to the general who by the strength of his arm performed the impossible. God has preserved his prestige. Thanks to Lord Colin Campbell. Bravo, bravo. You're a spear to the enemy. Where are you, Mother Bhagabati? I salute you. Through your kindness, completely eradicate the enemy.'<sup>64</sup>

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64. Ibid, pp. 219-20. Text: Ibid, (XXVI).

(iii) Political comment.

(a) British Sāsan (British Rule). Fundamentally Gupta's political outlook was medieval. At the back of his mind was the typical Hindu cosmic framework into which kingship and caste were slotted in their appropriate positions. The rule of kings carried divine sanction and was therefore morally justified: rebellion was thus not only criminal, but sinful; and this applied no matter what the religion or race of the king in question happened to be. This much of Gupta's conception of kingship can be deduced from the poems so far considered in this chapter. British Rule adds further detail to Gupta's conception.

Throughout the poem the British authorities are personified as the 'King'. This 'King', like the mythological Rām, to whom Gupta indirectly refers in the phrase Rāmarājya (Rām's realm), has distinct moral obligations, as laid down in the scriptures. He should be surrounded by 'righteous, honest and good' ministers (clearly brāhmins are envisaged, though not specified) and 'noble, scholarly' courtiers (poets like Gupta perhaps?). Both ministers and courtiers should counsel the King well, keeping his mind on religion. In assessing taxes the King should allow for floods, droughts

and crop-failures, thus ensuring through his leniency that agriculture was not depressed by oppressive taxation, but rather stimulated to produce more abundantly. A prosperous agricultural industry would in turn stimulate commerce and trade, increasing the nation's wealth.<sup>65</sup>

Improved international trade would have important consequences, not only economic, but also cultural. The Indian's living standards would improve through the importation of foreign goods, and their mental horizons would widen through acquaintance with foreign languages, cultures and civilisations. People would be happy and prosperous and work with increased zeal and enthusiasm, since success and initiative would no longer be penalised through excessive taxation.

Whilst painting this picture of increasing economic prosperity, Gupta stresses that its realisation depends upon a proviso:

'The King's power is a very great power and is incomparable, but he requires not only the power

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65. K.S., Part II, pp. 228-232. This constitutes a recurrent theme of Prabhākar editorials, written at different times. (S.P., d. 9.4.1847, 22.7.1847, 8.6.1847, 29.7.1854, S.B.S.C., Vol.I.).



of arms but also the power of the scriptures.<sup>66</sup>

i.e., to survive a Government required not only military might, but also the moral authority which derived from the discharge of its moral obligations to its subjects. Throughout the poem Gupta implies that this moral authority was lacking, because in fact the British were not behaving like the ideal monarch.

The revenue acts, the so-called Sunset Laws,<sup>67</sup> apparently provided for the confiscation of the lands and estates of loyal kings and zamindars, who, through no fault of their own, were temporarily unable to pay their taxes.

'Is it right to oppress them? This is not kingship. Any King who behaves like this fills his worldly store with disrepute.'<sup>68</sup>

Rather than stimulate agriculture, such oppressive acts would, Gupta implies, depress it.

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66. K.S., Ibid, P.228. Text: rājbal, barabal, tulya yār nāi /  
śāstrabal, śāstrabal, dui bal cāi//
67. An editorial comment in Friend of India ascribing the reason of increased revenue proceeds (1852) to Sunset Law, was contradicted by an editorial published in the Prabhākar (d.October, 1852), saying that many zamindaris went to auction and the subjects were suffering immeasurably due to this Law. (S.B.S.C., Ibid, p.54).
68. K.S., Ibid, p.234. Text: lobher adhīn hoīe, anyāy ācār /  
eei ki ucit hai dhārmik rājār ...

Gupta furthermore censures the British for engaging in trade: this was inimical to the interests of their Indian subjects.

'All the scriptures state that commerce is the province of merchants; it is not right for kings to engage in it ... their doing so is against the interests of their subjects.'<sup>69</sup>

As an illustration of this, Gupta cites the Company's monopoly of opium and salt. 'This unjust greed of the King' was jeopardising the livelihood of Indians engaged in those industries. The British had assumed ownership of 'whatever foods and medicines occur naturally'. This was unreasonable. 'Whatever occurs naturally is a natural phenomenon and everyone has an equal right to it.' By insisting upon the monopoly of salt and opium the British were therefore depriving their subjects of natural rights.

Under British rule no means existed whereby one might protest. Government Service was now the chief avenue to material advancement and in consequence competition for entrance

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69. Ibid, p.232. Text:

bānijya karibe sādhu, sarbbaśāstre kaý /  
rājār bānijya bidhi, kakhanai naý // ...  
prajār pratul pathe, kare pratishedh /  
rājār bānijya tāi, niyame nisedh //

was keen.

'An official post brings prestige and fame and unless one has an official post, no one will respect one.'<sup>70</sup>

Yet Government Service in effect muzzled the most articulate section of Indian society and rendered protest impossible.

'Those who get protection (i.e. official employment) remain loyal. Indeed, they are kept in subjection by the protection they receive.'<sup>71</sup>

As far as Gupta could see at the time of writing - and one presumes this to have been prior to the Mutiny and Queen Victoria's proclamation- the only path to improvement lay through universal education and tolerance. The Government should finance education for all, by doing so it would ensure that 'corruption and immorality would absolutely cease'. Furthermore, the Government should exercise religious toleration, refraining from interference with the castes and customs of its subjects.<sup>72</sup>

70. Ibid, p.235. Text: padetei mān hay, padetei yaś/  
pade nā thākile tār, kebā hay baś ?  
 71. Ibid, p.234. Text: anūgata āśrita ye, sab lok thāke /  
tāder āśray deyā, adhīnete rākhe //  
 72. Ibid, pp. 237-238.

(b) Nilkar (Indigo Planters). This poem comes as a great surprise. Before we have met poems about English personalities in which the conventional imagery of Bengali poetry applied to gods and goddesses is used for satirical purposes, but in this poem one senses that Gupta, writing in the manner of Rāmprasād Sen, addresses Queen Victoria as Mother, as Rāmprasād did Kālī, with complete sincerity; and just as Rāmprasād used to confess his own faults and failings, but nevertheless demand his Mother's love, so does Gupta with Queen Victoria.

'Assume the name of Annapūrṇā and pour down  
upon us your rice-filled glance ...'

'Many become bad children, but no one becomes  
a bad mother. You are Mother of the World, our  
Mother; we shall call you World-Mother ...'

'Take your subjects to your bosom and speak to them  
as you would to your children ...'

'You remain fondling your white children. Will you  
not look upon our faces, Mother, because we are  
black? ...'

'We may be bad children, but we belong to none but you.'<sup>73</sup>

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73. K.S., Part I, pp. 99-119. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XXVII).

It would seem that Queen Victoria's proclamation, taking India under her direct rule, inspired great hope in India.

'You ended Company Rule ... God bless you. You have illumined hope.'<sup>74</sup>

Reading between the lines, one senses that Indians, or at least Bengalis, saw it as the granting of equality with Europeans.

'May black and white live happily and in equality. No difference shall remain between them.'<sup>75</sup>

Throughout the poem Gupta harps upon the theme of the blackness of Bengalis and the whiteness of Europeans

'Our bodies may be black, but our hearts are not...'<sup>76</sup>

'The indigo planters are the sons of sāhebs: externally they may be gleaming white, but in-

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74. Ibid, p.104. Text: companyr rāj uṭhiye nile ... mā tomār habe bhālo, āsāte dilen ālo.  
 75. Ibid, p.104. Text: sukhe rok samabhābe, sādā kālo, bhed rābenā ār //  
 76. Ibid, p.115. Text: dehā kālo, kālo nai. bhitarete kālo kai? māgo!

ternally they bubble with rotten mud ...',<sup>77</sup>

- from which one deduces that at this time there was a strong sense of racial disparity. Gupta apparently thought this disparity would now end: just as under Mogul rule Hindus and Muslims had been more or less equal and had enjoyed more or less equal opportunities for advancement, now after the proclamation, Indians would enjoy equal opportunities with Europeans. This presumably was why Gupta called upon Queen Victoria to come to Asia and settle there, as the Mogul emperors had done before her, so that the Empress of India would, like the Moguls, become Indian.

'O Mother Queen, do not ruin India. Since you have taken direct control of golden India, make it your home.'<sup>78</sup>

The child-like faith of Gupta in his Mother Queen, Victoria, is revealed in the candour with which he discussed the indigo planters. Without compunction, he compared the granting of magisterial powers to the indigo planters with

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77. Ibid, p.99. Text: kūthel sab sāhebjādā, dhapdhape bāire  
sādā,

78. Ibid, p.106. Text: bhitare pacā kādār bharbharāni  
O mā Queen tomār, India dhām,  
ruin koro-nāka /  
yadi sonār Bhārat, khās korecha,  
bās kore, mā, thāko thāko //

the placing of children in the arms of witches, meaning that the temptation for the oppressive planters to become even more oppressive would be irresistible. It was as ludicrous as expecting snakes to foster frogs.

'Just as it is useless to offer sweet-smelling incense to the hissing Manasā, so it is useless to make appeals on the basis of morality to thieves to whom morality is meaningless.'<sup>79</sup>

The times were bad. The Mutiny had presumably disrupted the country's economy. There were probably areas where, because of the fighting, no harvest had been gathered, and consequently rice was being exported from peaceful Bengal. Because of the shortage of rice, its price had risen perhaps fourfold, and since rice was the staple diet of Bengal, the price of it underpinned the price of everything else.

'Not only rice, but all commodities are selling at grossly increased prices. Things are now four times as dear.'<sup>80</sup>

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79. Ibid, p.100. Text: O mā eke Manasār phōsphosuni,  
dhunor gandha tāy /  
hole coyer kāche dharmma-kathā,  
marmma kabhu boḥhenā //

80. Ibid, p.112. Text: śudhu cāl ba'le naṣ, drabya samudaṣ,  
bikāteche sab agnimūle /  
dar bereche cār gun, bidhātā bigun,  
khābār drabye dile āgun jvele //

When therefore the price of rice rose, labourers and others demanded higher remuneration. Since, however, the wages of the middle class were probably in the most part paid by Government, their income was fixed and in these inflationary conditions decreased in value, so that they could no longer afford the services of the working class.

'Those who were coolies and labourers now behave like bosses and strut about the streets disdainfully. Boatmen on the wharf refuse to work: they ply their boats like magistrates. Fishermen ... themselves eat the fish they catch. We tremble to approach them, for even minnows now sell at twice the normal price.'<sup>81</sup>

Thus it was that Gupta speaks of giving up pretensions to gentlemanly status:

'Never mind, I don't care about being a gentleman. I'll keep alive like a poor man on rice and lentils alone.'<sup>82</sup>

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81. Ibid, p.113. Text: Appendix, Ibid, (XXVIII).

82. Ibid, p.113. Text: yāk cāine bābuyānā, garibānā khānā,  
dhari prāṇ sūdu cele dele /



The situation was aggravated by the cultivation of indigo. The cultivation of indigo was admittedly profitable, though only to the Europeans, who could presumably compel others to cultivate it for them at prices the Europeans would themselves determine. This constituted virtual eviction:

'We are not evicting you: we're merely ploughing up your yard.'<sup>83</sup>

The Indian cultivators may have retained the ownership of their lands, but the use to which it was put was decided by others. Gupta wanted the cultivation of indigo stopped, so as to increase Bengal's rice yield, and consequently to reduce the cost of living. All his hopes were therefore pinned on Halliday, who was conducting an investigation into the oppressiveness of the indigo planters. This investigation was often misinterpreted, but Gupta prayed for its success.

The poems discussed in this chapter represent part of Gupta's love-affair with British rule. Obviously Gupta like

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83. Ibid, p.109. Text: khedāine tor uṭhān caṣi  
(Bengali proverb)

most members of his class saw his fortunes as linked to the Rāj. The wars of expansion were in a very real sense wars for the expansion of Bengal, since Bengal was the centre of British power in North India and since territorial gains by the British would bring corresponding gains to Bengalis in private industry and Government service alike.

Conversely, the Mutiny was a threat not only to British, but also to Bengali, interests. Under British guidance Calcutta and its Bengali inhabitants had moved into the European 19th century: some Bengalis even felt themselves to be European, being fully conversant with European culture and possibly even converted to the European faith of Christianity. Absentee landlords were enjoying urban life and the newly created middle class was now fully committed to the advanced civilisation imported from abroad. To these people the Mutiny threatened the return of medieval Mogul rule. So naturally Bengal remained loyal to the British, as Gupta claimed: its articulate classes were too committed to have any other choice.

Even so, there remained grievances. Indians, Gupta informs us, felt conscious of their colour and inferior status;

and presented the system which placed into the hands of such oppressors as the indigo planters magisterial powers. Though the term 'colonial exploitation' was probably unknown to him, one senses that this was what Gupta was groping to express when he speaks of the 'injustice' and 'greed' of a 'King', committed to commerce. To a man haunted by such a prospect, Queen Victoria's proclamation must indeed have come as 'glad tidings' 'which illumine hope'.

## CHAPTER IX

Patriotism

Īśvarcandra Gupta's mind was steeped in Indian tradition. Unlike westerners, Indians, especially Indians of his period, tended to think in religious, cosmological terms, rather than political. There is a fixed cosmological framework to Gupta's thought: the four ages of Hinduism, those four downward steps from an age of truth (Satyayuga) to this modern age of contention (Kaliyuga). During his procession from age to age man had in the Hindu view grown more and more deluded and degraded, till now in modern times he had become the epitome of baseness.

On this latter theme Gupta is good. In Bhārat Bhūmir Durddāṣā (India's Evil Condition) he sketches the defects of his age with a scathing pen:

'Illusory enjoyment has like a lamp's glow made of men's minds a honey-bee, delighting in ladies' favours. Once indulged, their sensual cravings have intensified and burn within them constantly. Their witty tongues now savour passion, and sparks flash from eye to eye. Their words are envenomed, poisoning compassion and peace. Their darting side-glances, like high winds, whip up the water's of each other's hearts. The snare of greed has once more proved

alluring: blown by the wind of desire, it dangles from the neck of men's minds. Constantly aflame with lust and drunk with delusion, they are all out to steal each other's women and wealth. The moon of men's intellect is swathed in illusion, which clouds their consciences... The country is awash with envy, malice and hatred: everyone is equally affected. Poisoned by arrogance, men's talents die: each man imagines himself the tops and everyone else third-rate... Everyone is bone-idle. The poor are intent on finding fault with others. There is no unity or fellowship in society: each man carries within his heart his own debased morality. People empty their pockets on vice, but when charity calls, their pockets close like the lotus.<sup>1</sup>

All this is familiar Gupta territory: the avaricious, licentious, concupiscent Calcutta of his times.<sup>2</sup> And he continues his theme with gusto, pointing out that even the efforts to stem the rot of Hinduism by the establishment of such institutions as Hindu College and the Dharmma Sabhā had now turned sour: the ideals of the founders had

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1. K.S., Part II, pp.296-297. Text: Appendix, ibid. (XXIX).
  2. Sāstrī, Śibnāth; op.cit., p.55.

been debased by their successors, who were all equally diseased with modernity. Words fail him in regard to the graduates of Hindu College, but the present members of the Dharmma Sabhā were, Gupta implies, either atheists or Christians in disguise.

'People are prepared to perform all kinds of rites and observances, provided they enhance their prestige. My pen bows its head in shame, when called upon to write of how on holy days sin thrives. The efforts which are made to protect Hinduism are as futile as a bridge of sand. To preserve Hinduism a college was set up: the country has yet to recover from it. The leaders of the Dharmma Sabhā were truly virtuous men, but their successors are not proving worthy of them. The father was an idolator: the son is a monotheist; yet his monotheism is only lip-deep, for they are opposed to all religions. They are like swans, who are birds only in name. How can they be called Hindus? They hate Christians in the same way as the cuckoo hates the colour of the crow. Thus has ruination descended on our holy land. Unless God has mercy on us, we are finished.'<sup>3</sup>

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3. K.S., *ibid.*, pp.297-298. Appendix, *ibid.*, (XXX).

Even the final prayer is a familiar Gupta flourish. Yet despite all its familiar features, the poem breaks new ground: it is the first of a series on patriotism. The seed of the series is planted in the opening lines: Gupta, like Rāmprasād before him, was a child; his heart lamented because of the decline in his mother's fortunes; and his mother, like his successor Bankim's, was Mother-India.<sup>6</sup>

'When I see the condition of India, I am like a son distressed by his mother's sorrows; my heart breaks.'<sup>7</sup>

The condition of India was the familiar one he gave above: a country riddled with immorality. But the thing that made this condition so heart-breaking, was the haunting-memory of what India once was, or so Gupta imagined, in that golden age of truth that haunts the Hindu mind. Even Gupta finds the image almost incredible:

'When I think of the good, prosperous times in the past, they seem almost unbelievably impossible.'<sup>8</sup>

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6. Thus his conception fundamentally differs from Derozio's, which was based on pure romanticism. See (i) Poems, 1827, (ii) The Fakeer of Jungheera, 1828. It is most probable that the conception of God as Mother by Rāmprasād Sen and other śākta devotees, has in some way or other influenced Gupta in conceiving the country of his origin as Mother. In the following decade it was taken up and fully developed by Bankimchandra in his Bande Mātaram. (Dāsgupta, Jayanta Kumar, op.cit., pp.105-107.)

7. K.S., ibid, -.294. Text: Bhārater daśā heri bidare hrday / Jananī durbhāgye yathā tāpita tanay //

8. Ibid, p.294. Text: mane ha'le prācīn suker susamay / asambhab bali kabhu pratyay nā hay //

So far, what we have said about this poem, makes it appear a mere lament on the inevitable coming of Kaliyuga. But there is one important line which throws the whole poem in a new light and renders it political:

'A foreign king has come as an enemy and eclipsed the moon of our happiness.'<sup>9</sup>

The 'foreign king' presumably signifies the two periods of alien, non-hindu rule: the Muslim and the British. The important questions posed by Gupta here are: 'How did we become a subject race?' 'Why were we conquered?' and his answer is: 'Because through error and delusion, we ceased to venerate the Vedas'. In a very flowery passage he then describes the wonders of Sanskrit literature and its chief fruit, the scriptures, which led to the attainment of life's four aims: virtue, wealth, enjoyment and salvation - (dharmmaa, artha, kām and moksā). The passage need not detain us: its contents are trite; only its implications are novel, or rather were novel at the time; namely that, the path of freedom lay through a renaissance of Hānduism. Though these implications are there in the poem, they are not brought out, however.

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Ibid., p.294. Text: ripurūpe bijātiya Rājā rāhu āsi /  
sukharūp śasādhare āhārila grāsi //



Sāstra eham Sikṣā Bibrāt (Religious and Educational Crisis). In this poem Gupta returns to the theme of the moral consequences of the neglect of Hindu culture:

'Death is the sun and in its rays India's lake of fame has completely dried up. Like fish out of water, the Hindus are now dying of thirst, crying 'water! water!' And lean has grown our mother-tongue, because of that self-same thirst, which has reduced almost to naught its chances of survival. The scholars are all upset: the scriptures are no longer studied. Knowledge, no longer cultivated, has grown virtually extinct: like serpents without jewels, it remains mere empty sounds. Insult and neglect are its lot in every house; nowhere is it warmly welcomed. Virtue and energy have forsaken our land. With heart-breaking laments, the Vedas too are drowning, uselessly. Because of this neglect the Smṛti are almost forgotten and the Śruti has lost its way to men's ears. Philosophical discourse has dwindled to mere sophistry. Can logic survive without honesty? The tāntras have acquired different significance. No one now knows what their old significance was. The new interpretation is nothing but perversion. Why should one care for them? Poetry too has become debased and rhetoric has lost

its power to embellish speech. The Mahābhārat is no longer at home in India. The purāṇs are ridiculed as outdated. No one now treads virtue's path. We've all forgotten how to. The Gītā is <sup>no</sup> longer read, and its consequences are inevitable. How can people expect to find the path? Their eyes have gone. They're not only completely blind but also enveloped in darkness. The seas are full of nectar (i.e. Hindu Literature still exists), but people can no longer see it. They drink poison instead (they read atheistic Western literature) and try to play the innocent. Drunk with envy, they forsake morality and mistake vile poison for nectar.<sup>10</sup>

Bhāṣa (Language). Gupta continues on more or less the same theme in language - (Bhāṣā). He continues to lament the neglect of Sanskrit and the scriptures, but now alludes to a further issue: the current aversion towards Bengali in intellectual circles.

'Alas! Alas! .. everyone is averse to his own mother-tongue... There's little hope of its surviving... People pull faces at their mother-tongue. How much

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10. G.B., p.254. Text: Appendix, *ibid.*, (XXXI).

of it can be preserved by newspapers. Listen, O my countrymen. Abandon this aversion. Cultivate a liking for each other's newspapers. There is much happiness to be gained from a knowledge of our national culture. Why play the blindman when a bright eye (i.e. the newspapers) is yours? You should take good, proper care of that which brings you knowledge, information and pleasure. May He who created all by His wish ensure the welfare of the Press.<sup>11</sup>

Mātrbhāṣā (Mother-tongue). It is our mother-tongue which taught us all we know, Gupta states in this poem. Since our debt to it is so great, we must cherish it like a mother.

'Lying in your mother's lap, with your head on her thigh, your lips gurgled with laughter. Nectar issued from your lips, in a gentle indistinct lisp, in half-formed words and phrases. In your heart you had <sup>learned</sup> ~~learned~~ to speak, yet your tongue hadn't mastered the difficulties of language... So you were very

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11. Ibid., p.311. Text: Ibid., (XXXII).

frustrated. 'Mummy' 'daddy' 'ābo-ābo' 'abā-ābā', these were like messages from the gods. Gradually you learned to speak. You were overjoyed. Bit by bit, you mastered everything. 'Uncle' 'aunt' 'father' 'bogy' 'ghost' 'mouse' 'snake' 'land' 'water' 'sky' and 'fire'. You would not have known right from wrong, nor would you have become toilet-trained, had you not through language acquired much advice. At the age of five, with chalk in hand and braving the teacher's cane, you studied much in the village-school. With the coming of youth you acquired mental maturity and grew able to distinguish things. By reading books and watching this world-drama, you learnt the difference between right and wrong. Now in old age, sing the praises of the language you have grown to love, your mother-tongue is truly like your mother: it fulfilled your desires. Serve it now happily.<sup>12</sup>

Svadeś (Native Land). It seems as if through these poems Gupta is groping back through a series of common denominators to a sound basis for patriotism. In Mātrabhāṣā he explored the potentialities of common sentiment for one's mother-tongue as a unifying agent.

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12. K.S., Part I, pp.284-285. Appendix, *ibid.*, (XXXIII).

In Svadeś he explores common feeling for mother-earth, the source and sustainer of all life.

'You don't know what creature you are. Your Mother is your Motherland, she holds you to her heart. Children do not forget their mothers, whilst lying in their laps. This is unheard of. You dwell on earth and fulfil all your desires in sleep. Day and night passes, and still you sleep. You have wasted a lot of time, since leaving your mother's womb and taking up with the world. I advise you to love with reverence her by whose strength you speak, move, have your being and derive your energy. Your Mother was herself, the daughter of Earth who is the Mother of the world. Who understands the ways of Earth, who is your Mother and Mother of your father? Her crops and fruits are without number and include precious stones, gold and silver. To sustain the lives of Her creatures, Earth holds to Her breast this immense sun. The depthless ocean is a mine of jewels by virtue of jewel-filled Earth. Located in space the sun pays tribute into the hands of young Queen Earth. Holding the feet of Earth being granted rank, rivers with their waters preserve life. By Earth's enchanting magic, fire and water

dwell in harmony as friends. Hold your worship  
 of Nature and jubilantly salute the feet of loving  
 Earth.<sup>13</sup>

Higher than one's love of Earth must come, however,  
 love of one's mother-land, which was more precious than  
 riches and more pleasurable even than Amarābatī (Indra's  
 heaven) and Kailās (Śiva's Abode).

'But retain your separate love specially for your  
 Motherland who enchants all its children. You  
 may not feel inclined to enjoy Indra's heaven, for  
 the enjoyment of heaven is<sup>2</sup> trifling affair. Śiva's  
 Heaven may be full of the name Śiva, but the real  
 house of Śiva is your Motherland. Jewels, pearls  
 and gold are all equally vain, there is no jewel more  
 precious than love of one's Motherland. The moon  
 contains inexhaustable nectar which like the glad  
 tidings of one's Motherland dispels hunger and thirst.<sup>14</sup>

Having indicated the basis of a common Indian  
 brotherhood, through love of both one's native language  
 and land, Gupta now calls upon his countrymen to unite

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13. Ibid., pp.285-286. Text: Appendix, ibid., (XXXIV).

14. Ibid., pp.287. Text: Ibid., (XXXV).

as brothers and labour in the common cause of revival of Hindu culture and traditions.

'Look O my countrymen, open your eyes full of love thinking of each other as brothers. I cherish this country's dogs with greater love than idols from abroad. Only those who live abroad really know the meaning of love for one's country. Holding in imagination the brush of emotion they draw on a canvas the picture delineating their land. Come tread the path of righteousness according to the scriptures of our Motherland and happily cultivate knowledge. Enhance your mother-tongue, fulfil its hope, diffuse learning throughout the land. Time is passing. Why go on being deluded? Learn to love God, dwelling in this India, sing God's praises day after day. In this way and in this year. Take my advice: do not dislike your Motherland. Abandon hope of useless happiness, your love is not genuine love where else will you find love? When you leave this house, what more can you hope for on reaching that land which destroys hope? Who will ever see you again, you came alone and you go alone and you never return.'<sup>15</sup>

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15. Ibid., pp.287-288. Text: Appendix, ibid., (XXXVI).

There is much that is vague in Gupta's vision:

Sanskrit and Bengali, and India and Bengal become confused and at times possibly interchangeable, but despite this confusion in regard to the positive symbols on which Indian/Bengali patriotism was to be based, the negative symbols are clear: Gupta's patriotism is Hindu patriotism, linked with the path of virtue as laid out in the Hindu scriptures and strengthened by a hard-core of xenophobia clearly expressed in 'I cherish this country's dogs with greater love than idols from abroad.'

Bhārat Santāner Prati (To the Sons of India). The title of this poem is important. The word for son in Bengali is generally either chela (colloquially) or putra (extremely literary), the use of the word santān in this sense is rare. Gupta uses it here. In the hands of later writers Santān was to become to mean virtually Patriot.<sup>16</sup> Gupta was perhaps the originator of this trend. In his poem Bhārat Santāner Prati, he calls upon his countrymen to serve their Motherland:

'Time is passing, how much longer will you remain lost in your sleep of delusion. The pitcher of happiness grows gradually empty, you are now wasting

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16. The theme is fully developed in Bankimchandra's famous novel Anandamath (1882). Derozio's approach was different in as much as it was conceived in monologues, (contd. on next page....)



time through laziness. Get up, quit your bed, why go on sleeping? Just look what has happened outside. Why waste more time in sleep? Open the door of your mosquito-net and look up. Idleness is not ordained by Providence. Achieve the good of your Motherland to the best of your ability. My prayer to God is this: let the king (i.e. the Government) be dedicated to justice and good conduct. By virtue of this my prayer, may the queen's welfare be achieved and may all the sons of India attain happiness.<sup>17</sup>

Bhārater Abasthā (India's Condition). In India's Condition Gupta swings back to faith in God as the source of revival of Hinduism.

'The waters of the ocean have dried and an island has appeared. The lamp of the Hindus has completely burnt out. But if God, who permeat<sup>es</sup>~~es~~ the Universe and is an ocean of Mercy and a friend to the poor, becomes once more the Friend of India, there<sup>will</sup>/no longer be any need to worry about the happiness of the Hindus. It was an ocean, it became a drop, it will become once more an ocean. If the Hindu by the

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(.....contd. from previous page.)

rather than addressed to people at large:

'May be by mortal awakened once again,

Harp of my country, let me strike again!'

(Poems, op.cit., p.1.)

17. G.B., p.314. Text: Appendix, ibid., (XXXVII).

virtue of God becomes an ocean, then the Hindu will easily rise. Once the rays of happiness of the Hindu were luckily very fierce. Those days are no more. The rays of the sun grow more feeble each day. The river of fortune was once, due to the rains of God's mercy, in full spate. The waves of happiness strenthened ceaselessly by the waters of joy, dashed swiftly along dancing endlessly. The unseen snows of fate, that was once glorious, have become, in course of time, blackened. The river of fortune of the Hindus has now completely dried up and has lost its prestige. In its season, the bud of the flowers blossomed: its fragrance was diffused attracting the bees. But now its petals have withered and its all dried up. Its fragrance and honey is gone and the humming of the bees has ceased.<sup>18</sup>

Even so, the task was such that God's love alone would not prove sufficient, unless supplemented by the energetic cooperation of the Hindus.

'Wake up, wake up, wake up - all you sons of India.

Sleep no more in idleness. Lift up your heads and

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18. K.S., Part II, pp.331-332. Text: Appendix, ibid., (XXXVIII)

open your eyes, and wipe away the tears of your Motherland. Your bed has broken. It is lying on the floor. So why are you still so desirous of sleep? The night is over. Dawn has broken. The darkness you see is but a layer of mist. The radiance of the sun lies obscured in its darkness, the beauty of the morning is veiled in mist. A slight glow of day is discernible like a reddish line. If you open your eyes it will be seen steadily. How much longer can this mist of despondency persist?<sup>19</sup>

Though speaking of despondency, Gupta is, however, momentarily sanguine of India's bright future; and writes in a punningly playful mood of the role of both God and Gupta as master of the Sun and the Press in dispelling the mists of despondency, shrouding India and delaying the dawn of her future greatness.

'When the sun appears (or, when the Prabhākar is published) it will all be dispelled. God is a powerful lion (or I, Iśvarcandra, am no weakling) and by nature a dispeller. This elephantine mist will not last long at His (or, my) hands. The sun was hidden (or, Gupta's Prabhākar still exists), when it is manifested (or, when it is published), there

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19. Ibid., pp.332-333. Text: *ibid.*, (XXXIX).

will be nothing more to be feared from despondency.

It will definitely achieve the good of India, the light of well-being will irradiate in all directions.<sup>20</sup>

Bhārater Bhāgya Biplāb (India's Future Revolution). The final poem on this theme of Hindu patriotism and renaissance begins on a note of pessimism, rises up the scale to optimism, then in typical Gupta fashion falls back to a final note of gloom.

'Mother India, why should you go on being unadorned by religion? Why should you burden yourself uselessly to the point of death with all these sons of yours who are completely ignorant? Not a trace now remains of the old morality of this country. Everyone is constantly engaged in immorality. Where now are the old codes of behaviour? People are now enamoured with irreligion. The śruti has lost its way to their ears. The dreadful plight of my Motherland is heart-breaking - and my mind is deeply disturbed by it. Even my pen weeps to describe it. In the form of ink, tears of sorrow flow from its sad face. Alas, how glorious India was and how it has declined.<sup>21</sup>

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20. Ibid., p.333. Text: Appendix, ibid., (XXXX).

21. This theme was first introduced by Derozio, though in English language. As an example, the following stanza can be quoted:

'My country! in thy day of glory past  
A beauteous halo circled round thy brow,  
(contd. on next page.....)

Will India's fame ever return? When will all her sorrows be at an end? And when will the constant rains of happiness infuse her with multifarious life? This Queen that was dear to God, this genuine language amongst languages, this ancient moribund tongue, will, being resuscitated, sing the praises of God dwelling constantly on men's tongues. The flowering creeper of civilization will wax strong in the lakes of men's hearts and on it the hundred-petalled happiness, its body thrilling with delight, will blossom in the rays of the sun of learning. Becoming murmurous and fragrant and extending its fame in every direction it will proclaim the glad tidings. Independence, thanks to the love of our Motherland, will infuse beauty into the decrepit limbs of India. It will dispel all tiredness and uproot deep-rooted delusions, and will shower down the waters of peace. This sacred land will once more, after regaining its former happiness, attain fresh life and youth. The old lady becoming young once more will take to her bosom all her children and cherish them and they sucking her nectar-like breasts

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(.....contd. from previous page)

And worshipped as a deity thou wast -

Where is that glory, where that reverence now?'

(The Fakeer of Jungheera, title pages V)

will gaze steadily into the face of their Mother. All this is like a dream and infuses into my heart sweet sentiments. When alas, will it ever come to pass, the Mother mourns, and all her children lament with her.'<sup>22</sup>

The final gloom is justified. Gupta's task was merely to 'publish the vision, broadcast and screen it.' The realisation of the vision was up to his countrymen. All he or any poet could do was to provide the inspiration: the perspiration had to come from elsewhere.

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The period during which the poems in the preceding five chapters were written ~~in~~ roughly from 1830 to 1858. As is mentioned at the outset, this was the period of the rise and extension of British power in India. On no side, until the Mutiny, did the Europeans meet with any obstacle they could not surmount; and as their power grew, so did their confidence and, unfortunately, their arrogance also. It was the arrogant, confident Europeans

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22. Ibid., pp.340-341. Text: Appendix, *ibid.*, (XXXXI).

of Calcutta that Išvarcandra depicted and attempted to satirise.

Whence does satire spring? People use satire when nothing else is to hand. Satire is the weapon of the weaponless. There was essentially no communication between Išvarcandra and European society. What he knew of them was information gained from a distance. He knew that they drank: he was presumably accustomed to seeing European-drunks. He knew that they attended Church, for he had seen European churches. He knew that they swore because he himself, like many others who knew little or no English, was familiar with their pet oaths: 'Damn, go to hell!' This phrase occurs again and again in his verses. He was aware too of their contempt for 'the black native'. Indications of colour-prejudice on the part of the Europeans and colour-sensivity on the part of Gupta and his fellows, are common in his verse. Obviously he sensed the consciousness of racial superiority emanating from the British and, in order to deride their superiority and show how ill-founded it was, he composed such poems as Griṣma and Tapasyāmāch, ridiculing the defeat of the world-conquering Britisher at the hands of, on the one hand, the Bengali climate and, on the other, the charms of the mango-fish.

Communication between the British and the Bengalis was not impossible but it was limited. In the early days of British settlement, Britishers had deemed it a privilege to live on an Indian standard and to adopt Indian ways, but gradually this privilege had changed hands. The more power the British acquired, the less Indian they became and the less the opportunities granted to Indian society for mixing with them. Gupta records only one occasion when the highest society of the British and Bengali met, to celebrate the Durgāpujā, and his account is, of course, satirical, because he, like the vast majority of Bengalis, was excluded.

It is a sad thing when ruler and ruled are divided by custom, culture and even language. To bridge the gap, one must assimilate to the other, but who was to do the assimilating, the minority English or the majority Bengalis? Gupta ridiculed anyone who attempted to assimilate to European ways or to gain the favour of the British. He ridiculed the poor, half-starved Anglo-Indians, celebrating Christmas Day; he ridiculed young Bengal and the newly-educated who attempted to celebrate Christmas in western-fashion; and most of all, he ridiculed those arch-champions of assimilation, those wreckers of Hindu domestic peace, Duff and his crowd: the weeping tiger and all his wailing cubs.



Satire springs to some extent from envy. It is a sad thing when men of equal ability do not enjoy equal opportunities, because one is in some way privileged, whereas the other is not. Gupta voiced the unprivileged envy of the Bengali masses, of the former aristocracy who had now fallen from grace, and also of himself. Learning English and getting a job under the British was the path to fame, fortune and prestige; composing verse in Bengali was a means of obtaining popularity amongst the under-privileged alone. Gaurīśaṅkar, Gupta's rival, enjoyed privileges and prospects that Gupta could never hope to gain. It was partly, we would say, out of envy of Gaurīśaṅkar and his likes, that Gupta gave vent to his satirical vein.

Satire is, however, the laughter of an essentially serious man and behind Gupta's laughter there lay a bitterness that was to bring to Bengal the tragedy of communal unrest and finally of political division. The Bengali nationalism that was to begin to assume a final form in the works of Bankimcandra has its roots in Išvarcandra Gupta. We see little essential difference between Gupta's poems on the Mutiny and Bankimcandra's historical novels, except for the fact that Gupta was forced by events to ridicule non-Bengali Hindus such as

the Sikhs and Mārāṭhās. Both Gupta and Bankim rejoiced in the defeat of the Muslims and seemed, if one reads between the lines, to praise British victories more as stepping stones to the ultimate rise of the Hindu nation.

All the preceding five chapters - Religion, Hindu Society, European Society, Political Attitude and Patriotism can be seen as links in one consecutive chain of thought. Permeating them all is the basic metal of alienation. Hindu Society clarifies Gupta's ideas on what contemporary Hindu society was and what in future it ought to become; i.e., purified of alien influences and reinvigorated by a return to the Vedas, Upaniṣads and early Hindu traditions that in modern times were being debased. European Society kicked at the representatives of the allegedly superior race and culture from abroad. Political Attitude showed that for expediency it was in the interests of the Hindu society in Bengal to welcome British rule and integrate more solidly with it, because the expansion of the British Empire in India and Burma was bringing a corresponding expansion of Bengali Hindu economic opportunities; but it criticised the British for indulging in trade and commerce, and for benefitting commercially from their conquests.

The role of the British was, by military might and legal impartiality, to provide an environment in which Hindus might prosper. The British were to rule, but the Bengali Hindus were to enjoy social, legal and political equality with them; and their culture, customs and commerce were not to be interfered with by the British. Gupta's was, in fact, a naively impossible view of colonialism: no imperialist or colonialist power could ever have been so altruistic. It is in the nature of colonialism to rule in favour of the colonialists: the abuses Gupta criticised: the indigo planters, the trading by the Company etc. were the raison d'être of colonialism's existence.

So at the one extreme Gupta's political thought was naive: he hoped for the impossible and was doomed to disappointment. At the other extreme, his outlook was narrowly communal: he was essentially the spokesman of the more unenlightened Hindu middle classes. He was incapable of conceiving Bengali society in any but religious terms. At the time he was writing Muslim society was admittedly falling from power and influence. One or two Persian journals<sup>23</sup> existed during his life-time, but the

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23. Bandyopādhyāy, Brajendranāth: Baṅglā Sāmāyik Patra, 1818-1900, revised ed., 1947, p.72.

only Bengali Muslim journal<sup>24</sup> to appear took a narrowly Hindu outlook on social reform similar to Gupta, possibly because the editor of the journal was in fact a Hindu.<sup>25</sup> The vast majority of Muslims were, however, at this period disorganised and unenlightened. Gupta therefore ignored their feelings, considering them negligible. But he set a trend, taken up by Bahkimcandra, that was to alienate Muslim sympathies and produce a reaction. The more Muslims found themselves belittled in Bengali literature, the more distasteful they found that literature. The more Hindus like Bhabānīcaran, Īśvarcandra and Bahkim stressed the importance of Sanskrit and the links of Bengali language and culture with Sanskrit, the more Muslims were later to rebel and insist on links with Perso-Arabic Muslim culture. So the two trends grew wider and wider apart. We do not of course blame Gupta for the beginning of this trend in Muslim society - dobhāṣī literature after all has a long history - but it was the attitude of men like Gupta who contributed to the intensification of these trends, and to the bestowing on them a political significance and destiny.

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24. Ibid., p.39. Samācār Sabhārājendra is the first Bengali newspaper published by a Muslim, Sheikh Ālimullāh (7th March, 1831).

25. Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government, No.XXII, Catalogue No.10002, India Office Library.

Part Three.

Place in Literature.

## CHAPTER X

The Beginnings of Literary Criticism  
in Bengali and Gupta's Conception  
of the True Nature of Poetry.

The purpose of this chapter is essentially to study the remarks of Īśvarcandra Gupta on the nature of poetry. To confine our attention solely to his remarks, however, would be to lose much of their significance, for much of what he says has meaning only in the sense that he was expressing his difference from others. Thus in order to bring out the full significance of his stray utterances and comments, I intend in this chapter to attempt to create a cultural context in which to view his remarks. I shall attempt to reconstruct the flavour of his times by demonstrating the conflicting attitudes towards Bengali literature held by his contemporaries and the conflicting hopes and aspirations they entertained about its future development.

In addition to Gupta's stray comments and one or two remarks by others culled from various sources, I shall in this chapter be focussing attention principally on seven

articles, six in English and one in Bengali.<sup>1</sup> Five of the English articles form a stream of comments made by Christians, both European and Bengali, on the nature of Bengali literature and their hopes of how it would develop, now that it was no longer confined by manuscripts to the privileged few, but diffused through print to the many.<sup>2</sup> The Bengali article and one of the articles in English written by an anglicised Bengali to some extent represent a reaction to this stream of Christian comment, in that they attempted for the first time to view Bengali literature from a sympathetic point of view, and, in comparing it to English literature, did not always do so to the detriment of Bengali.

(i) The stream of Christian comment. I shall summarise these articles one by one.

(a) On the effect of the Native Press in India,

1. (a) On the effect of the Native Press in India (The Friend of India, Quarterly, 1821) pp.119-140; (b) On the Progress and present state of the Native Press in India (The Friend of India, Quarterly, 1826), pp.138-156; (c) Introduction to the Bengali Language by the late Rev. W. Yates, D.D. in two volumes. Edited by J. Wenger, Calcutta 1847 - A Review (The Calcutta Review, 1848) pp.i-v; (d) Introduction to the Bengali Language - (The Calcutta Review, XXII, June, 1849) pp.493-522; (e) Early Bengali literature and newspapers (The Calcutta Review, No.XXX, March 1850); pp.124-161; (f) Bengali Poetry (The Calcutta Review, No.XXXIII, March 1852); (g) Bāṅgālī kabitā Biśayak Prabandha, by Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy, 1852.
2. Sen, Sukumār, History of Bengali Literature, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1st ed., 1960, p.178.

an article published in the quarterly The Friend of India for 1821.<sup>3</sup> The author of this and the following article was obviously a European Christian associated with the Serampore Mission Press.<sup>4</sup> He envisaged the press as an avenue whereby India might be Europeanised. His object in writing the article was to record the volume of progress made by the native press in its first ten years from 1810 to 1820.

He briefly chronicles the establishment of Bengali typography by Wilkins and how it was later taken up by two Indians Baboo Ram and Gunga-Kishore who by their respective publications of Sanskrit classics and Bengali works made immense personal fortunes, that of Baboo-Ram being estimated at one lac of rupees.<sup>5</sup> The author finally records that by 1820 there were four native presses operating in Calcutta, where Bengali newspapers had recently begun to appear. He then lists twenty seven works in Bengali that had appeared from these native presses during these initial ten years.

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3. F.I., 1821, pp.119-140.

4. Presumably John Clark Marshman who brought out The Quarterly Friend of India in June, 1820 (see The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward by John Clark Marshman, London, 1859; Vol.II, p.229).

5. F.I., *ibid.*, p.123.



The majority of them, he admits, were mythological and tended to indicate the prevailing 'low taste' of the Bengali Hindu community; but he saw signs of improvement in the fact that a number of non-mythological works were published: two Bengali dictionaries, a work on medicine, one on law, two or three almanacs and a treatise in Sanskrit on astronomy.<sup>6</sup>

The author's conception of literature was clearly somewhat wider than is now generally held. He conceived literature as comprising not only works of fiction, but also works of utility<sup>7</sup> - 'expressing all those scientific and philosophic ideas which the progress of refinement will render indispensable'.<sup>8</sup> 'Amelioration' and 'enlightenment', two of the author's favourite words, to him clearly implied the adoption of a western scientific, philosophic and moral outlook; i.e. the total abandonment of Indian tradition and the wholesale adoption of western Christian culture.

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6. Ibid., pp.124-125. The works mentioned were: Gunga-bhuktee-turunginee, Joy-deva, Unnuda-mungul, Rasa-munjusree, Rutee munjuree, korona-nidhan bilas, Vilwu mungul, Daya-bhag, Jyotish, Chamukhyu, Subda-sindoo, Ubeedhan, A treatise on the materia medica of India, Rag-mālā, Buttrish-singhason, Betal Punchessee, Vidya-ninda, Bhugurent-geeta, Muheemunee-stuva, Gunga-stuva, Sukhee-churitra, Santee-sutuk, Shringar-teelok, Us chu panchalee, Adee-rosa, Chandee, Choitunyu-chureetamrita.

7. Ibid., p.128.

8. Ibid., p.131.

He saw the press as an engine that would eradicate Hinduism as both a religion and social system. The publication of Sanskrit classics and sacred texts and of Bengali mythologies would, in his opinion, soon glut to satiety the interest of the Hindu masses in such works, which by their very scarcity had in the past exercised a fascination that could not survive close acquaintance. Furthermore, it was in the nature of things, the author argued, that in the first flash of excitement only such works as these should be published in any numbers, but gradually, as the history of printing in Europe had shown, public taste would improve. The next decade should, therefore, see the publication, under European supervision and guidance, of works of a higher literary and moral standards, with the result that ultimately, judging their mythologies and sacred texts in the light of the improved scientific and geographic outlook of the west, Hindus would discern their inconsistencies and absurdities. Then would it be that Hindus would abandon these beliefs and presumably turn to Christianity. 'The Hindu system of belief cannot stand when separated into parts of which some may be credited and others rejected. It must stand as a whole or fall as a whole.'<sup>9</sup>

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9. Ibid., p.135.

The articles of Rāmmohan Rāy on the burning of widows and the preparation of a Sanskrit dictionary by Rādhākānta Deb, who amongst other virtues possessed 'an ardent attachment to European knowledge', were both seen as steps in the desired direction.

The author saw little merit in present-day Indian culture itself. Idolatry and mythologies about 'lewd' gods and goddesses were anathema to him and even illustrations of these excited his spleen. 'Rude' and 'barbaric' were epithets that flew to his tongue in this connexion.

'The figures are stiff and uncouth, without the slightest expression of mind in the countenance, or the least approach to symmetry of form. They are in general intended to represent some powerful action of the story; and happy is it for the reader that this action of the hero or heroine is mentioned at the foot of the plate; for without it the design would be unintelligible.'<sup>10</sup>

These 'legendary tales', he states, 'will', in the opinion of many, 'tend only to increase corruption and

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10. Ibid., p.125.

perpetuate vice.'<sup>11</sup> And elsewhere he refers to 'the indolence and luxury of Eastern imaginations.'<sup>12</sup>

Despite his abusive attitude towards Hinduism, however, the author was sanguine of improvement. The coming of the press had standardised Bengali orthography and enriched the Bengali language. Brahmin pundits who hitherto had despised the language and the uncouth literature produced in it by sudras, were now eager to compose in it and with their knowledge of its parent Sanskrit were now embellishing the long-neglected child. Furthermore, though fettered 'by ignorance and superstition'<sup>13</sup> India was not devoid of intellect. The achievements of the Indian intellect had 'astonished even enlightened European scholars.'<sup>14</sup> And since India was in fact no more steeped in ignorance and superstition now than Europe had been before the commencement of printing, there was in India every prospect of improvement.

The author estimated that so far during the previous ten years ten to fifteen thousand volumes had issued from the native presses and been sold. At this rate, the outlook for the future was bright.

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11. Ibid., p.126.

12. Ibid., p.127.

13. Ibid., p.119.

14. Ibid., p.120.

Five years later this same European author returned to the same theme in an article called (ii) On the Progress and Present state of the Native Press in India,<sup>15</sup> Once more he opens with a eulogy to the press as a powerful agent for diffusing European knowledge and influence:

'The rise of the empire of the press constitutes a new if not the most important era in the history of man. To it we owe the discovery of the means by which the great bulk of society may be enlightened without forsaking the ordinary occupations of life. Colleges and schools may impart to the priesthood and the aristocracy, the requisite quantum of learning, but the experience of the last age has demonstrated, that it is to the extensive operations of the press that the mass of mankind must look for the means of instruction. When we consider how large a portion of mankind is still buried in ignorance, the discovery of this powerful engine of civilization cannot but be regarded as one of the most auspicious events in the history of the world, more especially when we remark, that, it has been made

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15. F.I., 1826, pp.138-156.

at a period when the influence of the civilised continent of Europe was more widely extended over the other divisions of the earth, than at any preceding period.<sup>16</sup>

Once more he pays tribute to Indian intellect and states:

'In an intellectual estimate India seems to stand midway between those nations among whom the knowledge of letters has not been introduced, and those with whom the use of letters exerts an auspicious influence on society.<sup>17</sup>

That is, India was literate, but not yet properly civilised, and was thus ripe for the reception of the press.

He then attacks the brahmanic self-interest which had kept the bulk of the Indian population in intellectual darkness:

'Motives of personal and family advantage, unhappily prevailed in their minds over every sentiment of patriotism. Instead of attempting to raise the nation, they provided only for raising their own class, depositing the product of their labours in a learned language, from the study of which they excluded the

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16. Ibid., p.139.

17. Ibid., p.140.

shoodra'....'It was revealed from heaven to the natives of India, that the gods, the guardians of the human race, were desirous that the great bulk of society should continue from age to age in a state of mental darkness. Thus was established and fortified by whatever is awful and sacred, the most complete system of mental despotism which the ingenuity of man has devised; and for the first time since the creation, was the privilege of acquiring knowledge rendered hereditary.'<sup>18</sup>

He urges that in the interests of the nation as a whole the Government should terminate this system of mental despotism and afford to all equality of opportunity.

'The welfare of the country requires that this unnatural system should be subverted, and that in its stead should be erected a system of civil equality on an equitable basis; and that the unsacerdotal class should be raised from the dust, and enjoy an equal chance of improvement with the more favoured class. The former is the province of the British Government; the latter of the press; of that press which has wrought so stupendous a change in the

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18. Ibid., p.141.

condition of our own happy country, and which, acknowledging no aristocratic or sacerdotal distinctions, throws open the door of knowledge to All. Under an enlightened and wise government, this mighty engine of civilisation will in a few years compensate for the injustice of ages.<sup>19</sup>

He then commences the promised outline of recent development in the press beginning with the history of the Samācār Darpan, a paper with which he appears to be closely associated and of which he therefore speaks with warmth.

'To begin with the Newspapers; these have in seven years increased in number from one to six; of which four are in the Bengalee and two in the Persian language. The first paper in point of age, is the Sumachar Durpan published at the Serampore Press, of which the first number appeared on the 23rd of May, 1818. It was immediately honoured with the notice of that enlightened statesman the Marquis of Hastings, who was pleased in various ways to express his approbation of the attempt. Of this paper it may be sufficient to remark, that its quantity of matter, to use a technical expression, is at present four times

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19. Ibid., p.143.



that of its first number, that it gives a translation of the political intelligence of the week, brief notices concerning the most remarkable events and discoveries in Europe, and two and sometimes three columns of articles, amusing and instructive, calculated to whet the edge of curiosity in the subscribers, and to ensure the continuance of their support. Its political character is neither whig nor tory, ministerial nor administerial; but it steadily supports the interests of the British Government, the best which India has ever enjoyed, and the only security for the progressive improvement of the country.<sup>20</sup> (My italics)

Turning to the indigenous newspapers, he is eager to indicate their indebtedness to the Darpan and their varying degrees of Hindu bias.

'The two next papers, are the Sumbad Koumoodi and the Sumbad Chundrika, the editors of which, not having easy access to the English papers, borrow their political intelligence from the Durpun. They give a weekly summary of 'moving accidents' in town and country, and sometimes engage in controversy, occasionally

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20. Ibid., pp.143-144.

virulent, with each other, the one advocating Hindooism, the other maintaining more liberal sentiments.<sup>21</sup>

He reserves special abuse, however, for the Timir Nāsak, which was apparently the most staunchly Hindu of them all, and as such a fit object for ridicule:

'The youngest of the papers is the Teemeer nausuck, "the destroyer of darkness"; and it brings to light most wonderful and portentous prodigies. From the perusal of its columns one might almost fancy the golden age of Hindooism returned, and the gods so far reconciled to men as to renew their personal visits for the succour of the faithful. It would be gratifying were the character of the paper, more in harmony with its title; for instead of holding up these pretended miracles to derision, it is ever attempting to create a belief of their authenticity. But we must speak gently of the Teemeer nausuck which has done us the honour to acknowledge itself the offspring of the Serampore paper. It is sometimes a little refractory, and occasionally requires a paternal reprimand, especially when it demands of the public,

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21. Ibid., p.144.

credence for stories too monstrous even for Hindoo belief. With true filial confidence, it borrows from the parental stock of news without any restraint.<sup>22</sup>

He is scarcely less scathing when turning to the Muslim press, deeming it dull and insipid:

'With the two Persian papers, we are not so well acquainted; they are, we believe, chiefly occupied with extracts from the pithless Ukbars, or papers issuing from the native courts and detailing with minuteness the daily uninteresting and unimportant actions of the native princes, in comparison with which, even the old Cape Gazette or Advertiser is not devoid of interest.'<sup>23</sup> (My italics)

He estimated that between eight hundred to one thousand people subscribed to these 'six native papers', though the total circulation was perhaps as high as 5,000, since each copy was probably read by at least five readers. In addition to native avarice, which balked at the one rupee per month subscription, the second major impediment to increased circulations lay in the difficulty experienced in trying to widen the mental horizons of Indians and

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22. Ibid., pp.144-145.

23. Ibid., p.145.

interest them in people and events outside India:

'Few of them possess a map of the world....beyond the sacred boundary of the country...is a kind of terra incognita, any intelligence from whence, would scarcely be less foreign to them than news from the moon. Yet little can be expected in the way of improvement without establishing an intellectual as well as a political relationship between India and the civilised world.... The extensive schemes of education now in operation,... will....tend....to....hasten the period, when half the weekly paper may safely be occupied with articles of intelligence from Europe and America, which step, in the present state of the public mind, would completely disband our subscribers.'<sup>24</sup>

Coming to the number of books published, he records a

vast increase:

'Nearly thirty thousand volumes have thus been sent into circulation within the last four years.'<sup>25</sup>

Though there has been no great change in quality, he nevertheless remains optimistic:

'Amidst all the trash which it has thrown into circulation we may discern the seeds of future improvement.

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24. Ibid., p.147.

25. Ibid., p.149.

It was naturally to be expected that works, claiming the patronage of an idolatrous population, should partake of a superstitious character, and fall in with the prevailing taste of the people; but this diseased taste is susceptible of improvement, and nothing is so likely to correct it, as the continued operations of the press.<sup>26</sup>

Two symptoms of the desired improvement were:

- 'a growing partiality towards Prose works.'<sup>27</sup>
- 'the decay of prejudice on the part of the literati against the Popular Tongue.'<sup>28</sup>

Elaborating this second point, he states:

'A pundit, who twenty years ago, should have written the Bengalee language with accuracy, would have been treated with contempt. So far indeed did the literati convey their contempt for their own mother tongue, that, while they cultivated the learned language with the greatest assiduity, they in many instances prided themselves on writing the language of the people with inaccuracy. They even discouraged the use of it among the people, and set their faces against its improvement. When Keetibas, about sixty years ago,<sup>29</sup>

26. Ibid., p.150.

27. Ibid., p.151.

28. Ibid., p.152.

29. A glaring instance of anachronism, for Keetibas composed his Rāmāyan in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. (Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihās by Sukumār Sen, 2nd ed., 1948; Vol.I, pp.98-102.)

translated the Ramayana into Bengalee, the literary conclave at the Court of Raja Krishna Chundra Raya,<sup>30</sup> is said to have denounced it in the following rescript copied from the Sungskrita: 'As it is not the work of a Pundit, let it not be read.'<sup>31</sup>

Owing to this attitude, the writer alleges,

'the vernacular tongue continues in a state of infancy, without a grammar or a dictionary, or a single work in prose, and in possession only of a few idle legends of which the matter is as contemptable as the style is wretched.'<sup>32</sup>

The first step to the improvement of Bengal lay in the improvement of Bengali, the writer argues:

'the improvement of the language has invariably gone hand in hand with..the improvement of the country. Of this, Rome, France, and England are examples.... Reasoning from this data, the cultivation of Bengalee must be the precursor of national improvement.'<sup>33</sup>

Fortunately this improvement had already commenced:

'The Bengalee language is gradually advancing in

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30. May be the pundits of the Rājās court, of which Kṛttibās gives a pen-picture in his ātmabibaranī (Self-Introduction)- Sukumār Sen, op.cit., pp.96-98.

31. F.I., Ibid., p.152.

32. Ibid., p.153.

33. Ibid., p.153.

importance and can no longer be neglected.<sup>34</sup>

Embellished by the rhetoric of Sanskrit and enriched with the treasure of European knowledge, it

'will carry forward and perfect the system of civilization of which the early dawn is now illuminating the horizon.'<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, to effect the desired improvement and to shake 'the foundations of the ancient structure of idolatry', a change in the matter of literature was imperative.

'The objectionable character of the greater part of the works we have enumerated, clearly points out the nature of our obligations. The welfare of the country imperiously requires that they should be counteracted by others which may tend to raise the tone of the country. The press should not be suffered...to become the auxiliary of superstition.... Most disastrous would it be, if the schemes of education now on foot should serve only to create readers for idolatrous publications, from a lack of more useful works.... We owe it to our superior civilisation,.....not to suffer minds which have been partly enlightened at school, to relapse

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34. Ibid., p.154.

35. Ibid., pp.154-155.

into the grossness of superstition.<sup>36</sup>

Unfortunately, to European eyes Bengali literature had still not effected the desired improvement even twenty-one years later. The reviewer of Yates' 'Introduction to the Bengali Language' (1848), speaks of Bengali literature.

'which, in its intrinsic worth, or rather, for the most part, its intrinsic worthlessness, bears no proportion to the capabilities of the language itself.'<sup>37</sup>

Europeans were still obsessed with the 'indelicate', 'disgusting' 'offensive' aspects of Bengali literature. On editing Yates' Reader<sup>38</sup> Wenger sought to eradicate these defects, but without complete success.

'Another advantage arising from this work will be that the most indelicate and disgusting passages are omitted. It would have been well if every vestige of idolatry could have been removed, but that was impossible. While purified from the most offensive parts, there will still be enough left to remind the reader that the writers were not Christians.'<sup>38</sup> (My italics)

According to Wenger, since 1800 there had been 'scarcely one work of original native composition; nearly all that had

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36. Ibid., pp.155-156.

37. C.R., 1848, Miscellaneous Notices, pp.I-V.

38. Ibid., p.III.



been printed were translations from Sanskrit, Persian, or English'. Nevertheless, Wenger remained hopeful that 'from among those whose minds have been stored with knowledge by the study of European literature and science, some will rise up who will enrich their native language not only with excellent translations of standard works, but with original compositions which will show that they have drunk deep at the fountain of true knowledge.'<sup>39</sup>

Two years later (1849) it was, one suspects, this same reviewer who returned once more to a consideration of Dr. Yates' work.<sup>40</sup> This second review is considerably more discursive than the first, though any connexion with the book under review appears co-incidental.

Internal evidence suggests that the reviewer was probably a civilian, who had lived long in Bengal. He seems acquainted with Bengali clerks, both Hindu and Muslim, the mixed Bengali-Persian language of the law-courts, the stilted Sanskritised Bengali taught to civilians at Fort William, the dialects of the countryside, the indigenous village educational system, the difficulties experienced

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39. Ibid., p.III

40. C.R., No.XXII, June 1849, pp.493-522;

in introducing the improved vernacular system of Hardinge,<sup>41</sup> Indian village-life, the Sanskrit ślokas commonly quoted by Bengalis and transmitted by oral tradition, the similarly orally-transmitted tales from the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārat, and one or two of the printed books popular in Calcutta, the Hitopadeśa, the Totā Itihās, Puruṣ Parikṣā, Prabodh Candrikā, and Batris Singhāsan.<sup>42</sup>

To have accumulated such deep and intimate knowledge of the language and people of Bengal, this civilian must undoubtedly have known Bengali well. Indeed, he speaks, one suspects, from personal experience when recounting the eagerness with which Bengali villagers responded to overtures of friendship and the readiness with which they launched into recitals of their problems and grievances. His observations on Bengali character are indeed deep and penetrating:

'Those, who care to study the Bengali language and character, must study them as they appear in the villages of Bengal. Let them only beware of confounding ignorance with innocence, or of mistaking the waywardness of childhood for that ingenuousness which is its usual

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41 Lord Hardinge, Governor-General, (1844-48), who first introduced an educational system through vernacular language, establishing one hundred Bengali schools throughout Bengal.

42. C.R., *ibid.*, pp.499-501.

accompaniment. They will then find in Bengal much that is repulsive to European nations, many degrading customs, great liveliness of disposition, many failings which alternately excite sympathy and disgust, little of solid comfort, a systematic disregard of law, and no inconsiderable amount of plenty and content.<sup>43</sup>

His comments on the orally transmitted Sanskrit couplets are also of interest in this regard, and more pertinently, of relevance to an understanding of the subject of this thesis: Iśvarcandra Gupta:

'There is undoubtedly something alluring in a verse, with points with fidelity the objects of dread or ambition to the lower classes of Bengal, the vicissitudes of climate they should most shun, the localities they should mainly select, the arts or endeavours by which they should compass opulence. But the low estimate which other couplets take of human nature, the high praise of riches as permanent in all worldly dealings, and the degraded character of the society in which such maxims are set forth and acted on, require no comment. And we are compelled to state...many have been excluded, which from their

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43. Ibid., p.515.

offensive minuteness, their plain dealing, and their gross bestiality, might have emanated from the foul pens of Rousseau or of Swift.<sup>44</sup>

From our point of view, however, two topics are of particular interest:

- (i) the difficulties experienced by Europeans in learning Bengali;
- (ii) his opposition to the 'purification' of Bengali.

Reading between the lines in this review, one senses that by 1849 the majority of Europeans had abandoned hope of any worthwhile literature ever appearing in Bengali.

The reviewer himself virtually shares this view:

'we are not very sanguine, as to the rise of a new literature, which shall give fresh life and vigour to the race, and, for sloth and sensuality, substitute energy, decision, and temperance; but we are confident, that something better is to be made of the fine Bengali language, than the present miserable Bengali literature.'<sup>45</sup>

In view of the paucity and poor quality of the literature in Bengali, there was, he states, little to be gained by studying Bengali. For convenience when travelling, of course, or when living or working abroad, a knowledge of the local language was essential, but for a person

44. Ibid, p. 515

45. Ibid., p. 521.

residing in Europe and having no intention of visiting India, the study of Indian languages was, he argues, pointless, except for philological, anthropological, or sociological purposes.

'But the most ardent philologist, his travels once over, can scarcely hope to derive any lasting satisfaction from the study of the languages spoken in India, beyond that of tracing out the offshoots of some great original, or of marking the connection between manners, morals, and speech. Thus to a man whose vocation is not on eastern ground, or who has no desire to map out the divisions of spoken tongues, time spent on the languages of India, whether of the north or south of the Peninsula, is time thrown away. However interesting as the repository of much that is curious or ancient, a language without a permanent literature is a blank.'<sup>46</sup>

He even castigates the French for having set up a chair in Paris for the study of Urdu.

'We have often doubted whether most to admire, or to condemn, the conduct of the French Government, which, with two insignificant settlements in India, instituted

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46. Ibid., pp.503-504.

in the metropolis a chair of the Urdu language, and appointed to it a man of such ability as M. Garcin de Tassy.... We must think that hours, spent in attendance on that gentleman's lectures, are to the Persian youth mere hours of idleness.<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, he discourses romantically on the pleasures and facilities for acquiring European tongues.

'We will suppose a young man endeavouring to master, on the spot, any one European language, French, German, the language of Tasso or the language of Milton. The masterpieces of each are necessarily his daily study, and their beauties are explained to him by teachers competent to remove difficulties, and to smooth the way. But his progress is not merely that which the perusal of books can give, nor his observation limited to the daily task or the morning conversation. The outward world, the world of the pleasure - seeker, or of the man of business, is to him full of incident and instruction. No blazing sun, nor uncongenial climate prevents his wanderings in high-way and street: no jealous temple closes its doors at his approach..... In the general...amusements

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47, Ibid., p.504.

of the nation, there is even more, that, while it gives conversancy with the idiom, bestows activity on the intellect, and refinement on the taste.

Language will be set forth in its purest and most attractive dress. The theatre or the assembly may correct anything unorthodox or low. The gentleman-scholar will listen, now to the accents of Kean in Hamlet, now to those of Rachel in Phèdre, or will hang breathless on the most magnificent of tenors pouring out his cadences in the most harmonious of southern languages. At one time his attention may be attracted to some mountebank at an English fair, or to a contatore di fatti on the mole at Naples.

...There is no time or locality from which he may not gather something; and no social habits are so dissimilar, as to inspire disdain, or to repel curiosity.... The impress of refined civilisation and bustling commerce is everywhere; and by the combined influence of reading, of meditation, and of constant intercourse with an active and an intellectual population, his speech rapidly acquires fluency, his utterance force, and his ear precision.<sup>48</sup>

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48. Ibid., pp.504-505.

One senses that behind all this romanticism about Europe and denigration of the study of Indian languages lies an increasing sense of aloofness on the part of Europeans in India, who had, as he admits, retired to their own little communities and who felt no urge to maintain any unnecessary contact with Indians.

'a confirmed routine of existence, or a regular residence in a circle, transplanted as it were from the west, and instinct with European notions, effectually remove the native world from the sight and the mind.'<sup>49</sup>

'A great barrier...stands between the European and the native crowd assembled for the celebration of some social or festive rite...some...may through "the cold medium of books" have acquired a certain knowledge of the social world of the Hindu and the Mussulman: but even these, from imperfect opportunities or from actual distaste, may never have gone forth to see whether books reported aright, or how far old customs had yielded to innovation.... We cannot readily embrace all the features of native

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49. Ibid., p.505.



life, as it appears in business, in books, in amusement, in the palace, and in the hut.... Their commonest hopes, their daily fears, the secrets of their household, their habitual cast of thought, are known to us by distorted views. Our speech to them is rarely that of persons thinking in the language which they employ.<sup>50</sup>

The reviewer himself obviously did not share this aloofness, but he was affected by it and sympathetic to it; and he was also infected with the prevailing European sense of cultural superiority to Indians. What he was in fact, saying though only obliquely, was: the only languages worthy of study were those of one's social, cultural and intellectual equals. It is noteworthy that in discussing learning Bengali he speaks of learning the classical language from books and the colloquial language from villagers. Obviously, Bengali was not the language of polite society: one did not converse with educated Bengalis in Bengali. The reviewer had mentioned two past impediments to the development of Bengali: Sanskrit and Persian; the cultivation of these two cultured tongues by intellectuals had resulted in the neglect of Bengali.

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50. Ibid., p.506.

'It (Bengali) is in fact just such a literature as we might expect from a people, who, for one series of years, saw in Sanskrit, a vehicle for thought and a fancied repository for knowledge, with which other created languages could never compete; and for another series, transferred their admiration to Persian, as the only road to emolument and to worldly honour.'<sup>51</sup>

Though he mentions the third modern impediment to the development of Bengali - namely English - to our mind he does not give it sufficient stress. He merely states:

'There is indifference to the vernacular amongst the mass, and an undue preference for English amongst the more enlightened of the rising generation, who, however, can hardly be censured for applying themselves to a language, hitherto the main road to competence or distinction.'<sup>52</sup>

He does not acknowledge that, even though desiring the diffusion of useful knowledge to the masses, the Europeans had themselves imported a fresh impediment to that diffusion, which was again to enable certain Hindu classes to reestablish their monopoly of the means of

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51. Ibid., p.501.

52. Ibid., p.519.

education and culture, namely the English language.

In speaking out against the purification movement, however, the reviewer exhibits genuine perception and insight into Indian linguistic problems. As he says, the British at Fort William had themselves allowed the perpetuation of bigotry.

'In pure Bengali well nigh every word is pure Sanskrit.'<sup>53</sup>

'The Sanskrit style, for so we must call it, is that of most books in the language, and of the institutions under government....Our college essays are for the most part stiff, inelegant, and scrupulously adherent to words of Sanskrit origin. Whilst grandly propounding the doctrines of liberality of thought, and of emancipation from mental slavery, we have given a quiet sanction to the most genuine bigotry and the most unbending intolerance.'<sup>54</sup>

The attempt to purify Bengali of Perso-Arabic elements was misguided.

'To insist that from the written Bengali style shall be systematically excluded every word unknown in India, up to the inroads of Mahmud of Ghazni, or to the dynasty of the slave kings, is to insist on the

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53. Ibid., p.495.

54. Ibid., p.520.

retention of a strange dialect, which is familiar to no sensible Hindu of any class.<sup>55</sup>

Undoubtedly, it was people who formed languages, not lexicographers and grammarians.

'Speech was made before grammar, and men invented fresh terms before dictionaries were compiled.'<sup>56</sup>

And it would be well if some writer of repute would come forward and utilise the Bengali language, as actually spoken by the majority of Bengalis. Then possibly, instead of the stilted verbosity of Fort William, Bengali would assume as mixed and polished a form as the mixed and polished Urdu:

'The state of the language is in fact at present such, that almost anything could be made of it by one gifted pen. A single individual, who would discard attempts at Sanskrit verbosity, who would not disdain the occasional use of humble and expressive phrases, and also would boldly adopt a Persian term, when it alone could give the exact meaning required, might mould and fashion Bengali into one harmonious and consistent whole. There is no reason, why Bengali should not, in its way,

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55. Ibid., p.520.

56. Ibid., p.520.

be as mixed and polished, as the mixed and polished Urdu.<sup>57</sup>

Three years later a further study of Bengali literature appeared: *Early Bengali Literature and Newspapers*, (1850).<sup>58</sup>

The article is a confused collection of extracts, summaries, and opinions assembled without any coherent place or purpose. The first three and a half pages attempt to demonstrate the antiquity of Bengali civilisation and trace the origin of the Bengali language; the following paragraph summarises Bengali literature from 1500 to 1800; the next paragraph expresses the opinion that the Muslims 'acted with a dispressing weight on every effort to create a national literature' in Bengal;<sup>59</sup> there follows a long extract from the Calcutta Asiatic Observer for 1824, giving a 'Traditional Account of the Minaret at Pandua'. This two-page extract is followed by an observation that 'Religious reformers...in all ages...have always availed themselves of the vernaculars, as the media for influencing the masses',<sup>60</sup> the examples being Wicliffe in England, St. Patrick in Ireland, Marot in France, Sankar<sup>2</sup>Acharjya in India, Dr. Carey in Serampore and Ram Mohan Rāy via the *Tattwabodhini Sabhā*. Having established this point, the author again returns to the theme of Islam's negative influence:

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57. Ibid., p.521.

58. C.R., No.XXX, March 1850. Pp.124-161.

59. Ibid., 128.

60. Ibid., p.130.

'Muhammadian influence had exerted itself in checking every development of a National Literature.'<sup>61</sup> Having dealt with the pernicious influence of Islam and its vehicle, Persian, he turns to the 'Pandits (who) kept the Hindu mind in a certain state of activity - yet it was the activity of a class, not of a nation; and no man dared encroach on the preserves of the twice born caste.'<sup>62</sup> He then continues his tale of confusion with a further twenty nine page medley of extracts from The Friend of India, the Quarterly Friend of India, Bengali theses delivered by European students in Fort William College, Adam's Reports on education in Bengal, the Darpan, the Brahminical Magazine, a tantric work entitled Prān Toshana, reports on the progress of the Calcutta Tract Society, and summaries of contents for various years of the Candrikā, and the Kaṇṇudi; and the whole medley is interlarded with expressions of praise and condemnation, indicative of the author's attitude to all the various developments he alludes to.

The confusion is due to a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the fact that he was not writing in

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61. Ibid., p.131.

62. Ibid., pp.131-132.

his mother-tongue. A sentence like 'They may be known by their having under their arm an Almanac wrapped in cloth,'<sup>63</sup> clearly indicates that the author was a Bengali. The remainder of the confusion can be attributed to the fact that he was not only a Bengali, but also a Bengali Christian convert from the Hindu community. There is therefore present in this article a clash of loyalties, between, on the one hand, the religion of his adoption, Christianity, and the country of his birth, Bengal; i.e. a clash between his religious and national loyalties.

Had he been a European Christian, we should have had a straight-forward account of the progress of the press between certain dates and an expression of regret that the hoped-for moral uplift had not been achieved. On the other hand, had he been a Bengali Hindu, we should have had a straight-forward account of the antiquity of Bengali culture and civilisation, of the development of Bengali literature, a few disparaging remarks on Islamic influence, a few lyrical passages on the close affinity between Bengali and Sanskrit, a few pages of regret about the pollution of the purity of the Bengali language by the intrusion of Perso-Arabic vocabulary and English sentence-structure and

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63. Ibid., p.154.

an optimistic conclusion. As it is, we get an intermixture of both these articles.

The straight-forward European Christian account can be reconstructed from the extracts from the Friend of India, Adam's Reports, and the reports on the progress of the Calcutta Tract Society.<sup>64</sup> The straight-forward Christian attitude is evident in the following quotations:

- 'The whole genius of Hinduism (forming a strong contrast with the encouragements to popular instruction among the Chinese) is anti-social. No contact with Mlechas is its motto.'<sup>65</sup>

- 'In contrast to this mass of literary rubbish (the Tantric work Prān Toṣaṇ), in the same year 1823, a Society, which exercised a beneficial influence on Native Literature, and which will ere long, we trust, provide a Christian Vernacular Literature for Bengal - the Calcutta Tract Society - came into existence.'<sup>66</sup>  
(brackets and italics mine)

- 'All these publications (i.e. the Bengali newspaper available in 1850) have a decided Anti-Christian tone, and must produce a considerable sapping effect on the

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64. Ibid., pp.132-133.

65. Ibid., pp.156-157.

66. Ibid., p.152.



minds of their 20,000 readers, who show the value they attach to them by paying for them. Though the Serampore Darpan was the first Bengali Newspaper, and was started under Missionary auspices...yet, strange to say, Missionaries have at present no organ in Bengali to exercise an influence over the native mind, and reply to the various misrepresentations that are given on Christian subjects. We hope that ere long we may see a Bengali Newspaper started under Christian influence.... Missionary schools are well; but the present Bengali Newspapers in many cases destroy much of the prospective fruit from them.<sup>67</sup> (brackets and italics mine)

The straight-forward Bengali Hindu account can be traced from the consistent attempt to enhance the prestige of Bengali civilisation and culture, which had, he argued, continued to thrive and assert itself, despite Islamic and European Christian interference. This trail of thought is discernible from the following tendencies and quotations.

(a) The tendency to belittle English civilisation and deprecate the behaviour and achievements of the English in India:

- 'we conclude therefore that Bengal was a civilised

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67. Ibid., p.161.

country long before the light of refinement dawned on Britain.'<sup>68</sup>

- 'the Mussulmans...like the English, when they conquered Ireland,...acted with a depressing weight on every effort to create a national literature.'<sup>69</sup>  
(italics mine)

- '...we would recommend a perusal of the Tatwabodhini Patrika, a monthly publication in Bengali, which yields to scarcely any English publication in India, for the ability and originality of its articles.'<sup>70</sup>  
(italics mine)

- 'The Editorials of the Native Papers are never noticed by the authorities; yet they work their own way quietly and gently, forming a public opinion among natives, but: we must say this there has been far less of personality, railing against Government, scandal, and scurrilous remark in the Native Press of Calcutta, than there has been in the Calcutta English Journals.'<sup>71</sup> (italics mine)

- 'Carey's translation of the New Testament... Though written according to the English idiom, and in a

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68. Ibid., p.125.

69. Ibid., p.128.

70. Ibid., p.131.

71. Ibid., pp.144-145.

Bengali style, that would be considered disreputable in the present day'...<sup>72</sup> (italics mine)

- 'In this field, as in others, France and Germany have taken the lead. What works has England ever produced of a Bibliographical kind, equal to the writings of Mabillon and the Fathers of St. Maur?'<sup>73</sup>

(b) His tendency to support the purification of Bengali movement.

'...while other modern dialects of India are of Prakrit origin,...the Bengali is almost a direct off-shoot from the Sanskrit, (quotation from Max Muller with whom the author probably concurred.).<sup>74</sup>

- 'Its style, a kind of mosaic, half Persian, half Bengali, indicates the pernicious influence which the Muhamadans had exercised over the Sanskrit-derived languages of India.'<sup>75</sup>

- 'The civilians...interlard all their documents and phraseology with Persian terms, to such a degree, that the language of the Courts is not now the language of the peasantry, but has become a jargon suited to the purposes of the Amlas, who wish to mystify everything for their own advantage.'<sup>76</sup>

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72. Ibid., p.134.

73. Ibid., p.124.

74. Ibid., p.127.

75. Ibid., p.134.

76. Ibid., p.138.

(c) His tendency to champion the cause of the Bengali language.

- 'Muhammadian influence had exerted itself in checking every development of a National Literature. The officers of the Revenue Courts under the Mogul regime as a general rule would not even receive a petition in Bengali: it had to be written in Persian, which was the avenue to all places of trust and emolument. Yet it is surprising that, even under the British Government, the Persian held its ground, until the memorable 1st of January, 1839, when, by the orders of the Authorities, the Bengali was substituted for the Persian in all the courts of the Lower Provinces, and this Moslem language was deposed from its unjust ascendancy.<sup>77</sup> (italics mine)

- '...The Bengali language was so despised, that Dr. Carey could scarcely form a class... In fact, Persian and Urdu had been the languages studied, to the most unwarrantable neglect of the language of thirty millions of people; and this neglect has hung as an incubus over our Mofussil Courts in Bengal ever since.<sup>78</sup>

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77. Ibid., p.131.

78. Ibid., p.138.

- 'In the days of Halhed, people "scarcely believed that Bengal every possessed a native and a peculiar dialect of its own, distinct from that idiom, which, under the name of Moors (i.e. Urdu), has been supposed to prevail over India". And to the perpetuation of this error the influence and untiring advocacy of the Urdu language by Gilchrist greatly contributed...by editing a series of useful works, he gave the impression that the Bengali was a mere patois, and that the Urdu was to be the only medium of literary and social intercourse between natives and Europeans.'<sup>79</sup>

Twice in the course of this article the author used the term 'national' in connexion with Bengali literature.<sup>80</sup> Obviously a sense of Bengali national consciousness was building up and the author, despite his Christian allegiance, identified himself with it. We have in discussing his article laid stress on this conflict within him between his religion and his nationality, because from our point of view this is the most striking feature of the article. The contents of the article itself tell us little that could not be gathered from elsewhere. Indeed, it is the

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79. Ibid., p.143.

80. Ibid., pp.128, 131.

omissions that are so interesting. The author, though a Bengali and proud of his language and nationality, was out of sympathy with the predominantly Hindu spirit of his native literature and for this reason was not fully aware of developments in it. He makes no mention of the works of Bhabānicaran Bandyopādhyāy and Īśvarcandra Gupta, the two men who above all others kept Bengali literature alive during this so-called period of interregnum.

(ii) The Sanskritisation of Bengali and its link with Hindu Communal bigotry. The European Christians had wanted virtually to eradicate Bengali literature, culture and traditions and institute in the Bengali language a new Christian vernacular literature, which would inculcate in the Bengali masses European culture and traditions. Part of the reason for their failure lay in their own attitude to the English language. It was at that time assumed among educated Europeans that modern languages could be developed and enriched only by borrowings from ancient classical languages. Since English was enriched by borrowings from Classical Greek and Latin, it was at first regarded as natural that Bengali could be enriched only by borrowings from Sanskrit, whereas in fact it could have been enriched by borrowing from contemporary languages, such as Persian, Portuguese and English and by the formation of new words from its own indigenous stock of roots, stems, prefixes and suffixes.

Thus, as the reviewer of Yates' grammar in 1849 to some extent indicates the British, by acquiescing in this assumption, sanctioned at Fort William College and elsewhere the gradual and progressive Sanskritisation of Bengali. In doing so, however, they were merely permitting to continue a trend that had started even under the Moguls: Alāul and Bhāratcandra had been equally guilty of excessive Sanskritisation.

Possibly, no one had been aware at first that in the Sanskritisation of Bengali lay the path to Hindu renaissance.

It was, as we say, almost universally admitted that a modern language could grow only on the sustenance derived from its classical roots. By 1849 a European had, however, noticed that this Sanskritisation was in fact linked with Hindu communal bigotry. But not everyone had realised the fact by that date. Even the Bengali Christian convert had failed to notice it.

This link with Hindu communal bigotry had in fact been growing for some considerable time. The need for linguistic purity had, we suspect, become the main means by which Hindus could hit back at the Christian bias in the literature issuing from Serampore. Whilst Christians were condemning Hindu literature as 'degraded', 'disgusting', 'offensive', 'indelicate' and 'idolatrous', the only weapon Hindus permitted themselves was the need for 'sad-bhāṣā'

(good language). Marshman's Sadgun O Bīryer Itihās (1829)<sup>81</sup> was, for example condemned in a literary journal edited by Kālācād Rāy on the ground that it was 'not particularly well-written: it misses out many words, is disjointed and overladen with foreign diction.'<sup>82</sup>

Kāśīprasād Ghos in an article entitled 'Bengali Works and Authors',<sup>83</sup> published in the Literary Gazette for 1830 continues the same line of attack, condemning Carey's Bible as 'unintelligible to Bengalis because the translation was made in accordance with English style',<sup>84</sup> and indicating that there was in any case a general prejudice amongst his fellow-Bengalis against works published in Serampore,

81. Sarbbatattva Dīpikā O Byabahār Darpan, 2nd issue, Paus 1236 B.S., (Nov-Dec. 1829), edited by Kālācād Rāy, p.86.

82. Ibid., pp.88-89. It appears that this author uses the term Sadbhāṣā in the sense of sādhubhāṣā. He does not clearly define this term but the definition that one deduces from his criticism is that sādhubhāṣā has two predominant features, (i) it contains no non-Hindu diction, (ii) it is 'natural and appropriate'. One deduces from this criticism that actually few books were composed in Sādhubhāṣā and that children did not already know Sādhubhāṣā: they had to learn it by reading books; i.e. Sādhubhāṣā is not normal Bengali. Normal Bengali at this time probably contained innumerable non-Hindu elements which were nevertheless commonly understood.

83. S.P.S.K., Vol.I., pp.45-47.

84. Ibid., p.47.



which were universally dismissed as 'Srirāmpurī Bāṅgālā'.<sup>85</sup>

According to Kāśiprasād, the first books published in

'uncontaminated'<sup>86</sup> Bengali were the pamphlets of

Rāmmohan Rāy.<sup>87</sup>

(iii) The Beginnings of literary criticism: Haracandra

Datta. It must not be supposed, however, that we regard the bigotry to have been only on the Hindu side: the strictures on Bengali literature made by European Christians reveal an equal degree of bigotry. The fact is that the appreciation of literature requires sympathy. The reader needs to sympathise with the aims and intention of the author and to identify with the author's tastes, ideals and aspirations, before he can fully understand him. Conversely, in order to communicate with his readers, an author must speak in terms of their tastes, ideals and aspirations and address his audience as cultural equals. It was the European Christian conviction of cultural

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85. Ibid., p.47.

86. Ibid., p.45. 'nirābil Bāṅglā'.

87. Kāśiprasād Ghos, however held some odd views about Bengali literature. In addition to 'Srirāmpurī Bāṅgālā', he also condemned celebrated Bengali words such as the Rāmāyaṇ of Kṛttibāṣ, the Mahābhārat of Kāśidās and the Caṇḍimāṅgal of Kabikāṅkaṇ on the grounds of 'apabhāṣā' ('odd language'); and Mṛtyuñjaṇ Vidyālaṅkar's Rājābali and Haraprasād Rāy's Puruṣ Parikṣā on the grounds of bad word-order. He did, however, highly praise Bhārat-candra's Vidyā Sundar. His views are interesting now merely as instances of current intellectual snobbery amongst the contemporary English-educated.

superiority and complete lack of sympathy with any aspect of Hinduism which resulted in their failure to communicate with Hindus.

A perfect example of how to communicate is given by Haracandra Datta in an article in the Calcutta Review in 1852.<sup>88</sup> He commences his article with observations on the relationship of Bengali to Sanskrit, that is already accepted by Europeans. Then he mentions his earlier attempts with the help of 'Jones, Wilson, Schlegel and other illustrious scholars' to familiarise readers of English with the Rāmāyan and Mahābhārat.<sup>89</sup> Having already established a favourable impression on a European audience, he confirms it in the following paragraph, speaking of Bengali literature in terms of Latin and Greek:

'But before we proceed with one task, we must premise that Bengali literature stands in exactly the same relation to Sanskrit, as Latin literature stands to Greek. As in Latin, many metres, the heroic, elegiac, and lyric, for example are of Greek origin, so, in

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88. C.R., No.XXXIII, March 1852.

89. Ibid., p.1.

Bengali, the metres payār and totak are of Sanskrit origin.<sup>90</sup> As the best Latin epic poems are faint echoes of the Illiad and Odyssey, so the best Bengali epic poems are faint echoes of the Ramayana and Mahābhārata. As the best Virgil's pastorals are imitations of Theocritus, so the best Bengali pastorals are imitations of Jaydēva. As Latin plays, the plays of Livius Andronicus and Ennius and Plautus, are bad copies of Greek dramas, so Bengali plays (which are not many) are bad imitations of Kalidas and other Sanskrit writers. Almost all the standard Latin works are fashioned after Greek models, and almost all the Bengali works are on Sanskrit models. If ever there is a Bengali philosopher, we have little doubt that he will borrow as much from the Nyaya and Patanjali schools, as Seneca borrowed from the Portico and the Academy.<sup>91</sup>

By now mutual sympathy has been established between the Bengali author and his European reader. This sympathy

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90. Totak is a Sanskrit metre but payār is not: it is now acknowledged as deriving in the natural course of the language's development from indigenous nursery rhyme metres such as that of br̥ṣṭi pare tāpur tupur nadi ela bān. (See The History of the Bengali Language by Bijaychandra Majumdar, 1st ed., Calcutta, 1920, pp.125-126.)

91. C.R., *ibid.*, p.2.

will henceforth be sustained by a series of quotations and allusions interlarded in the text creating the illusion almost that one is now discussing not an alien literature, but one somehow allied to Europe:

- (1) 'Her conduct was even more severe than that of the younger wife of Elkanah toward the mother of Samuel.'<sup>92</sup>
- (2) 'Her lute strings gave an echo of his name.  
She spoilt her half done 'broidery with the same.'<sup>93</sup>
- (3) 'When she passed, it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music.'<sup>94</sup>
- (4) 'The vision and the faculty divine.'<sup>95</sup>
- (5) 'Wear like a garment, the glory of the morning.'<sup>96</sup>
- (6) 'Rather than have the stain of perjury and uncharitableness to one of the priestly class upon them, they both determined, like Abraham of old, but with misdirected faith, to overcome their natural affection and slay Brisacatu.'<sup>97</sup>

Again this illusion of attending a discussion of a semi-European literature is maintained in the literary judgements passed by the author:

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92. C.R., *ibid.*, p.5.

93. *Ibid.*, p.9.

94. *Ibid.*, p.11.

95. *Ibid.*, p.12.

96. *Ibid.*, p.18.

97. *Ibid.*, p.15.

'In most countries the ballad preceded the song.

The reason of this probably is, that the former was more easily composed. The excellence of a ballad consists not in sentiment, but in its story. The hurried narration of events do not task the poetical faculties to a very great degree, nor need the feelings of the author's mind be wrought up to a high state of sensibility. With abstract ideas, the ballad writer has little or nothing to do. The bloody feuds of chiefs and nobles - the adventures of some errant knight or beauteous damsel, form the staple of his verse. The legends that exist in the language in which he writes, furnish him with ample materials. His imagination is not wholly inactive, but it does not soar to unexplored regions.<sup>98</sup>

In broaching his subject proper, the development of Bengali literature, he maintains a comparative approach, speaking always in terms of English literature, for example:

'The oldest Bengali poem extant'<sup>99</sup>...the Chandi of Kabikankan...occupies the same place among Bengali

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98. Ibid., p115.

99. Modern scholarship has ascertained that 'the oldest Bengali poem extant' is actually the Caryāścaryabiniścaṣ.

epics as Milton's Comus occupies among English dramas.

It is decidedly pastoral.<sup>100</sup>

The use of the term 'pastoral' is a distortion: Chandi is a devotional poem; but to have said so at this stage would perhaps have alienated his audience. So to retain his audience's sympathy, he deliberately attempts to view Bengali literature in a light they would consider favourable: after all Greek and Latin literature is not Christian; it is indeed as idolatrous as Bengali; but the use of such terms as 'pastoral' has rendered it palatable to European tastes. Haracandra therefore adopts the term.

By successfully creating and maintaining this mood of mutual sympathy with his audience, Haracandra Datta is able to communicate a considerable amount of information about Bengali literature; and indeed, to go a fair way towards writing a defence of Bengali poetry that was acceptable to Europeans. Beneath a cloak of acceptable allusions, quotations and comparisons, he manages to strike a considerable blow for Bengali patriotism, enhancing the prestige of his mother-tongue by elevating it as a linguistic medium even above Sanskrit.

'Though the Bengali language has sprung from, and

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100. C.R., *ibid.*, p.3.

bears a close analogy to, the Sanskrit, it is, in several respects, better adapted than the original tongue, as a vehicle for the interchange of thought. Being of comparatively modern origin, it has not undergone any of those deteriorating changes, which have rendered the Sanskrit different from what it once was. With it the perverse ingenuity, which delights to invent difficulties where no difficulties exist, and to turn clearness itself into mystery, has not been at work. Neither has the jealousy of an ambitious priesthood endeavoured to counteract its diffusion. Spontaneous in its growth, it has branched out of the parent stock unrestrained and uncared for, possessing many of its beauties, and few of its imperfections. Of all the derivative languages of the East, it is, perhaps, the most simple in its structure, and lucid in its syntax. Its nomenclature, though not quite so full as that of the Sanskrit, is varied and precise. It is the spoken language of upwards of twenty-five millions of inhabitants, which is more than anything that could have been said of the Sanskrit even in its most palmy days, the days of Kalidas and Bar-ruchi.<sup>101</sup>

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101. Ibid., p.1.

Though apparently conscious of the shortcomings of his community and ready to criticise even its most sacred texts,<sup>102</sup> Haracandra might conceivably have been as imbued with communal patriotism as was Bahkimcandra; whether he was or not, would seem to depend upon why he selected the following passage. If it was selected deliberately for its heroic tone, exalting Hindu valour, then one must conclude that Haracandra was indeed a patriot. The selection could, however, have been fortuitous: [Man Singha's statement to Emperor Jahangir]

'The conquest of Bengal, great King, has been effected, but not without the loss and trouble which always attend such undertakings. Pratapaditya, the rebellious Raja of Jessore, has been defeated and captured; but the glory of the victory cannot be claimed by me alone. On the eve of battle a great storm swept over the province, and the men, horses, elephants, and camels of the army under my command would all have been utterly destroyed, had not Mazundar, who now stands on my right hand, given us shelter. To him is due to the credit of having propitiated the goddess Annada

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102. For example, 'Rig Veda Sanhita, which is a collection of Sanskrit hymns, lays bare the abominations of the priestly mythology of the Hindus. Among a race prone to war and bloodshed, their tone is martial and their music wild and thrilling. Delicacy of texture they have none!...(ibid., p.14).



by prayers and offerings, to put an end to the raging storm. To him I, and several of my companions in arms, owe our lives. The reward which my sovereign can most appropriately bestow upon him, is the governorship of Bengal. Let the word of favour drop from his lips, and Mazundar is at once exalted and recompensed.' A frown passed over the brow of Jahangire. 'Renegade', exclaimed he, after a pause, 'you too have been imposed upon by that wicked and deceiving race, the Brahmins. The faith of our Prophet hast thou disgraced in the eyes of idolators, who should not be touched but by the sword. Hinduism is full of abominations. Its doctrines and rites are both abominable. It inculcates the shaving of one's beard. It restrains widows from marrying. It commands the worship of stocks and stones, and creeping things. The Hindu race is composed of cheats and liars. It is priest-ridden. Its Puranas have been penned by the evil one. Pratapaditya was a Hindu, and I have hurled him from his throne, shall I then consent to place another of the same faith in his stead? Name some of other reward, Mazundar, and I will grant it thee. It would be foolish in me to entrust to you the government of the conquered province.'

Mazundar, being thus accosted, spake to the following effect - 'I am a Brahmin, and I have heard my class reviled; the authorship of the books I venerate, and the religion I follow, has been ascribed to the evil one. Fear, therefore, has departed from me. The augustness of the presence in which I stand shall not restrain me from speaking out my mind freely. The religion of Mahomet is false and puerile; but the religion of the Purana comes direct from Heaven. The Mahometans pray in a vacant room, and not, as they should do, before god's image and likeness; many of their rites cannot be named. Their widows are allowed to take husbands unto them' 'Hindu', said Jehangire, interrupting the sage, 'no more of this - there is insolence in thy look and words; call on thy thousand gods to save thee.' Mazundar was immediately surrounded by the imperial guard. But who can harm the man that is favoured of heaven? Annada heard his prayers, and on the third day of his captivity, came to his rescue with an army mighty and invincible. Thus sing I Bharut Chunder Roy, the favourite of my master, and a true Hindu.',<sup>103</sup>

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103. C.R., *ibid.*, pp.11-12.

Unlike his Christian predecessors, Haracandra does not expect his readers to form an idea of Bengali literature from a bald list of titles: he summarises the contents of the works he discusses and translates one or two passages to give the flavour of the original. Part of a summary is quoted below to illustrate his skill in this regard.

'Shrimant had come to Sinhala in search of his father, and had related the same story to the king, perilling his life to prove its truth. He failed in his undertaking, and, bound hand and foot, was immediately carried to the place of execution. Here, while the headsman was sharpening his axe, a woman, 'with age grown double', made her appearance and demanded Shrimant as he only child. The guards laughed and insulted her, but she went not away. A moment after, another decrepid female came to them with the same request, *till at last the whole yard was filled with crones,* and the next moment another, *who* began to dance hand in hand. While all wondered at the unexpected interruption, the whole company suddenly vanished, and Chandi descending from the skies with a sword of flame, commenced the work of destruction. Taking up Shrimant in her arms, she spared neither age nor sex. The very horses and elephants in the stalls were butchered, and one man only remained to carry the rueful intelligence to the king. Agitated

and frightened in the extreme, the monarch hastened to the place of slaughter, and fell at the feet of the wrathful divinity, who consented to spare him on condition that Shrimant should be married to his only daughter, Sushilya, and be allowed to go back to the place of his birth with his father, who was still a prisoner. This was readily consented to, and everything ended happily.<sup>104</sup>

In many respects Haracandra Datta foreshadowed future developments in Bengali literary criticism. His translations have much of the sensuousness of the later translations of Dīnēśandra Sen;<sup>105</sup> e.g.:

'Spring, accompanied by the god of love, had now come to the earth, and the trees and creepers were loaded with flowers. On the bank of the river Ajuya, and under a fragrant and spreading Asoka, the young woman had fainted with the pangs of separation. As she cast her eyes on the new leaves and tendrils, she thought the bridal of the earth was nigh, for the robes which it wore were the robes of a bride. The

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104. Ibid., p.6.

105. For example, see his Eastern Bengal Ballads, Vols.I-IV, Calcutta University, 1923-1932.

bee sucking the honey from one flower hastened away to another, as a Guru hastens from the hospitable home of one shishya to that of another. The flowers were dropping to the ground, and with these khuluna paid an offering to Cama. The kōkila was cooing his love-song, the breeze was blowing softly, and the shari and shuke were kissing each other with their bills. Overcome with sadness at the sight, she thus addressed the latter in a tone of reproof - 'shuke, thou art the cause of my lord's departure; at the king's command, has he gone to Sinhala, to bring a golden cage for thee; hence all my pangs and sorrows. My condition is quite forlorn, nor food, nor clothing have I. Fly thou to him, whom I love, and acquaint him with all I suffer. If thou neglectest my injunction, I shall learn the fowler's art and entrap thee, and so give pain to shari, the she-bird.' Both birds then winged away their flight. A creeper twisted round the stem of a tree then met her eyes, and she ran to the place where it was. Embracing the tender plant, she accosted it as sister, and as one most fortunate. The peacock and peahen, dancing with joy, she also saw, and was forcibly reminded of her own desolate state. To the male and female bee, she said the following words

with joined palms: 'Hum no more, hum no more your song of pleasure, for my breast is startled at the sound. You know not the pangs of separation. O! male bee, if thou hast any regard, any love for your partner, cease thy song. Alas! thou mind'st not my entreaties. Settling on that pale Dhatura, thou singst again.'<sup>106</sup>

Haracandra Datta's comparative approach foreshadowed the defence of Bengali poetry made by Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy.<sup>107</sup> It was, for example, Haracandra who first noticed the marked similarity in tone and taste between VidyāSundar and Venus and Adonis.

'The Bydya Sundar is the most popular and admired of all Bharut Chunder's productions, and but for the indelicacies which disfigure it at places, would, perhaps, have been justly so.

The Venus and Adonis of the bard of Avon was not a greater favourite with the pensioners and court beauties of Queen Elizabeth than is the Bydya Sundar with the young ladies of Bengal.'<sup>108</sup>

And like Raṅgalāl also, Haracandra was aware that, though at times indelicate, Bengl<sup>a</sup>i poetry was no more so

106. C.R., *ibid.*, pp.6-7.

107. Bāṅgālā kabitābisayak Prabandha, see pp.352-347 of this chapter.

108. C.R., *ibid.*, p.8.

than that of Europe:

'While on this subject, we are compelled to admit the truth of a charge often urged against the Bengali poets. All their writings, and more especially their pachalis or songs, are interlarded with thoughts and expressions grossly indecent. The seclusion of women from society is not, as some have supposed, the only cause of this turpitude. Sanskrit authors, living at a time when in India women mixed freely with men, and the wits of the Restoration, from Dryden down to Dufey, are open to the same objection. The Plain-Dealer and the Country Wife are of a more immoral tendency than even Bydya Sundar. They were written to please men, who were determined to avenge themselves for the enforced morality of the protectorate. Whatever, therefore, outraged the feelings of the puritan, to them yielded delight; whatever the one avoided with the utmost scrupulosity, the others were the most forward to join in. The male characters in Wycherly's plays are not libertines merely, but inhuman libertines; the women are not merely without modesty, but are devoid of every gentle and virtuous quality. The blots in the poetical literature of Bengal

are more properly ascribable to the religion and moral training of its inhabitants, than to the seclusion of women from <sup>society</sup> ~~society~~.<sup>109</sup>

Furthermore, like Rangalāl, Haracandra was aware that it was a poet's environment and times that tempered his creations:

The ballads and songs of a people are a true index that it was national character. With an idolatrous race they are tinctured with sentiments at which the mind revolts, as for example, the lyrics of the Khonds addressed to Laha Pinu, the god of battles, and Bir Pinu, the earth goddess, reveal to us that these deities were propitiated with human sacrifices; and the Rig Veda Sanhita, which is a collection of Sanskrit hymns, lays bare the abominations of the pristine mythology of the Hindus. Among a race prone to war and bloodshed, their tone is martial and their music wild and thrilling. Delicacy of texture they have none. They stir the soul like the sound of a trumpet. Again, the ballads and songs of a people naturally timid are characterised by softness, and have seldom anything in

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109. Ibid., p.17.



them to startle or terrify. The mind of the ballad and song maker is moulded and fashioned by the society in which he lives.'<sup>110</sup>

Thus, though educated and steeped in European thought and tradition, Haracandra did not, like the Europeans condemn Bengali poetry as worthless. Indeed, as he himself states,<sup>111</sup> he did his utmost to 'palliate their faults, and...lavish...praise on their beauties'. He was nevertheless, forced to conclude that 'compared with the poets of Britain, and even with the Sanskrit poets, 'the Bengali poets' 'sink into utter insignificance.'<sup>112</sup> Even so, he did not despair of the future. On the contrary, he ends on the note of optimism with 'strong hopes of better days for Bengali poetry and Bengali literature generally.'<sup>113</sup>

Nevertheless, in order to temper his remarks to the taste of his audience, Haracandra Datta had presented a slightly distorted impression of Bengali literature and also echoed European Christian sentiments. The following extract echoes, though less harshly, European strictures on woodcuts:

'In concluding our notice of the Chandi, we<sup>114</sup> have to

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110. Ibid., p.14.

111. Ibid., p.18.

112. Ibid., p.18.

113. Ibid., p.18.

114. This seems to be an echo of the statement by the author of the article 'On the effect of the Native Press in India' on design and execution of plates in books under his review. See Page 276 of this Chapter.

observe that the copy before us is embellished with several wood-cuts, which do no credit to the artists.<sup>115</sup>

A similar reflection of Victorian prudery, condemnation of idolatry, and a desire for a secular, less sex-ridden literature, may be seen in the following passage.

'The works of Bharat Chunder, the Annada Mangal and Bydya Sundar, are familiar as household words to the people of Bengal. They are read with delight and admiration by every class of native society. They while away the leisure hours of the Hindu lady of rank, as well as of the well-fed and wary banya, and materially lighten the labours of the manji at the helm. We ourselves have witnessed young Bengali women lounging about from room to room, with one or other of the books in their hands, and can well conceive how their minds are contaminated by the perusal. There is nothing more grossly indecent in sense than certain chapters in the Bydya Sundar, made attractive to readers by the help of rhyme, rhythm, and diction. Idolatry, the bane and curse of India,<sup>is</sup> inculcated in all imaginable shapes, by every one of the poets with whom we have to deal. They call for a healthy, and at the

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115. C.R., *ibid.*, p17.

same time, popular, literature in Bengali, is really imperative, and we wish all success to those who are labouring to supply the want.<sup>116</sup>

These distortions to pander to European taste and these echoes of European attitudes were to have their effect.

(iv) Raṅgalāl Banerji's defence of Bengali poetry. Apparently Haracandra Datta read his paper on Bengali literature in a meeting of the Bethune Society, held on the 8th April, 1852.<sup>117</sup> It was afterwards discussed by members of the society, such as Maheścandra Sen, Nābīncandra Palit and Kailāścandra Basu.<sup>118</sup> The latter was an enthusiast for English literature and reacted strongly to Haracandra's paper, stating that Haracandra's translations were more poetic than the originals. In his opinion Bengali literature contained nothing that could appeal to a man of education and taste: it was ugly, vulgar and insipid.<sup>119</sup> To illustrate his remarks, he made a few impromptu translations from Bhāratcandra's Vidyā Sundar. Kailāścandra's strictures galvanised Raṅgalāl Banerji to write what the Rev. Long has termed a 'Defence of Bengali Poetry'; Baṅglā Kabitā Viśayak Prabandha.<sup>120</sup>

116. Ibid., pp.7-8.

117. Ghos, Manmathanāth: Raṅgalāl, p.107.

118. Ibid., pp.107-108.

119. Ibid., p.107.

120. Ibid., p.107.

Raṅgalāl opens his defence by declaring that the nature of the poetry produced by a people is to some extent determined by geographic conditions: the bleakness of the northern hemisphere was the source of the bleak poetry emanating from that howling, rain-drenched region:

'a famous European scholar once remarked that poetry is a chaste lady whose attire varies according to space, time and circumstances. Poets dwelling bound by the girdle of cold and covered in darkness describe black mountain-ranges, kissed on their peaks by white snow and the appearance of a mass of stormy clouds, and also the beat of high waves on the craggy cavy shores of the ocean, the pale sun, the dim moon, the unhappy howling of the wind, the ear-piercing shriek of the night-birds, and the ceaseless lightning on the northern horizon.'<sup>121</sup>

But poets from more favoured regions spoke in more dulcet tones of the dazzling, sun-drenched settings of romance.

'(They) sing of bowers filled with laughter, charming trysting places adorned with thousands of different kinds of coloured flowers, lakes full of crystal-clear water on which is seen the gaiety of a hundred and one lotuses of infinite variety, the sports of engaging

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121. Bandyopādhyāy, Raṅglāl: Baṅgālā kabitā-biśayak Prabandha, 1852, pp.2-3.

water-fowl such as swans and the beauty of the various kinds of trees and creepers on the banks; and all this loveliness is again reflected from the enchanting mirror-like breast of the lake; (in addition to which they sing of) the glaring sun, the crescent moon like polished silver, the rainbow bedecked with various colours to delight both eye and mind, and the fragrant-flowing of the gentle breeze carrying the melody of the singing cuckoos and multitudinous bees. Consequently there is no reason why men of discernment should not perceive the kind of difference possible between the poetry of the northern hemisphere.<sup>122</sup> Mocking the English-educated detractors of Bengali poetry, Rahgalāl continues:

'Always supposing we had any poetry and it were worth mentioning, that is! Yet I am very rash, and dare to assert before this learned society that Bengal already possesses poetry. The new bābus, whose intelligence has been heightened by a knowledge of English, may on hearing this scoff at me. And so, these few gentlemen in this assembly who are that way inclined may go ahead and laugh. I promised you at

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122. Ibid., p.3.

the outset, you may remember, that I should feel gratified, if I managed to make you laugh. It's true no Milton or Shakespeare has yet been born in our land. Yet why do I say 'has yet been born?'

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The darkest waves of ocean bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste their sweetness in desert air.<sup>123</sup>

He goes on to imply that some poets may well have been born in Bengal, but had lived and died, unknown and unproductive, through lack of encouragement.

Raṅgalāl rejects the notion that Bengalis are inferior to Europeans and infers that in some respects they are even superior.<sup>124</sup> The English themselves admit that Bengalis are more emotional. And though the English may mock them as 'Lovers of the tontom',<sup>125</sup> if the truth were known, Bengalis would be admitted to be more sensitive to harmony than the English - despite the fact that young Bengal might perversely decide to break the rhythm and sing out of tune.<sup>126</sup>

Raṅgalāl refutes Koilāścandra's contention that subjection to foreign rule had dammed the well-springs of

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123. Ibid., pp.4-5.

124. Ibid., p.7.

125. Probably a reference to the percussion accompaniment to Kabi performances.

126. B.K.B.P., ibid., p.7.

poetry in India.

'My relative and friend Mr. Koilāścandra Basu stated in the last meeting that mental happiness is impossible without the political happiness of independence. Consequently, in a nation which is deprived of intellectual happiness, no true poet is able to emerge. Which explains why from amongst us Bengalis who for so long have been subjected to foreign rule, no true poet has yet emerged and why none is ever likely to. He added that it was when India enjoyed independence that such poets as Vālmikī, Vyās, Kālidās and Joydeva flourished. I congratulate Kailās Bābu on his far-sightedness and love of learning, but this statement of his does not accord with logic. He himself demonstrates his error within that self-same statement. For if poetry cannot emerge and flourish in the absence of independence, then Joydev would not have been born at Agradvīp during Mugal rule. My dear friend places Joydev during the period of India's independence. But Joydev is not an ancient poet as can easily be demonstrated. Furthermore, such poets as Surdās and Tulsidās also flourished during Mugal times and their poetry has been accepted by people of various nations as distinguished. If the lack of true poets were really due to the absence

of independence or to poverty or to despair, then in no country would there have emerged famous poets.'<sup>127</sup>

Coming now to Bhāratcandra, Raṅgalāl again alludes to differences in national temperament and the effect these differences have on their respective literatures. The abundance of erotic passages in Bhāratcandra were ultimately attributable to the tastes of the people for whom he wrote.<sup>128</sup>

'in a society fond of bitterness, sweetness is disliked.'<sup>129</sup> Whilst acknowledging by implication that the eroticism in Bhāratcandra was due to the sensuality of Bengalis, Raṅgalāl does not allow the British, who were the root-cause of these charges, to get off scot-free: indeed, he virtually labels them sadistic.

'Similarly it is the nation which is drunk with its own greatness and wishes to lord it over the other nations of the world that prefers to find in its literature violence and destructiveness.'<sup>130</sup>

Othelo and Hamlet were much too strong meat for the delicate stomachs of Bengal Raṅgalāl declares:

'No true Bengali dares either to read in a text or see in a theatre, the scene in the English play Othelo

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127. Ibid., pp.8-9.

128. Ibid., pp.17-18.

129. Ibid., p.17.

130. Ibid., p.17.



in which the innocent Desdemona is murdered.<sup>131</sup>

In fact, Bengalis had no taste at all for tragedy.

'Scholars ranging from Sir William Jones to Dr. Valentine have been unable to trace in Sanskrit literature what the English term tragedy (for there is none in Sanskrit, let alone Bengali) although there may be in some Sanskrit dramas occasional pathetic passages.'<sup>132</sup>

Poets could only cater to the tastes of their respective nations:

'It must therefore be said that Bhāratcandra was not at fault in composing erotic poetry, for a poet expresses only the propensities of his fellow countrymen and the feelings and emotions that arise within him in the particular country.'<sup>133</sup>

At the meeting of the Bethune Society Kailāścandra Basu had said that poetry in Bengali was not poetry at all, but the progenitress of shamelessness and vulgarity. By co-habiting with her, human nature could only become the servant of low inclinations; the only true comparison with Bhāratcandra's Vidyā Sundar was, he stated, that vile

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131. Ibid., p.18.

132. Ibid., p.18.

133. Ibid., pp.17-18.

work in English called Fanny Hill.<sup>134</sup> Vidyā Sundar, Kailāścandra opined~~ed~~, ought to be publically burnt, so that ladies' minds would no longer be polluted by it. Since Kailāścandra was however, eager to educate ladies in European fashion, Raṅgalāl asks, what measures did he propose taking in regard to the vile book with which he compared Vidyā Sundar.<sup>135</sup>

Pressing his attack, Raṅgalāl now observes that in English there were innumerable works which in regard to shamelessness would stand comparison with Vidyā Sundar. Indeed, in competition with some English poets, Bhāratcandra would never win the crown of bawdiness. To prove this point, it would, Raṅgalāl argues, be useless to speak of minor poets, for that would merely prolong the discussion.<sup>136</sup> He therefore intended to compare the 'shamelessness' of Bhāratcandra, the leading poet of Bengal, with that of Shakespeare, the highest pinnacle in the mountain-range of English poetry.<sup>137</sup> Was Vidyā Sundar any worse than Venus and Adonis of the much-vaunted Shakespeare? In Vidyā Sundar the hero begged the heroine for intercourse: in

134. Memoirs of Fanny Hill, by John Cleland. An abridgement by Cleland of his "Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure". pp.273. R.Griffith: London [1750] Suppressed Scenes from the Memoirs of Fanny Hill. Spurious, purporting to be passages extracted from John Cleland's "Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure" later abridged by the author under the title "Memoirs of Fanny Hill", p.29, [1920].

135. B.K.B.P., *ibid.*, p.20.

136. *Ibid.*, p.23.

137. *Ibid.*, p.23.

Venus and Adonis it was the heroine who craved intercourse with the hero. Vidyā and Sundar made love at night, Venus and Adonis during the day. Between Vidyā and Sundar there was a deep affection, whereas Venus was bound to Adonis by sheer lust.<sup>138</sup>

Raṅgalāl then quotes a few representative passages from each work to demonstrate their proportional obscenity.

From VidyāSundar:

'Holding the lovely lady's hand, Sundar politely said, 'Listen, my beloved, at noon today I saw on the lake a lotus entwine an Elephant. The mountain peaks bowed to the moon, saying that the lotus had risen in the sky. Seeing this, the moon fell to earth, and the khañjan and cakor laughed together.'<sup>139</sup>

Which means: the paramour said, 'I am the elephant, you are the lotus, you bind me with your stalk arms, I, the moon, fall to earth, whilst you, the lotus in bloom, rise in my heart's sky. My eyes are the Khañjan-bird, and yours are the cakor; both will laugh together, when the mountains of your breasts weep in steady streams of perspiration. Come, let's do it. Then you will understand.'<sup>140</sup>

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138. Ibid., pp.23-24.

139. Ibid., pp.25-26. Text: Appendix I.d (—)

140. Ibid., p.26.

From Venus and Adonis:

'Fondling' she saith, 'since I have hemm'd thee  
here.

Within the circuit of this ivory pale,  
I'll be the park, and thou shalt be my deer;  
Graze on my lips: and if those hills be dry,  
Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains  
lie,

Within this limit is relief enough,  
Sweet bottom-grass and high delightful plain,  
Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and  
rough,

To shelter thee from tempest and from rain;  
Then be my deer, since I am such a park;  
No dog shall rouse thee, though a thousand bark.' 141

Again from Vidyā Sundar.

'When Sundar, hungry for love like an elephant in  
rut, went to draw her to him Vidyā, like an  
unexpanded lotus, said:

'Leave me alone, my Lord, my lover and my  
darling. Fresh youth is not to be enjoyed  
by force. Only when the flower blossoms,

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141. Ibid., p.27.

will you get your honey. What, pray,  
 is the point of crushing the bud? No  
 honey can be had by squeezing that, yet the  
 bee has no quarrel with the fully-expanded  
 blossom.<sup>142</sup>

From Venus and Adonis:

(Adonis to Venus)

'Who wears a garment shapeless and unfinished?  
 Who plucks the bud before one leaf put forth?  
 If springing things be any jot diminished;  
 They wither in their prime, prove nothing worth:  
 The colt that's back'd and burthen'd being young?  
 Loseth his pride and never waxeth strong.'<sup>143</sup>

And again:

'No fisher but the ungrown fry for-bears:  
 the mellow plumb doth fall, the green sticks fast,  
~~Or,~~ Or, being early plucked is sour to the

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142. Ibid., pp.28-29. Text: kṣamahe patiṇe bādhuke priyahe  
naba yaubān jorer yogya nahe  
ras lābh habe rahiṃā phutile  
bala ki haibe kalikā dalile  
ras nā haibe karile ragrā  
ali nāhi kare mukule jhagrā

143. Ibid., pp.29-30.

taste.<sup>144</sup>

Raṅgalāl continues:

'Our uncivilised poet Bhāratcandra writes,

'Fear does not vanish unless one tears it,  
and sugar-cane does not give out its juices,  
if one leaves it alone (the metaphorical  
meaning is intercourse); by persistence the  
bee gently and moistly enters the lotus.'<sup>145</sup>  
(bracket mine)

The highly civilised poet of the English, Shakespeare,  
said:

'What wax so frozen but dissolves with temp'ring:  
And yields at last to every light impression?  
Things out of hope are compassed oft with vent'ring;  
Chiefly in love, whose leave exceed commission.'<sup>146</sup>

Let us conclude this discourse on shamelessness  
by singing a morning-song from Bhāratcandra and an  
evening-song from Shakespeare.

The morning-song from Vidyā Sundar:

'Biding farewell, Sundar took leave for his lodgings,

144. Ibid., pp.30-31.

145. Ibid., p.31. Text: bhaṃ nā tūṭibe bhaṃ nā turile  
ras ikṣu ki dei dāyā karile //  
baliyā chaliyā sahale sahale //  
rasiyā paśila bhramarā kamale //

146. Ibid., pp.31-32.

the lotus closed its eyes, the moon set. And Vidyā said: how can I say farewell, my darling, each second is like doom to me. How can I wait for twelve hours till I see once-more those cakor-eyes and that moon-like face. If I survive burning fires of separation, this night, shall I drink the honey of your lips.'<sup>147</sup>

The evening-song from Venus and Adonis: (Adonis says)

'Look, the world's comforter, with weary gait:

His day's hot task hath ended in the west,

The owl night's herald, shrieks, 'it is very late';

The sheep are gone to fold, birds to their nest;

The coal black clouds that shadow Heaven's light,

Do, summon us to part and bid good night.'<sup>148</sup>

I have presented you with a box of real London-baked sweetmeats and a platter of genuine kṛiṣṇa-nagure sarbhājā.<sup>149</sup>

Take each as you like but please remember that to digest English sweets one requires a bottle of good red castilion liquor, whilst to digest sarbhājā a cup of pure water from a chalky river will more than suffice.'<sup>150</sup>

Later in his discourse, Raṅgalāl made four further observations that were of great value in regard to the contemporary stage of Bengali literature.

147. Ibid., pp.32-33. Text: ~~Appendix i.d~~ (

148. Ibid., p.33.

149. Ibid., p.35. The pure sarbhājā sweet made at Kṛṣṇanagar, (i.e. Vidyā Sundar which was composed in the Court of Kṛṣṇanagar).

150. B.K.B.P., ibid., p.35.

(i) Assimilation from other sources was not reprehensible:

'Many people allege that in many instances Bhāratcandra stole ideas (from others). But this fault is common to all poets of every nation, the sole exceptions being the very first poets of each nation (who had no one to steal from).'<sup>151</sup>

(ii) To attempt to compose poetry in any language other than one's mother-tongue was meaningless:

'There are many amongst you, who, despising the easily attainable corn of their own country, endeavour to cultivate foreign crops, but they don't realise that English verse by Bengalis and Bengali verse by Englishmen are as impossible as mango ~~leaves~~<sup>but</sup> on a bakul-tree. Should you protest, 'Do not the English poems of Kāśīprasād Ghoṣ, Govindracandra Datta and Rājñārāyan Datta constitute poetry?' Then I should reply: 'Why, of course. In exactly the same way as horse (aśva) is prefixed to mule (aśvatar)?.'<sup>152</sup>

(iii) Scholarship was not a prerequisite of poetry.

'If great erudition could render men great poets, then Ben Johnson would have been counted superior to Shakespeare and Bar-ruchi to Kālidās. Though Pandit Madan Mohun Tarkalanhar is a veritable Doctor of

151. Ibid., p.42.

152. Ibid., p.49.



Poet-ology and though he shows many signs of being a true poet, nevertheless in poetic power he is, in any humble opinion, surpassed by Išvarcandra Gupta. We presume that had Išvar Bābu been a distinguished scholar, Nabīn Bābu would have accorded him the accolade.<sup>153</sup>

(iv) A literature could by enterprise and hard labour be improved.

'Fellow countrymen! Friends of Bengali language and poetry. Delay no more. Let your goal be the placing of the garland of Bengali poetry on the necks of the cultured. You have the land, you have the seed, you have the means. All you need are the cultivators. So arise. Sprinkle the waters of enthusiasm, apply the plough of toil, up-root the weeds and tares of dis-inclination. In no time at all a good harvest will be yours.'<sup>154</sup>

Unlike the European Christians, who had of late almost abandoned hope of anything worthwhile appearing in Bengali, Raṅgalāl was confident of the coming renaissance, when western literary standards would be attained in Bengali. 'Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is', T. S. Eliot observes, 'directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry.'<sup>155</sup> Though Raṅgalāl himself failed to create the new poetry of the renaissance, his

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153. Ibid., pp.50-51.

154. Ibid., pp.48-49.

155. Eliot, T.S.: The Sacred Wood, 7th ed. reprinted, 1949, London, p.53.

criticism served as its prologue.

(v) Gupta's conception of the true nature of poetry. There are strong reasons to suppose that in planning his discourse Raṅgalāl may have been inspired by Iśvarcandra Gupta.<sup>156</sup> Both were unanimous in their acclamation of old Bengali poetry, but, while Raṅgalāl was a believer in cultural cross-fertilisation, Gupta probably for educational reasons was not - though he did his best to encourage young writers to translate from English poetry and introduce English metres into Bengali verse.<sup>157</sup>

A few poems and prefaces by Iśvarcandra Gupta throw light on the place of poetry in contemporary society, the nature of true poetry and Gupta's approach to criticism.

a) The place of Poetry in Contemporary Society: Iśvarcandra was passionately fond of old Bengali poetry:

'I find pleasure in no other entertainment on earth,  
I feel inclined to no other activity and nothing else  
brings peace to my mind; I think constantly only  
of our ancient poetry. Whenever I find a poem to  
my liking, my joy is boundless and I feel as if I have  
the joy of Brahma in my hands.'<sup>158</sup>

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156. Datta, Bhabatoṣ, op.cit., p.3.

157. S.P., annual number, 1257 B.S.

158. Gupta, Iśvarcandra: Rāy Guṇākar Kabibar Bhāratcandra Rāyer Jībanbrttānta, 1855, introduction, pp.1-2.

It grieved him that in modern times old Bengali poetry was being neglected:

'Poetry is an ocean of nectar whose waves are emotions and whose waters are love. No one now appreciates it, to whom can I express this sorrow. Alas! alas! who will dispel this pain?'<sup>159</sup>

In modern times, prose was in the ascendency but to Īśvarcandra's mind, it was as dry and tasteless as wood:

'They bite on wood and sing its praises.'<sup>160</sup>

'How many qualities can you express in this harsh, grating language resembling the cawing of a crow?'<sup>161</sup>

Yet to Gupta's mind this modern preference for prose was mistaken. It was false to assume that old Bengali poets had nothing significant to say to modern man; indeed, ancient poetry was the vehicle of the culture and civilisation that distinguished men from beasts. In repudiating poetry, modern man was relinquishing his claim to be regarded human and civilised:

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159. K.S., Part II, p.299: Kabitā o Kabi.

Text: Kabitā amṛta sindhu, bhāb tār dheu  
e sāgare prem jal, nāhi khāy keu  
maner e khed kare kariba prakāś  
hāy! hāy! ei dukha, ke karibe nās //

160. Ibid., p.300. Text: kāthele kāmār mere, gān kare yās

161. Ibid., p.298. Text: kāker dāker nyāy, karkāś kubhās  
tāhe tumi kata guṇ karibe prakāś //

'I fear that man as a terrible animal who is not susceptible to the charms of such poetry. Alas! alas! O providence! how could you commit such a fault, why did you not fit them out with tails and fur? Why do these people who are not bees on the lotus flower of poetry continue to live in human communities: why do they enjoy human fare? Why do not they go to the jungles and live on leaves and grass?'<sup>162</sup>

These modern philistines, who do not appreciate poetry and are ipso facto man-born apes, are to be feared more than animals, for animals are at least responsive to its music (though the meaning of poetry may elude them):

'The sound of music enchants even animals yet these human-beasts are unmoved. So I fear them more than I fear animals: let them wander round the forest, eating leaves and grass.'<sup>163</sup>

Nevertheless, Gupta did not despair. So convinced was he of the value of old Bengali poetry, that he sought

162. Ibid., p.303. Text: eman kabitā preme mugdha jei nañ / bhayanak paśu bole, tāre kari bhay // hāy! hāy! bidhātār bhram dekhi hena // lyāñ ār lom tār den nāi kena? / kabitā kamal phule kabi nañ yārā / janapade janamāñhe kena thāke tārā? etc.
163. Ibid., p.303. Text: git śune premākul, paśukul yata / nara paśu yārā tārā, sei prem hata // kāñe kāñe bhay kari, paśuder ceye // kāñane ghuruk giyā, pātā ghās kheye //

to collect and publish it, so that modern man might have the opportunity of learning to appreciate fully the achievements of earlier poets:

'I now request most cordially all those newly educated Bengalis who are not conversant with Bengali poetry, to direct a little of their attention to all the old poetry, which we have been, and are, publishing, and to try seriously to appreciate it. We assure them that if they do so, they will find pleasure and will quickly be convinced of the progress made by Bengali poets in the poetic expression of philosophy, humour and love. With what wonderful skill have they captured nature and each in their own individual way evoked responses from their readers. What graceful language! Sweetness! what charming thoughts! Beauty! What depth of sentiment!...We see no defect anywhere.'<sup>164</sup>

In collecting and publishing the old poets, Gupta was apparently motivated by two aims:

(i) He wished to revitalise old Bengali literature making it the model on which aspiring modern poets might fashion their own styles:

'I desire only this that when I have (to my satisfaction) published these unpublished verses these ancient dead

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<sup>164</sup>. Gupta, *Isvarcandra*, op.cit., Introduction, pp.5-6.

poets will live once more in human society with all their own glory. Preserving the high honour of the country, the fragrance of these proud flowers will be diffused everywhere. The pride of the modern poets who are as arrogant as they are untalented, will fall from the proud peak and those who are entering the path of poetic composition, will find good guidance to direct their footsteps.<sup>165</sup>

(ii) He also wished faithfully to preserve the poetic monuments of old Bengali literature.

Devotional lyrics, for example, were only imperfectly known in modern times:

'Because of the scarcity of books, devotional songs have not been available to everyone. Even though some particular individuals may have had the opportunity of hearing extracts from them performed by singers or in some way or other, nevertheless, it is not possible fully to appreciate such wonderful sentiments unless one hears the complete songs. Consequently, after having heard those extracts, those individuals are always eager to hear the rest.'<sup>166</sup>

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165. Ibid., p.5.

166. Gupta, Īśvarcandra: Introduction to Kālikīrtan, 1833 (S.S.C.M., Vol.I., Book 10), p.1.

The singers, who in the past had been the vehicle for disseminating literature, were no longer qualified to perform this function:

'Furthermore, the few professional singers of Kālikīrttan that once meets, are so inexperienced in reciting them and so generally ignorant that by their distortions of the meaning, the sentiment intended by the composer is at the time of the recital so contorted that instead of infusing joy into the hearts of the audience, they infuse sorrow. Consequently, since there is a danger of these defects in the singing being interpreted as defects in composition, the beauty of the composer's achievement might perhaps be impaired.<sup>167</sup>

It was, therefore, essential to publish editions of old poets, both for the sake of faithful preservation of their form and also for the moral value of their matter:

'So in order to avoid the various faults mentioned above and in order to preserve these wonderful lyrics, for all time in a large edition and in a faithful version, I have fetched the original manuscript (of the Kālikīrttan) from its original source, edited it and am now engaged in printing it. Consequently, when perusing this book, virtuous kind gentlemen will find that devotion to Kālī

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167. Ibid., p.1.

germinates in their hearts, and they themselves have become appreciative of other people's qualities, and the composer's great achievement will be immortalised, and my labour will not have been in vain.'<sup>168</sup>

b) The Nature of True Poetry. Poetry, according to Gupta, was the highest form of art, superior both to painting and to prose. The superiority to the latter has already been alluded to. As regards painting, Gupta points out in Kabi that the painter could but record the 'external form of things', whereas 'from the poet, one gets a complete revelation of both the visible and invisible world.' Furthermore, a painting, Gupta asserts, was as perishable as the transient universe it portrayed, whereas a poem recorded eternal verities and was therefore indestructable.<sup>169</sup>

Poetry was the supreme achievement of man: an appreciation of it distinguished man from beasts; and the ability to compose it placed a man at the summit of society:

'It is not easy to be born a man and the best of men are learned and the best of the learned are poets and the poet who possesses divine power is alone a great poet.'<sup>170</sup>

168. Ibid., pp.1-2.

169. K.S., op.cit., 282-283.

170. Ibid., p.303. Text: sahaje mānab deha sulabh to naṣ  
mānuser sār sei, paṇḍit ye haṣ  
paṇḍiter sār sei, kabi haṣ yei  
daiba śakti āche yār, mahā kabi sei //



Thus a great poet, according to Gupta, represented the highest point on the evolutionary scale.

In the poets he singles out for praise, chiefly Bhāratcandra Rāy and Rāmprasād Sen, Gupta finds himself in a quandry<sup>a</sup>, for each of these <sup>poets</sup> would seem to us to represent one side of Gupta's <sup>own</sup> poetic nature: he therefore seems at a loss as to which poet deserved preeminence, according it now to Bhāratcandra and now to Rāmprasād.

Rāmprasād he admired for four reasons:

- (i) His composition<sup>s</sup>, like many of Gupta's own, were spontaneous:

'In regard to poetry Rāmprasād Sen possessed extraordinary skill and divine power. He used to compose spontaneous verses about whatever he saw and felt.

He never sat down with pen and paper. All the utterances which issued from his lips were, in fact, poetry. As a mystic poet, he was outstanding: he could compose a devotional poem from the most trivial material.'<sup>171</sup>

- (ii) He possessed what Gupta termed 'divine power';

- (iii) He was unworldly:

'Rāmprasād was completely apathetic to patronage and

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171. Datta, Bhabatoṣ, op.cit., p.48. (S.P., 15th December, 1853 as quoted).

worldly possession<sup>s</sup>,<sup>172</sup>

(iv) His compositions were entirely his own.

'Rāmprasād Sen was a poor man and in composing his poetry received assistance from no one.'<sup>173</sup>

In these respects, Rāmprasād was, Gupta at times maintains, superior to Bhāratcandra, who, lacking 'divine power', was never able to produce passages of such haunting, spiritual beauty as Rāmprasād achieved, occasionally in his Vidyā Sundar, but consistently in his Kālīkīrttan and Kṛṣṇakīrttan.<sup>174</sup>

Nevertheless, elsewhere Gupta waxed eloquent in praise of Bhāratcandra:

'How sweet, how wonderful! With what a marvellous skill and with what graceful honied diction, this letter and nāgāṣṭak have been composed. We are at a complete loss to describe the depth of thought and feeling, the sweetness of sentences, the neatness of the rhymes and the lucidity of the verse. Only those whom God has graciously granted learning, poetry and skill in all spheres, will be able fully to appreciate its excellence. We can only say this, that as a composer of verse in the Bengali vernacular he is

<sup>172</sup>. Ibid., p.58.

<sup>173</sup>. Ibid., p.59.

<sup>174</sup>. Ibid., p.59.

virtually unequalled. Furthermore, the poetry composed by him in Sanskrit is also of a high order: it is worthy of particular comment. In addition to that he was also able to compose poetry in Persian: his compositions both in mixed diction (i.e. a mixture of Sanskrit, Brajabuli and Mussalmanī) and in separate languages (i.e. Brajabuli, Hindi and Mussalmanī), were also excellent. Such versatility is indeed rare. Consequently he will undoubtedly be universally considered outstanding in every possible way.<sup>175</sup>

Despite this occasional fulsome praise, however, Gupta to some extent belittled Bhāratcandra's achievements, attributing his best work to the aid he received at the court of Kṛṣṇa Candira Rāy:

'The VidyāSundar, which Bhāratcandra composed at the king's command, was corrected by all the court pundits and for this reason has been univerally acclaimed as a masterpiece (sarbbāṅga sundar).<sup>176</sup>

'All the vernacular poetry composed by Bhāratcandra before or after Amadāmaṅgal cannot be compared with it in any way whatsoever, which proves that taking

175. Gupta, Iśvarcandra:.. Bhāratcandra Rāy Jīvanbrttānta, p.37.

176. Datta, Bhabatoṣ, op.cit., pp.58-59.

refuge in the court of Mahārājā Kṛṣṇacandra Rāy, made Bhāratcandra's Amadamaṅgal for various reasons excellent and in many respects flawless. Furthermore, this poetry gives more evidence of Bhāratcandra's learning, erudition, industry and care than of divine power ('daibaśakti'); yet what little daiba śakti is revealed is out of the ordinary.<sup>177</sup>

Despite this carping upon the assistance Bhāratcandra received Gupta accords him pride of place in the adaptation of Sanskrit metres to Bengali verse: Bhāratcandra was not, Gupta states, the originator of this trend, but he was in this regard indisputably the best.

'Nevertheless, as one must readily admit, Bhāratcandra excelled his predecessors.'<sup>178</sup>

It would seem to us that, since imitation is a form of flattery, Gupta's Kabitā may be taken as an ill-conceived tribute to Bhāratcandra.<sup>179</sup> It borrows all the worst features of Bhārat's poetry and incorporates none of the redeeming features of Gupta's own. It is full of classical conceits, indicating a blind admission of Sanskrit rhetoric, and completely lacks humour. Its diction is not contemporary but classical: e.g. (a) mahari (b) Madhudarpahāri Badhu, (c) rasaratnakarudbhava. Even the metres it praises - e.g. lalita, toṭak, and bhujāṅgaprayāt - are not metres that

177. Gupta, Iśvarcandra: ... Bhāratcandra Rāyer Jīvanbr̥ttānta, p.58.

178. Ibid., p.37.

179. K.S., op.cit., pp.252-254.

Īśvarcandra himself used. And finally it reads almost like an essay in which a deliberate attempt has been made to display classical erudition:

'Thou art accompanied by thy handmaids, the thirty-six rāginīs and attended by thy servants the six rāgas and the six rasas. The six seasons, spring and so forth, are your generals and your innumerable soldiers are nature's sons: the world's great enemies the six senses are the oldest heroes born of the heart and are engaged as your ambassadors.'<sup>180</sup>

As a definition or example of what Īśvarcandra considered true poetry to be, we may quote the following from his comments on a poem by one Thākuraṇi Dāsī:

'This verse has attained quality in every respect - pause, rhyme, metre, sentiment, idea and meaning, every aspect has received due treatment. And it is pregnant with the best of all qualities - perspicuity.'<sup>181</sup>

c) Īśvarcandra Gupta's Approach to Criticism. Appreciation of poetry was, Gupta maintained, a gift from God.

'Only those, whom God has graciously granted learning, poetry and skill in all spheres, will be able fully

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180. Ibid., p.252. Text: chatriś rāginī saṅge. saḥacarī same /  
chay rāg. chay ras. sebak upama //  
basantādi chay rtu. senāpati han /  
prakṛtir puttaraṇa senā agana //  
chay ripu agraja manoja mahābit /  
doutya kārje niyojita. mahāri mahir //

181. S.P., No.6098, Tuesday, the 13th April, 1858 (1 Baisākh, 1265 B.S.).

to appreciate its excellence.'<sup>182</sup>

Since this was so, the number qualified to criticise poetry was severely limited. In modern times many 'unqualified' critics had dared to come forward. These critics revealed more of their own ignorance than of the defects of the poets they reviewed, however:

'Modern authors, ignorant of the intentions of Bhāratcandra, quote examples of his errors in their writings, yet when one examines these, one sees that by criticising Bhāratcandra these authors are merely revealing their own ignorance.'<sup>183</sup>

Even Vidyāsāgar was, in Gupta's view, unqualified to judge poetry.

'You may be very learned, O Vidyāsāgar, and you may have attained popularity by writing prose, but unless you have genuine love for poetry, don't try to expound poetics: how dreadfully dry and boring you are: how can you become famous amongst talented men? Unless you are a genuine lover of poetry, how can you be described as a connoisseur and where is your literary

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182. Gupta, Īśvarcandra: ... Bhāratcandra Rāyer Jīvanbr̥ttānta, p.37.

183. Ibid., p.57.

taste?<sup>184</sup>

The point was: some newly-educated Bengalis were attempting to criticise Bengali poetry by alien western standards; Gupta maintained that in order to appreciate and criticise indigenous poetry, one must try to grasp the poet's intentions; i.e. judge his work from within the framework of the literary standards and cultural ideas current at the time of composition. It is noteworthy that Gupta's own appraisals of Rāmprasād and Bhāratcandra are made from this angle of approach: i.e. he judges each in terms of what each set out to achieve, the former to promulgate bhakti and the latter to enrich Bengali verse with a greater variety of metres.

The age in which Gupta lived, as seen in the materials we have been discussing, has four main characteristics:

- (i) It was an age in which people were beginning to explore the history of Bengal - of both its literature and inhabitants - recent and past.
- (ii) It was an age in which for communal reasons people desired to distort that history; e.g.
  - by misinterpreting the reasons for the backwardness of Bengali literature;
  - by claiming an exaggeratedly close affinity between

184. K.S., op.cit., p.298. Text: hae tumi supandit, vidyār sāgar/  
yadya likhe bādya kabi, has  
priyabar //  
Kabitar prati yadi prem nāhi  
dhara /  
 (Contd. on next page.....)

Bengali and Sanskrit;

- by desiring to rid Bengali of Perso-Arabic elements and alien syntactic influences.

(iii) Foreign observers seemed in the main sanguine of Bengali's future. Some were averse to this Hindu-inspired purification movement: they held that Bengali was ripe for development and should absorb as much alien diction as was natural.

(iv) It was an age in which poetry was held in greater esteem than prose, but in which prose was gradually increasing in importance. Most serious criticism was, however, confined to poetry.

Since this question of 'purification' is so important, let us examine it in the light of the literary history of Bengal.

Linguistically it would seem that up to 1760 there were in Bengali only two streams of creation, one in pure unmixed Bengali and one in a Bengali in which either Sanskrit or Perso-Arabic elements are used, sometimes, in the case of Sanskrit, predominantly, but in the case of Perso-Arabic

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(....contd. from previous page.)

kabir kabitā gun. byākhā nāhi kara //  
ki ras niras tumi. biras bikat /  
kise tumi yaś pābe, gunir nikat?



elements, only sporadically. The stream of creation of pure unmixed Bengali can be traced straight from the earliest extant manuscript, Śrīkṛṣṇakīrttan, right to the songs of the Kabiwālās 185. Mānnān, Q.A., The Emergence and Development of Bengali Literature in Bengal, (up to 1855 A.D.) The sporadic use of Persian-Arabic elements is found in a number of works, such as Manasā Bijay and Candimangal, dating from the end of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, respectively, to round about 1760. This sporadic use was associated with Muslim contexts: the poets were obviously seeking to create veri-similitude.<sup>185</sup> In this connection, the famous utterance of Bhāratcandra may be quoted:

Mān Simha Pātsāy haila ye banī /  
ucit ye Aroi Parsi Hindusthānī //  
pariyāchi sei mata barnibāre pāri /  
kintu se sakal loke bujhibāre bhāri //  
nā rabe prasād gun nā habe rasāl /  
ataeb kahi bhāsā yābanī miśāl //<sup>186</sup>

185. Mānnān, Q.A., The Emergence and Development of Doghāṣī Literature in Bengal, (up to 1855 A.D.), 1st ed., 1966, p.71.

186. Bandyopādhyāy, B.N. and Dās, S.K. (ed.): Bhāratcandra-Granthābālī, 2nd. ed., 1951, p.339. Translation: 'The appropriate languages for a conversation between Mānsimha and the emperor (of Delhi) are Persian, Arabic and Hindustānī. Since I studied these languages, I could use them; but they are difficult for people to understand. They lack grace and poetic quality. I have chosen, therefore, the mixed language of the Muslims.' (Mānnān, *ibid.*, p.69).

The predominant use of Sanskritic diction seems to have become fashionable in the seventeenth century and largely associated with court-poets, such as Alāol and Bhāratcandra.

Up until the death of Bhāratcandra (1760) linguistic diction probably had no political overtones, though these were perhaps social implications. The stream of pure Bengali literature was probably a creation of rural poets who were perhaps to some extent recasting folk-materials; the use of Sanskritic and Perso-Arabic diction may perhaps have been associated with particular social groups who had received further education either in Sanskrit or Persian and were thus to some extent linked with government service under the Mughals. After 1760, a change gradually took place. Power passed into the hands of the English and Calcutta became a magnet for literary talent within Bengal. The old method of disseminating literature must somehow in these altered circumstances have broken down producing the much-written of interregnum in Bengali literature. Without patronage presumably long epics could no longer be composed and in the altered circumstances of city life there were no occasions on which they could be recited. At all events, the only new creations were those of the Kabiwālās who both continued the former tradition of

sihging on themes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa etc. and also explored new paths in the highly entertaining and sometimes scurrilous Kabi Larāi, verse-contests in which one poet or one member of a party tries to vanquish or satirise his opponent from another party in largely spontaneous verse.<sup>187</sup>

Another lines of creation was that of dobhāṣī in which Perso-Arabic elements were used in profusion to create an exclusively Muslim literature.

The greatest change, however, resulted from a combination of circumstances: the coming of printing (1778), the establishment of Fort William College (1800), the School Book Society and Hindu College (1817) and launching of an indigenous press in Bengali from 1818 onwards. One of the main results of these developments was the gradual evolution of a Bengali prose which in course of time became rich enough and flexible enough to handle almost any topic.<sup>188</sup> But in the formative years of Bengali prose, from 1800 to 1851, generally speaking, four styles can be distinguished: (i) a heavily Sanskritised style, that was the heritage of court-patronage in the eighteenth

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187. Cakrabarttī, Nirañjan, op.cit., p.32.

188. Dās, Śiśirkumār: Early Bengali Prose, 1st. ed., 1966, pp.241-243.

century and was now cultivated largely under Government patronage in the nineteenth, in various educational institutions, (ii) a Musalmānī style which was to a large extent the direct linguistic result of Persian continuing to be the Government language, (iii) a highly colloquial style used sporadically at Fort William College, first in Carey's Kathopākathan (1802) and again to some extent in Mrtyuñjaya Vidyālakṣhār's Probodh Candrikā (1813) and which was later to be used with great success by Pyaricāḍ Mitra in the first Bengali novel of note, Alāler Gharer Dulāl (1858), and (iv) lastly, the prose of the press used for newspaper reports, book-reviews, literary articles, social sketches, pamphleteering and controversy: i.e. any purpose other than that of the production of text books. It was probably this prose of the press which exhibited the widest variety of styles and which ultimately exerted the greatest influence on the formation of a popular, all-purpose prose, for newspapers were cheap, yet to remain cheap had to be popular and the need for popularity is a fine whet-stone for sharpening and shaping language into an acceptable instrument.

Gradually, however, a movement arose for the purification of the Bengali language. This movement can be traced

straight from the writing of the preface to Halhed's Grammar (1778) and constituted mainly in a denigration of Bengali in which there was a large element of Perso-Arabic diction. Presumably Halhed acquired from his Hindu teachers not only a knowledge of Bengali but also a degree of the communal prejudice that was held by a certain section of Hindu society.

We have now arrived at this important question of communalism. As the reader may have noticed, in presenting the material in this chapter we did so, community by community. Let us briefly re-capitulate the attitudes of the various communities alluded to either directly or indirectly in the course of the chapter.

(v) Firstly, The Christians.

Christians were concerned with chronicling the Volume of literature produced since 1800 - i.e., under their own inspiration.

They aimed to break with tradition: to produce prose instead of poetry; and saw improvement chiefly in the abandoning of all traditional outlooks and practices and the adoption of Christian outlook and principles. They had no 'purist' ideas in regard to language: i.e., Perso-Arabic diction was permissible provided it was apt.

(vi) The reaction of some Hindus.

Precisely because of this intransigent attitude on the

part of Christians, some Hindus were prejudiced towards all the products of Serampore. They were adamant in trying to purify Bengali diction and to strengthen the relation between Bengali and Sanskrit: i.e. they wished to strengthen their adherence to what they regarded as their cultural origins: they wished to affirm cultural traditions.

(vii) The reactions of anglicised Bengalis.

The anglicised Bengali Hindu community did not react in concert: ~~some such as Haracandra Datta and Koilāscandra Datta.~~ Haracandra Datta and Raṅgalāl Benerji both took a comparative attitude, though each differed in their findings: Haracandra found Bengali poetry inferior to both Sanskrit and English; Raṅgalāl found it not inferior, but merely different. Koilāscandra condemned it outright as unworthy of consideration by a civilised man.

(viii) Finally Iśvarcandra Gupta.

He plainly is outside the main tract of the discussion. He is unable to take a comparative approach, because of lack of scholarship. For him Bengali literature was still a living tradition: there had been for him no interregnum: he continues in a direct line from Bhāratcandra and Rāmprasād; and for this reason it

is easy to see why he quickly became neglected after his death.

The poet of the new age was to be Michael Madhusūdan Datta, the one who is pre~~s~~saged in the writings of almost all these critics, a poet who was to take the Bengali language and raise it to a higher cultural level by the infusion of a more western outlook and a sense of higher literary standards. Thus Madhusūdan was to sy<sup>n</sup>thesise western outlook with Bengali-Sanskritic diction and tradition. But later there was to be a further synthesis between these raised aesthetic standards and the popular, earthy appeal of such a man as Iṣvarcandra.

One of the critics discussed twice used the term 'national literature'. Actually, Bengal has no national literature; it has merely a collection of communal literatures. This state of affairs ~~has~~ persisted into the modern period: i.e. communal literatures continued to be created during the period under discussion - Christian, Hindu, Muslim, etc. The newspapers were in fact a continuation of this communalism. The Bengali Christian ends his article on a note of appeal for a newspaper for the Christian community. The anti-Serampore bias was another indication of this inter-communal rivalry. The comparative stream indicates that for some intellectual Bengalis there appeared to be no Bengali literature at all: it would seem that anglicised Bengalis to some extent

formed a community and for this community there appeared to be no literature of a sufficiently high quality to appeal to them. Many turned to English for literature. Some even chose to write it; i.e. some anglicised Bengalis were even opting out of Bengali nationality and virtually proclaiming themselves European. In reaction to these Rangalāl pointed out that Bengali literature was in no way inferior to English, it was merely different. And lastly Išvarcandra Gupta, who was again creating a communal literature for his readers by ridiculing other communities (e.g. the European) and affirming faith in traditional Bengali culture.

The emergence of a national literature in Bengali is a question that lies outside this thesis. But we would hazard a guess that its emergence depended to some extent on education. In the course of preparing this chapter we noticed that in 'native' primary schools no books were used. For the most part pupils were merely taught to read and write. What literature they read was read outside the schools. The literature they read was communal and it would be read mainly on a communal basis: i.e. in a public gathering. The works to some extent were interrelated with the religion of their community and read or rather performed at specific times and festivals.

It would seem that it was because of this communal



nature of literature that the writing of Bengali literary history has been so difficult. In the materials we have considered there has been considerable communal bias. The Christian writers have chronicled the emergence of literature in the modern period and have seen progress only when works of a western outlook and Christian principles have appeared. For the rest they have been eager to denigrate speaking of the 'degraded' low taste of Hindu literature, and low standard of Hindu ethics and morals. They were mainly eager to show the volume of Christian literature produced.

Hindu writers praised only works by Hindu writers.

No works by Muslims were mentioned. This is not because no such works existed, but because of the communal bias, Hindus were not aware of them.

Though efforts were now being made to re-discover Bengali literature, the discoverers seemed to discover only works belonging to their own community. Both Haracandra Datta and Isvarcandra Gupta 'discover' only works of their own communities and each takes a peculiar communal attitude. Haracandra Datta, an anglicised intellectual, speaks of the Candimangal as a 'pastoral' poem, when to the people for whom it was written it was devotional. He quotes a passage from Mansingh with a heavy communal bias of Hindu patriotism and apparently

overlooks the passage's intention. That is, he gives the impression of writing almost like a European about an alien literature, trying to discover literary qualities in that literature, whilst totally ignoring its intention. Gupta, on the other hand, is not re-discovering anything. He is still within a living tradition of communal literature and in reprinting it, does so, for the same reason that the literature was created in the first place - to inculcate bhakti in its readers or to allow them to enjoy the aesthetic qualities in the manner in which they have been traditionally enjoyed. In speaking of Bhāratcandra, he seems to be looking enviously back to a golden age, when a poet could enjoy court-patronage and more important a cultural climate of appreciation and encouragement that in modern times is sadly lacking. He himself would have liked very much to enjoy such stimulation as Bhāratcandra must have received in reading his works to a critically appreciative Brahmin audience, who were out to savour and improve the excellence of his creations. In holding his annual readings Gupta was to some extent seeking to recreate that atmosphere. And as a poet writing within a living communal tradition he castigates critics outside that tradition such as Vidyasāgar and people like Haracandra Datta who criticise poetry without taking into account the all-important question of the poet's intention, implying that

without sympathy for that intention there can be no criticism.

## Chapter XI

### Form and Style

It would perhaps surprise Gupta to learn that in modern times his reputation rests upon his satires alone. The definition of Roman satire in The Classical Tradition<sup>1</sup> by Gilbert Highet, which is largely applicable to modern satire, may be referred to in this context. It enumerates the characteristics of a satirist:

- great variety of style and subject
- but generally characterized by the free use of conversational language
- frequent intrusion of the author's personality
- predilection for wit, humour and irony
- great vividness and concreteness of description
- shocking obscenity in theme and language
- an improvisatory tone, topical subjects
- the general intention of improving society by exposing its vices and follies.<sup>2</sup>

The essence of Roman satire 'is summed up in the word σπουδωγέλοισι ridentem dicere verum = 'joking in earnest'.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Highet, Gilbert: The Classical Tradition, 5th printing, 1964, p.305.

2. Ibid, p.305.

3. Ibid., p.305.

With the exception of the first, this list of characteristics<sup>4</sup> virtually constitute a profile of Gupta, as will have become apparent in the ~~five~~<sup>six</sup> preceding chapters. Even the first characteristic seems to have been aimed at by Gupta, though missed lamentably.

It is unfortunately a sad fact that men achieve distinction most readily in the things which come easiest to them. The thing that came easiest to Gupta was satire, though he himself aimed for distinction in other directions and laboured exceedingly to achieve it, though to no avail. His religious verse far exceeds his satire in volume, though not in quality. He even tried to gather together into published volumes what he considered his 'serious' verse (it is perhaps as well that he did, for it would have occurred to very few others to do so); but his satires he left scattered in his ephemeral

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4. Even Gupta did not fail to compose 'short, biting, and memorable epigrammatic sentence' (Highet, *ibid*, p.306), which is another feature of good satire. Some examples are given below:

- (a) birālakṣī bidhumukhī mukhe gandha chutē
- (b) bibijān ca'le yān labejān ka're
- (c) hotel-e total nāś
- (d) amrā bhusi pelei khusi haba, ghusi khele bācbanā
- (e) erā āpan hāte hākiye bagī garer māthe hāoyā khābe
- (f) bujhi 'hoot' bale, 'boot' pāye diye cheroot phuke sarge yābe.

daily to perish.<sup>5</sup> The thing was, I suppose, that he had inherited, together with numerous other poetic traditions, a traditional scale of values in regard to poetry: at the top of the scale were the Vedas and Upaniṣads and at the bottom the kind of jingling nursery-rhyme verse of folk-poetry in which much of his satires were couched. So naturally he neglected them.

The age into which Gupta was born was overshadowed by a giant: Bhāratcandra Rāy, who had died more than fifty years earlier, but whose spirit in the form of the printed versions of his masterpiece, Vidya-Sundar, still dominated popular taste. Bhāratcandra's influence was deeply stamped on Gupta's friend Bhanānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy: it was also deeply stamped upon himself. Gupta would very much have liked to be a second Bhāratcandra, but a Bhāratcandra imbued with the sincere religious convictions of Rāmprasād Sen. Unfortunately for Gupta the system of court patronage that had sustained Bhāratcandra had ceased, and the only scope for a poet lay in editing newspapers, where to maintain circulations he had to 'prostitute' his talents writing satires on

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5. The works published in Gupta's life-time (i.e., Bhāratcandra Rāy Gunākaraṇ Jīvanbrttānta, Prabodh Prabhākar, etc.) were all 'serious' in nature.

topical events, whilst he longed to sit in the Court of Krishnagore, producing some interminable masterpiece.

Such then was Gupta's position: a man who yearned to be a medieval devotional poet, but confined by economic necessities to being a newspaper editor. As a poet, Gupta can claim credit for no technical innovations whatsoever. His whole career can be summed up in a sentence: he inherited from Bhāratcandra and Rāmprasād, and also from the current Kabiwālās, the whole estate of Bengali poetry; he managed the estate as best he could in prevailing circumstances and handed it on intact to his descendants. To this extent, his achievement was no greater and no less than that of any feudal aristocrat, except for this: from this estate Gupta farmed a harvest of verse satire, such as Bengal had never known before or since. There had been a few seeds before, in Mukundarām and Bhāratcandra, and the Kabiwālās, but such abundance was unprecedented. For this Gupta does indeed deserve credit.

(1) Stanza. The variety of forms and styles exhibited by Gupta was almost as wide as his inheritance: he attempted long poems in the manner of Bhāratcandra<sup>6</sup> and short lyrics in

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6. e.g. Sārādāmaṅgal. (G.B., pp. 267-288).

the style of Rāmprasād; he also attempted a drama and serious religious verse; but he achieved success as we have indicated, mainly in short satirical poems where the folk elements of the current kabiwalās are perhaps strongest. To say that Gupta's variety of forms and styles was as wide as his inheritance does not ultimately imply any great variety, however; for traditionally Bengali verse exhibits only two forms: the payār and the tripadī. These constituted the typical Bengali stanza form: the length of the poem being dependent merely on the number of such stanzas.

A payār consists of 28 syllables, fourteen to each line,<sup>7</sup> with a caesural pause after the first eight,<sup>8</sup> and a final pause at the end of each line marked by either a single or double dāri (vertically-drawn stop). The double dāri indicates the close of the couplet or stanza. From the point of view of syntax, these caesuras and dāris coincide with syntactical groupings into phrases and clauses. From the point of view of rhythm, however, they break the flow of sound into rhythmic groups, where uniformity tends to produce monotony. In Gupta, however, subsidiary pauses within the broad rhythmic structure serve to introduce variety. In

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7. There is, however, a variant called ekābalī consisting of eleven syllables.

8. In ekābalī the caesura is after the sixth.



the scheme below a number of conventions have been improvised: + indicates a subsidiary pause and ~ the caesura. It will be seen that the initial eight syllables preceding the caesura, sometimes exhibit the following four groupings:

- a) 4 + 4
- b) 2 + 2 + 2 + 2
- c) 4 + 2 + 2
- d) 3 + 3 + 2

whilst the six syllables after the caesura fall into the following four groups:

- e) 3 + 3
- f) 4 + 2
- g) 2 + 4
- h) 2 + 2 + 2

e.g.,

- (a) bīśvarūp nāṭyaśāla      dr̥śya manohar / 4 + 4 ~ 2 + 2  
 śobhita sucāru ālo      sūrya śaśadhar // 3 + 3 + 2 ~ 2 + 4  
 svabhāb svabhābe loṇe sampādan bhār / 3 + 3 + 2 ~ 4 + 2  
 koriche sakal sūtra      hoṇe sūtradhar // 3 + 3 + 2 ~ 2 + 4  
 jaladhar bādyakar      bādya kare kata / 4 + 4 ~ 2 + 2 + 2

samīraṇ saṅgī      koriche a birata // 4 + 3 ~ 3 + 4  
 chaý kále chaý kāl    haý chaý rūp / 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 ~ 2 + 2 + 2  
 raṅgabhūme raṅga kare    bhāṛer svarūp // 4 + 2 ~ 3 + 3  
 adhikāṛī ekmātra      akhil pālak / 4 + 4 ~ 3 + 3  
 āmarā sakale tār      yātrār bālak // <sup>9</sup> 3 + 3 + 2 ~ 3 + 3

In the variant of the payār, the ekābali, the six syllables before the caesura sometimes fall into the following five groupings:

- j) 3 + 3
- k) 2 + 2 + 2
- l) 2 + 4
- m) 4 + 2
- n) 1 + 1 + 4

Whilst the five after the caesura may subdivide mainly in two ways:

- o) 3 + 2
- p) 2 + 3

e.g.,

(b) sukher sāgare    milan dvīp / 3 + 3 ~ 3 + 2

mama prāṇesvar tār adhīp // 2 + 4 ~ 2 + 3  
 deha tarī man nābik tār / 2 + 2 + 2 ~ 3 + 2  
 becībe tāhāre prem bhāṇḍār // 3 + 3 ~ 2 + 3  
 ataeb dekhi karuṇā kara / 4 + 2 ~ 3 + 2  
 dayāl biraha dukh-sāgar // 3 + 3 ~ 2 + 3  
 e ki biparīt kusum kāle / 1 + 1 + 4 ~ 3 + 2  
 hrday ghereche, jaladjāle // <sup>10</sup> 3 + 3 ~ 3 + 2

The tripadī as its name implies is based on the three feet (pad), into which each line of the stanza divides. Here again syntactical and metrical groupings coincide, and once more to vary the rhythm, Gupta makes use of subsidiary pauses. The broad scheme<sup>11</sup> is:

8       ~       8  
          10  
 8       ~       8  
          10

As in the first foot of the paṇḍar, Gupta may break the initial 8 syllables in four ways:

a) 3 + 3 + 2

10. G.B., p.306.

11. There are, however, two varieties of tripadī, laghu and dirgha. The broad scheme 8 ~ 8 refers to the dirgha tripadī. In the laghu tripadī the scheme would be 6 ~ 8 6.

r) 2 + 3 + 3

s) 2 + 2 + 4

t) 2 + 2 + 2 + 2

and the eight syllables of the second foot in four similar ways:

u) 3 + 3 + 2

v) 2 + 2 + 4

w) 4 + 2 + 2

x) 2 + 2 + 2 + 2

The remaining ten of the final foot he sometimes breaks three ways

y) 3 + 3 + 2 + 2

z) 4 + 3 + 3

aa) 2 + 2 + 3 + 3

e.g.,

(c) sahasrakarer kare, kibā śobhā sarābare,

3 + 3 + 2

~

2 + 2 + 4

se rūper nāhi anurūp /

1 + 3 + 2 + 4

nalinī pheliyā bās, bistār kariyā bās,

3 + 3 + 2

~

3 + 3 + 2

prakāś kariche nij rūp //

3 + 3 + 2 + 2

māthār ācal khule,      priyāpāne mukh tule,

3 + 3 + 2      ~      4 + 2 + 2

hese hese ki khelā khelāy /

2 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3

āhā kibā manohar,      dibākar diyā kar,

2 + 2 + 4      ~      4 + 2 + 2

snehe tār badan muchāy //

2 + 2 + 3 + 3

nece nece kṣaṇe kṣaṇe,      hēṭmukhe paṛe bane,

2 + 2 + 2 + 2      ~      4 + 2 + 2

mane ei bhāber āhbās /

2 + 2 + 3 + 3

kamaldaler tale,      rabi-chabi jale jvale,

3 + 3 + 2      ~      2 + 2 + 2 + 2

bidūrta hateche bilās // <sup>12</sup>

4 + 3 + 3

Besides the manipulation of subsidiary pauses, Gupta made other sporadic attempts to vary the rigidity of the traditional stanza form, some examples of these variations are:<sup>13</sup>

12. G.B., pp. 253-254.

13. Ibid., (d) p.32, (e) p.77, (f) p.81, (g) p.110.

(d) chile tumi aprakāś, haile he suprakāś,  
       <sup>bāsa</sup>  
 bhālo/bhālo bāsa, peye bās kara bās,  
 kata āś abhilāṣ, kata hās parihās,  
       śuna bhāṣ dhara bhāṣ, bhramabās paronā //

(e) manre āmār śuna manre āmār /  
       sakali asār ār sakali asār //  
 ek bhābe bhāb rākhi, ye dike phirābe ākhi,  
       dekhiḃe sakal phāki, ek mātra sār /  
       sakali asār ār sakali asār //

(f) sukṛti sādhan koriye kaṭai  
                                   hole tumi jīb nar re /  
 indriya sahit sukher sadan,  
                                   pele cāru kalebar re //

(g) prakṛti-i sarbba mūlādhār /  
       prakṛtir pade namaskār /  
       prakṛti pradhāna satī, śuna rati rasabati  
       sabiṣeṣ bali sadācār //

These stanzas seem, more or less, combinations of

payār and tripadī:<sup>14</sup> in three songs, however, an attempt is made to express sentiments in extensive stanzas, as in Nilkar:

tumi biśvamātā Victoria thāko Bilāte /  
 āmrā mā sab tomār adhīn, dīn ciradin,  
 śubhadīn dīn mā Bhārāte //  
Company Rāj uṭhiye nile,  
 ke bujhe tomār lile?  
 nile mā ei Bhārāter bhār /  
 peye śubha samācār /  
 mā tomār habe bhālo, āśāte dīlen ālo,  
 sukhe rok samabhābe, śāda kālo,  
 bhed rabenā ār //<sup>15</sup>

in Durbhikṣa:

yata churī gulo turī mere,  
 ketāb hāste nicce yabe /  
 takhan a b śikhe, bibi seje,  
 Bilāt bol kabei kabe /

- 
14. The so-called 'new' metres, such as prakṛti chanda, unmādinī chanda, capalāmālā chanda, āmodinī chanda, bilāsini chanda, raṅginī chanda, birbilāsini chanda, mohini chanda and pāncāl chanda, employed in Gupta's Bodhendu Bikāś (1858), are either combinations of payār and tripadī or based on the nursery-rhyme metre.
15. K.S., Part I, p.104.

ekham ār ki tāra sāji niye,  
 sāj šejutir brata gābe /  
 sab kāṭā cāmce dharbe šese  
 pīri pete ār ki khābe /  
 o bhāi ār katadin bēce thākle  
 pābei pābe dekhte pābe /  
 erā āpan hāte hā kiye bogī,  
 garer māṭhe hāoyā khābe //<sup>16</sup>

and in Pausrār Git:

meṃegulo bēdhe khopā,  
 tabu mukhe kare copā,  
 puruṣgulo tāder kāche,  
 pāre nāko kathāy ēte /  
 rānnāghave kānnāhāṭi,  
 tathāca nā bākye āṭi,  
 ekebāne holem māṭi,  
 kādiye dile kathār cote //<sup>17</sup>

It will have been noted that in (a) one flaw occurs:<sup>18</sup> modern

16. Ibid., p.122.

17. G.B., p.155.

18. The underlined line in the quoted text, which is apparently divided into two equal parts (7 + 7).



readers might perhaps accuse him of introducing a little too much variety here, but it should be remembered that such metrical flaws were common in medieval verse<sup>19</sup> and were disguised in recital, because in those days poetry was more closely allied to the art of singing, where the lengthening or shortening of a vowel can easily conceal metrical flaws. Poetry was not then, as it is now, a reading art.<sup>20</sup> Thus such flaws were part of Gupta's inheritance and he preserved them.

19. For example:

- |       |       |  |
|-------|-------|--|
| (1)   | 6 + 8 | <u>sattare paṣilā sāgarer jal mājhe</u><br>(Baru Candīdās, <u>Srīkrṣṇakīrthan</u> ). |
| (ii)  | 7 + 8 | <u>lāru diyā yeman bhāṇḍāo he chāyāle</u><br>(Kṛttibās, <u>Rāmāyan</u> )             |
| (iii) | 6 + 9 | <u>Prāhlāde rakṣilā Hiranyakaśipu saṁhāri</u><br>(Kāśiram, <u>Mahābharat</u> .)      |
| (iv)  | 6 + 6 | <u>panditer madhye, kṛttibās guṇi</u><br>(Dhṛubānanda, <u>Mahābāmśalbalī</u> )       |
| (v)   | 7 + 7 | <u>bhuruṅ-ug dhanuk dhariyā pañcabāṇ</u><br>(Alāol, <u>Padmābatī</u> )               |
| (vi)  | 6 + 9 | <u>ṣuniyā kahilā Bhabānanda Majumdār</u><br>(Bhāratcandra, <u>Annada Maṅgal</u> )    |

20. It is interesting to note that the fundamental feature of Bengali prosody is its quantitative equivalence; hence in verses rhythm is not achieved by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables, though initial stress in words is a characteristic of the language. In Bengali verse the foot is the basic measure and consists of an equal number of syllables. A number of feet, usually accompanied by a tag, constitute a line. Lengthening and shortening of syllables within a foot is a common feature in reading as well as in singing.

(ii) Rhyme. In the payār proper and its variant, the ekābali, the first line of each stanza rhymes with the second: e.g.,

_____	a
_____	a
_____	b
_____	b

In the tripadi the rhyme scheme is:

_____	a	_____	a
_____	b	_____	b
_____	c	_____	c
_____	b	_____	b

In Sanskrit verse rhyme was optional, but in apabhraṃśa and Bengali it became obligatory. Though in medieval Bengali even assonance was acceptable,<sup>21</sup> by Gupta's time consonantal rhyme was also requisite. Even Bhāratcandra, who did much to perfect versification in Bengali,<sup>22</sup> was at times criticised

21. Bhaṭṭācārya, S.B.: Bāṅglā Chanda, Calcutta, 1955, p.198.

22. Ibid., p.194.

for deficiencies in rhyme.<sup>23</sup> This was a further result of the <sup>very</sup> ~~sewing~~ of poetry from music, which had concealed so many poet's inadequacies.

There are two kinds of rhyme: rhyme in open syllables and rhyme in closed syllables. In open syllables Gupta maintains uniformity between both the consonantal and vowel constituents of his rhymes:

- |     |  |                    |
|-----|--|--------------------|
| (a) | āśutoṣ āśutoṣ sarbbadoṣ <u>hata</u> /          | <u>a</u> <u>ta</u> |
|     | dān dhyān yāg-jajñe abirata <u>rata</u> //     | <u>a</u> <u>ta</u> |
| (b) | kāminī kuhake paṛi khāy̐ yei <u>hābā</u> /     | <u>ā</u> <u>bā</u> |
|     | nije sei hābā naṃ hābā tār <u>bābā</u> //      | <u>ā</u> <u>bā</u> |
| (c) | śrama-cintā ubhaṃyer biśrāmer <u>bāti</u> /    | <u>ā</u> <u>ti</u> |
|     | budhir pradīpe uṛi uskibār <u>kāthi</u> //     | <u>ā</u> <u>ti</u> |
| (d) | br̥ddha dhare paśubhāb Jaśu-bhāb <u>śīśu</u> / | <u>i</u> <u>śu</u> |
|     | buṛā bale Rādhākṛiṣṇa choṛā bale <u>īśu</u> // | <u>i</u> <u>śu</u> |
| (e) | ghare āṛ nāhi laṃ madaner <u>jhūki</u> /       | <u>u</u> <u>ki</u> |
|     | jog hole bhog nāi nāi lukol <u>uki</u> //      | <u>u</u> <u>ki</u> |

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23. Ibid., p.199. See also ...Bhāratcandra Rāy Gunakarer Jīvanbr̥ttānta by Iśvarcandra Gupta, Calcutta, 1855, p. 9.

- (f) pitā deý gale sūtra puttra phele kete / e te  
 bāp pūje bhagarbatī beṭā deý pete // e te
- (g) biśeśata pākā dāri peṭmoṭā bhūre / ũ re  
 randhra giyā peṭe ḍhoke nerā māthā phūre // ũ re
- (h) mūle tār mūl nāi nām dhare mūlo / ũ lo  
 rogā peṭe khete hole yete haý culo // ũ lo

In closed syllables too, Gupta's record is good:

- (i) bara bole abhimān kise kare nar // a r  
 nānā rūp ḍuḥkha yār maner bhitār // a r
- (j) sourabher dulol phulol nām yār / ā r  
 tiler tilete haý janam tāhār // ā r
- (k) sakal śarīre śobhe niśir śiśir / i r  
 ṛṣir jaṭāý yenas mandākinī nīr // i r
- (l) dāsā khete khāsā lāge kata tāý sukh / u kh  
 ekhan porheche dāt ei bara dukh // u kh
- (m) bāṅgālī āchen yārā tārā seirūp / ũ p  
 saṅga doṣe aṅgahīn hoýeche birūp // ũ p

(n) hāy hāy kār kāche kori bala khed / e d  
yār dharmma eki karmma hay marmmmabhed // e d

(o) e barā asahya bhāb bhebe jñān lop / o p  
madan hārāye anta prakāśe prakop // o p

One of Gupta's favourite devices was the pun, which of course produced total identity between some of his rhymes.

(p) tāre tār yānā yāy ras ṣoloānā / ā nā  
arasik lok tabu bale tare ānā // ā nā

(q) ghr̥nār svabhābe yei nāhi khāy kopi / kō pi  
tāre ki manuṣ bale ni je sei kopi // ko pi

(r) mūle kona doṣ nāi bhālo baṭe mūl / mū l  
mūle ye nipāt kare tāne deṣ mūl // mū l

(s) e kāler karttā yini tār nāi kūl / kū l  
athaca dilen tini sakaler kūl // kū l  
kul diṣe kūl diṣe ye dharenā kūl / kū l  
akūl sāgare kara tāre anukūl // kū l  
akūle ye kūl dile sei debe kūl / kū l  
kūl kūl kore kena hetecha bya kūl // kū l

Rarer types of one-syllable, three-syllable and four-syllable rhyme are illustrated below.

(t) one-syllable rhyme:

dekhiyā rabir chabi nāciche jonākī / ki

baker māthāy̐ barā badhite Bāsukī //                      ki

(u) three-syllable rhyme:

Node Sāntipur phire phiriṃā Hugali /      hu ga li

ॐ श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः ॥

(v) four-syllable rhyme:

ramanīr ramaniyā kalebar kamaniyā ra ma nī yā

o to nahe gamaniya, dukheri adhār /ka ma nī ya

ga ma ni ya:

Just as Gupta introduced rhythmic variety by the manipulation of minor pauses, he also introduced a similar variety into the monotonous rhyme scheme by the insertion of internal rhymes.

A conservative list may readily include the following citations:

(w) madhubhare taltal, daldhal rūp /

āsyabharā hāsyā tāy, drśyā aparūp //

mājhe mājhe yata dvij, nij nij dale /

ras khāy yaś gāy, ba'se puspadale //

- (x) hamśabedi bheṅge gele dhamaśa sab habe /  
aṁśe gele aṁśa miśe baṁśa kothā rabe //
- (y) birhālākṣī bidhumukhī mukhe gaṇḍha chute /  
ahā tāy roj roj kata rose phute //  
suprakāśya kibā āśya mṛdu hāśya bharā /  
adhare amṛta sudhā prem-ksudhā-harā //
- (z) manolobhā kibā śobhā āhā mari mari /  
ribban uriche kata phar-phar kari //  
dhaldhal dhaldhal bākā bhāb dhare /  
bibijān cole jān labe jān ka're //
- (aa) very best sherry taste Merry rest yāte /  
āge bhāge den giṇā śrīmatir hāte //
- (bb) śaktisaha bhaktibhābe kheṃe māṁsa mad /  
hāte hāte svargalābh prāpta Brahmapad //  
rāse matta chere tattva premtattva lābhe /  
hoṃe prīt nṛtya-gīt biparīt bhābe //
- (cc) hellā kore kellā luṭhe Dillir bhitare /  
jellā mere berāita ahamkār bhare //  
ekhan se kellā kothā hellā kothā ār /  
jellā mere kebā dey' dārīr bāhār ?  
chere pāllā bale Alāh parechi bipāke /  
kachā khollā yata mollā tobāttallā dāke //

(dd) madhumukhe bādhū bole toṣani āmāy /  
 rajanīte sudhumukhe diṣecha bidāy //

(iii) Onomatopoeia. Bengali is particularly rich in onomatopoeia, which, as might be expected, constitutes a feature of nursery rhymes. Onomatopoeia was also exploited in medieval verse: Bhāratcandra developed its use to a fine art.

Two major poetic functions are served by onomatopoeia: (a) it enhances the musical quality of poetry; and (b) it releases poetry from the tyranny of restricted meaning and allows it to roam in regions of suggestion and association.<sup>24</sup> In the following couplet, for example:

laṭāpaṭ jaṭājuṭ saṅghaṭṭa Gaṅgā /  
 calaccal ṭalaṭṭal kalakkal taraṅgā //<sup>25</sup>

onomatopoeia intensifies both the melody and the meaning: the first line suggests the splash-down of the Ganges on Śiva's matted locks; and the second the dancing flow (calaccal), crystal-clear translucency (ṭalaṭṭal) and inherent

24. Dāśgupta, Sudhīrkumār: Kābyaśrī, 2nd ed., 1968, p.18.

25. Bhāratcandra: Annadāmaṅgal, ed. by Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy and Sajanikānta Dās, 1950, p.31.



gurgling (kalakkal) of the Ganges.<sup>26</sup>

Whilst Bhāratcandra drew Śiva eating his dinner as follows:

pañcamukhe Śiva khāben kata //  
 pūren udara sādher mata //  
 pāyes paṇodhi sapsapiyā //  
 piṣṭak-parbbat kacmaciyā //  
cuku cuku cuku cuṣya coṣiyā //  
kacar-macar carbba cibiyā //  
liha liha jihe lehya lehiyā //  
cumuke cak cak peya piyā //<sup>27</sup>

Gupta describes a New Year's Day dinner celebrated by the English in Calcutta as:

kaṭ kaṭ kaṭakaṭ tak tak tak //  
ṭhun ṭhun ṭhun ṭhun dhak dhak dhak //  
cupu cupu cup cup cap cap cap //  
supu supu sup sup sap sap sap //  
ṭhakās ṭhakās ṭhak phas phas phas //  
kas kas tas tas ghas ghas ghas //  
hip hip hurray dāke whole class //  
'dear madam you take this glass' //<sup>28</sup>

26. Dāsgupta, op.cit., pp. 18-19.

27. Bhāratcandra, ibid, p.84.

28. K.S., Part I, p.71.

Bhāratcandra drew partially in onomatopoeia (the underlined portions): Gupta sketched the entire situation in sound alone, thus improving on his master.

A similar method describes the flight of the Sikhs and the blare of the English martial trumpet:

hur hur hur hur,                      dur dur dur dur,  
    gur gur gur gur gum //  
kar kar car car,                      ghar ghar phar phar,  
    har har dar dar dum //  
gārā gārā gum gum,                      dāgā dāgā dum dum,  
    gum gum jāyōhāk bāje //  
bhā bhā bhā bhā bham bham, phāphā phāphā pam pam,  
    bham bham bherī rāg bhāje //<sup>29</sup>

On other occasions, however, Gupta like Bharatcandra loads his palette only partially with onomatopoeia:

cap cap tap tap kalarab uṭhe //  
kan kan jhan jhan huhumkār chuṭe //  
 sumadhur kata sur bheke gīt gāy //  
jham jham jhām jhām jalad bājāy //

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29. Ibid., p.234.

kar kar mar mar rāge rāg bāre /  
har har kar mar ṭiṭkāri chāre //  
dhiri dhiri śobhe giri svabhāber sāje /  
guru guru guru guru nahbat bāje //  
 khartar dinkar lukāila tāpe /  
thar thar gar gar tribhuban kāpe //  
hur hur dur dur ghana ghana hāke /  
jhar jhar phar phar samīraṇ ḍāke //  
bhan bhan phan phan maśaker dhani /  
 katarūp nabarūp aparūp gaṇi // <sup>30</sup>

Gupta's use of onomatopoeia was, however, sparing: in addition to the above only three more instances can be cited.<sup>31</sup> As an internal embellishment, he much preferred alliteration.

(iv) Alliteration. In Bengali alliteration could traditionally be of two kinds: simple and complex. In simple alliteration a single initial letter is repeated several times: in complex two or more initials are interwoven in a pattern. In English these variants are termed piled allitera-

30. Ibid., p.166.

31. G.B., pp. 296, 297, 327.

tion and crossed alliteration respectively. An example of the former is cited below:

sambhrame bhramar bhrame bhuñje kata ras /  
 guṇ guṇ guṇ guñje mukhe gāy yaś //

This to some extent resembles the alliterative pattern of Anglo-Saxon poetry, where three words in each line were required to begin with the same letter:<sup>32</sup>

In a somer seson whan soft was the sonne,  
 I shope me in shrouds as I a shepe were,<sup>33</sup>

It should be noted, however, that Gupta displays greater subtlety. His scheme is:

bh... bh... bh... bhuñje ... k... as /  
 g.... g.... g.... guñje .... k... as //

where each of his series of alliterations terminates in an internal rhyme.

Furthermore, Gupta was quick to exploit not only alliteration, but also similarities amongst medial letters and phonetic similarities as well:

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32. Boulton, Marjorie: The Anatomy of Poetry, 5th impression, London, 1965, p.61.

33. Piers the Plowman by William Langland, quoted in Current Literary Terms by A.F.Scott, M.A., London, 1967, p.7.

palāṣe bilāś kare mālatīr latā //

prabāḷ karāye tār mano-malinatā //

Besides the alliterative 'p's, 'k's, and 'm's here, there are also five medial repetitions of 'l', three of 'ā', echoing the rhyme, five repetitions of 'r' and in addition an overall predominance of labials ('p', 'b' and 'm'), which in concert produce a very intricate pattern indeed.

(v) Puns. We have already mentioned Gupta's puns in connection with his rhymes. Puns were his vice and like all vices were ultimately destructive: like white ants they bored in and out of his verses producing an effect which even Gupta would have described as boring. We therefore give only one example of his puns:

kusumer bās chere kusumer bās /

bāḡubhare ese kare nāsikāy bās //

In Gupta's time this could only have meant:

'The scent of the flower (2nd kusumer bās), having left the home of the buds (1st kusumer bās) and laden the air, made its home in a nostril.'

Modern times, having added the sense of omnibus to bās, makes possible the following rendering which no doubt would have delighted Gupta:

'The flower 'bus having left the flower depot  
and ladened the air (with its fumes) parked in  
a nostril.'

(vi) Further reiterative devices. Gupta frequently repeats  
the same initial, medial or final word, phrase or sound.  
These repetitions often heighten the intellectual effect.

Initial reiteration:

eirūp golyog kalikātā maý /  
keha bale dui pāc keha bale chaý //  
keha bale tin kánā chaý tin naý /  
keha bale grahobhog naý kena naý //  
keha bale dekhā yābe pañjari paý /  
keha bale cār dānā mandā atīśaý //  
keha bale jugbādhā uparete raý /  
tār kāche kācā pāka sab habe kṣaý //  
keha bale dān phele ghare gele jaý /  
keha bale jay jay ajāy bijaý //  
keha bale br̥thā bala bal hataksaý /  
ghare uṭhe kēce pākā baṛa śobhodhaý //  
keha bale ke bolibe jaý parājaý /  
yekhānete dharmma āche sekhānete jaý //<sup>34</sup>

The phrase keha bale (someone says) coming at the beginning of almost every line, expresses the whisperings and rumours amongst the citizens of Calcutta about the judge's impending decision in a certain case.

Medial reiteration:

Bāji Rāo Pāsā yini  
Bāji Rāo Pāsā yāni, sadhu tini,  
 mānyānānāmate /  
 Mahārāṣṭra mahā rāṣṭra, pūjya e jagate //  
ghere se nij deś  
 Chere se nij deś, rāj beś,  
 bācibār tare /  
 ātmasamarpaṇ kare Britisher kare //<sup>35</sup>

The reiteration here serves to emphasize particular points.

Terminal reiteration:

santoṣ-kṣīrod-tīre yābe ki nā yābenā /  
 añjali pūriyā sudhā khābe ki nā khabenā //  
 āhā hena snigdha nīre nābe nā he nābenā /  
 eman śītal jal pābenā he pābenā //

ksīrod-śāyīr guṇ gābenā he gābena /  
 ye gāy se ār bhabe bhābe nā he bhābenā  
 kāmkuñje pāp-puṣpa tulonā he tulonā /  
 kope kubātāsete phulonā he phulonā //  
 mohe maji māyadvār khulo nā he khulonā /  
 madrūp madālase dhulo nā he dhulonā //  
 dāmbhikatā dolmañce dulonā he dulonā /  
 śīyare bhujaṅga kāl bhulona he bhulonā //<sup>36</sup>

Sometimes it is the rhyme itself which is repeated:

āhā mari taraṅgiṇī kibā śabhā dhareche /  
 rajata rañjita sātī aṅga berī pareche //  
 śūnyapare śaśadhare hemchaṭā kṣariche /  
 suśītal nirmal kar dān kariche //  
 taṭiṇī-taraṅge tārā kāṭa raṅge kheliche /  
 paban hilloḷ yoge ghana ghana heliche //  
 yena kona biyoginī nidrābhare rayeche /  
 svapna yoge patilābhe pramodinī hayeche //  
 hasya baśe subadan jhalmal kariche /  
 thaṭ thaṭ kalebar nithar śihariche //  
 dekhiyā svabhāb priyā naṅyan prakāśiche /  
 dekhiyā e bhāb kintu hr̥de lāj bāsiche //<sup>37</sup>

36. G.B., p.35.

37. K.S., Part II, p.311.



Here the repetition is deliberately intended to produce monotony.

rātri din samabhābe rojēchi 'tight' /  
 e ābār kothā ha'te āila 'kite'?  
 binā sūtre urīyāche kerran 'kite' /  
 pākhā nāi śūnye ese kēman 'fight' //  
 nāhi bale, bale cale kaler 'kite' /  
 marttya loke śabda kare, 'kite, kite' //  
 ghor krudde ese urdde yuddher 'sight' //  
 hariyā laibe śaśi kariyā 'fight' //  
 mane ei bhābiyāche haile 'night' //  
 kere labe āmāder cāder 'right' //  
 celeche nūtan kal jveleche 'light' //  
 ekhani nāśiba tāre, kariyā 'bite' //<sup>38</sup>

The monotonous repetition here records the monotonous line-by-line rise of the 'kite': i.e., the steady upward progress.

uṭhila yuddher bhāb, nṛpatir māne /  
chuṭila imrāj senā, Rangooner raṇe //  
luṭila Brahmer deś, anubhab haṇ /  
kuṭila mager bujhi, maraṇ niścaṇ //

jaṭila kucakrī yata, cakra kari mane /  
phuṭila pramād-puṣpa, saṃhārer bane //  
khūṭila khūṭer khūṭ, matta haṃe roṣe //  
tuṭilo sakal khal, svabhāber doṣe //  
raṭila rarer rab, kāpe basumatī /  
ghaṭila bipad tathā, abodh bhūpati //  
ābār tāhār doṣe imrājer krodh /  
thābār prahāre kare himsā pariśodh //  
chalila kariyā chal khal mantri tār /  
phalila pāper phal, rājya rākhā bhār //  
jvalila rāger agni dalila hr̥day /  
salil-sandhir yoge, nirbbāṇ ki haṃy //  
calila British-senā, talila dharanī /  
balila badane śudhu mār mār dhani // 39

Here the repetition, like the steady tick of a clock, suggests the inevitability of doom for the Burmese, for whom time was running out.

ei dharā ei banhi ei baṃu jal /  
ei taru ei patra ei puṣpa phal //

ei ghrāṇ ei dr̥ṣṭi ei sparśa rab /  
ei ei ei ei ei ei ei sab //  
ei bhaba pañcakṛta pañca chārā naṃ /  
ei pāt bhedguṇe kata pāt haṃ //  
ei ksudhā ei tr̥ṣṇā ei śok rog /  
ei sukh ei dukh ei tripti bog //  
ei bhāb ei bodh ei cintā man //  
ei khāḍya ei mukh ei āsvādan //  
ei nadī ei kṣetra ei upaban /  
ei candra ei sūrya ei tārāgaṇ //  
ei rātri ei din ei tithi bār /  
ei dr̥śya ei ālo ei andhakār //  
ei prāt ei sandhyā ei makhya kāl /  
ei pal ei daṇḍa ei khaṇḍakāl //  
 ki āścarya bhabakārya sab purātan /  
 athaca naṃṇe nitya nirakhi nūtan //<sup>40</sup>

Here the constantly recurring ei indicates the eternally new, eternally old condition of the universe in its constant cycle of rebirth and decay.

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40. Ibid., p.312.

(vii) Refrains. Reiteration is the life-beat of rhythm and is seen in the stanza form, flow and pause, rhyme and alliteration, assonance and pun. In short, in all poetic devices of patterned sound and silence. Refrains are but a further instance of this regulated, rhythmic reiteration, of which as a poet Gupta was inordinately fond. Here are two passages from Burā Śiver Stuti:

bam bam bam bab      bam bam bam /

kise tumi kam?

bājāo British śiṅge      bham bham bham /

bam bam bam bab      bam bam bam //

Srīdhām Serampore kailās sikhar /

biśvamājhe aparūp drśya manohar //

Companyr pratiṣṭhita tumi burā Śiv /

tathāy birāj kari tarātecha jīb //

śubhradeha Bhūtanāth Bholā Maheśvar /

Gaṅgār taraṅga taba māthār upar //

kakhano prakhar beg kabhu tham tham /

bam bam bam bab      bam bam bam //

kise tumi kam?

bājāo British śiṅge      bham bham bham /

bam bam bam bab      bam bam bam //

Friend of India br̥ṣabe ārohaṇ /  
 ahaṅkāṛ alaṁkāṛ bhujāṅga-bhūṣaṇ //  
 pakṣapāt hārmālā sadā suśabhan /  
 mithyā chal toṣāmodī trīśul dhāraṇ //  
 dhūmpān chal taba kāgajer kal /  
 Urdhabhāge dhak dhak jvaliche anal //  
 dame dame dam bājī nāhi khāo dam /  
bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //  
kise tumi kam?  
bājāo British śiṅge bham bham bham /  
bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //<sup>41</sup>

The above refrain is repeated in six other passages in the same manner.

Twelve poems in the Basumatī edition of Gupta's poems contain such refrains.<sup>42</sup> It should be noted that Gupta partially utilises the same refrain in several poems.<sup>43</sup> Such

41. K.S., Part I, pp. 134-135.

42. G.B., p.9, p.18, pp.18-19, pp. 17-18, p.77, p.158, pp.158-159, pp. 185-186, pp. 196-199, pp. 317-318, pp. 330-331, pp. 338-339.

43. For example: (i) duniyār mājhe bābā sab hyāy phāk  
 (ii) duniyār mājhe bābā sab bharpur  
 (iii) duniyār mājhe bābā kichu kichu naý  
 (iv) lāṭhālāṭhi kātākāṭi kise ami kam?  
 (v) lāṭhālāṭhi kātākāṭi kise tumi kam?

economy of effect in Gupta was not uncommon. He often repeats lines and sometimes whole stanzas from one poem to another.<sup>44</sup> This is a feature of folk-poetry,<sup>45</sup> of course, and indicates how close to being a folk-poet Gupta actually was.

(viii) Rhythm. Gupta's rhythms too<sup>46</sup> at times present folk-elements. Though, in reading Gupta's poetry, it is possible to discover a subtle rhythm dependent upon the ever-moving minor pauses indicated in our discussion of his stanzas, if one is not careful one finds oneself in many of his passages reproducing the celebrated rhythm of Bengali nursery rhymes, which may be schematised as:

- - - - -

where ' signifies stress and - a single syllable. This may be exemplified by:

44. G.B., pp. 254-255, p.311. Compare Sastra eban Siksā Bibhrāt with Bhāṣā: four couplets are common to both poems, while two slightly altered.

45. Dušan, Zbavitel: Bengali Folk-ballads from Mymensingh and The Problem of Their Authenticity, 1st ed., Calcutta, 1963, p.190.

46. 'Rhythm is', as pointed out by Harvey Gross, 'neither outside of a poem's meaning nor an ornament to it. Rhythmic structures are expressive forms, cognitive elements, communicating those experiences which rhythmic consciousness can alone communicate: emphatic human responses to time in its passage.' (Sound and Form in Modern Poetry, by Harvey Gross, 1st ed., Michigan, 1964, p.12.)

'ghumpārāni māsipisi moder bārī ye'yo /  
 'bāṭābharā pān debo gāl bha're 'khe'yo //  
 'sānbādhāno 'ghāṭ debo beṣam mekhe 'ne'yo /  
 'śītal pāti pere debo pore ghum 'ye'yo //<sup>47</sup>

or

'br̥ṣṭi pare tāpur tupur nadī elo bān /  
 'Siv ṭhākurer 'biye holo tin kanye 'dān //  
 'ek kanyā rādhēn bāren 'ek kanyā khān /  
 'ek kanyā nā khe'ye bāper bārī yān //<sup>48</sup>

The following passage from Gupta may be recited to the same rhythm:

'āy love 'cala yāi 'hoteler 'shope /  
 'ekhāni dekhite pābi 'katamajā 'cape //  
 'garāgarī 'charācharī 'kata śata 'cake /  
 'yata pāra 'ka'se khāo 'take take take //  
 'sherry cherry 'beerybrandy 'ai dekha 'bharā /  
 'ek bindu 'pete gele 'dharā dekhi 'sarā //

47. Bhaṭṭācārya, āśutoṣ, Bāmlār Lokśahitya, 2nd ed., 1957, p. 94.  
 48. Ibid., p. 115.

'curry dim ālu fish dishporā kāche /  
'pet pūre khāo love yata sādha āche //<sup>49</sup>

These rhythmic similarities can be demonstrated by means of instrumental phonetic techniques. The mingograms given on the following pages were produced in the Phonetics Laboratory of the School of Oriental and African Studies. The continuous intensity curve, marked Int. on the diagrams, and the duplex oscillogram, marked Osc., were produced simultaneously from recordings of the selected stanzas.

Both the nursery rhymes and the poetry readings have similar rhythmic patterns, each line consisting of four parts, the first three having four syllables, and the fourth, two. the timings of these sections are similar, and so are the rhythmic patterns. The intensity curve for the second line on the first page, for example, where the stressed syllables

- 
49. K.S., Part I, p.72. In this example, the feet belonging to all the lines fall naturally into four-syllable pattern, except at one instance where an eight-syllable part is apparent ( 3 + 3 + 2 : ekhani dekhite pābi ). But it can be set apart by means of an internal division in between syllables de and khi. Secondly, the feet which exhibit shortage of syllable (e.g. āy love, ek bindu, pet pūre) are actually of the same measure: the shortage being made up by lengthening of a syllable. (e.g.,

$\begin{array}{c} \text{||} \quad \text{||} \\ \text{ā} \text{ } \text{y} \text{ love,} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{||} \quad | \quad | \\ \text{ek} \text{ bindu,} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{||} \quad | \quad | \\ \text{pet} \text{ pūre} \end{array} )$



bā, pān and gāl have similar vowels, show peaks with the highest intensity for these syllables. This is not always the case, however, as in the first line of this same page, and differences in the intensity curve may be related to differences in the carrying power of the particular syllables.<sup>50</sup>

(See Mingograms, pp.422-425).

In contemporary European poetry it was, I think, customary in India to indicate the rhythm in the punctuation. This at least is what one deduces from the Shakespearian passages<sup>51</sup> quoted by Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy in his Bāṅgālā Kabitā Bisāyak Prabandha (1852). Gupta satirically utilises this device in one of his poems to produce the weird ecclesiastical chant of a person reading a sermon:

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50. This is merely a brief preliminary study of the possibility of using such techniques in connection with literary criticism.

51. B.K.B.P., pp. 26-27, pp. 29-30, pp. 31-32, p.33, p.34.

he, gaver, nar	/	mānab, bara //
raṇ sa, svar	/	baṇan dhara //
British, gaṇe	/	abhaý, mane /
Sikher, sane	/	sejeche, raṇe //
lāhorā, dhip	//	śiśu Da, ḍlip /
tār sa, mīp	//	samar, dīp //
dhaner, āś	/	kari pra, kāś /
prāṇī bi, nās	//	dayā nā, bās // <sup>52</sup>

A poem on war, Kānpurer Yuddhe Jaý (Victory at Kanpur)<sup>53</sup> is composed in a peculiar, indigenous rhythm known as Rektāchanda, in which for emphasis certain phrases are repeated at different pitches, first low (anudāṭṭa) then high (udāṭṭa). It was used to narrate topical events, the following example being on the queen of Jhansi:

hyāde ki śuni baṇī?

hyāde ki śuni baṇī, Jhāsir Rāṇī

thotkātā kākī /

meýe haýe senā niýe, sājiyāche nāki?

52. G.B., p.188.

53. K.S., Part II, pp. 212-220.

Nānā tār gharer dhēki,  
Nānā tār gharer dhēki, māgi khēki,  
 gojāler dale /  
 etadine dhane jane yābe rasātale //<sup>54</sup>

(ix) Songs. In anthologies such as the Basumatī edition of Gupta's verse, his songs are generally segregated from his poetry, though some songs such as Nilkar, Durbikṣa and Pausrār Git<sup>55</sup> occur amongst the verse. His songs are generally set to popular, semi-folk tunes such as Kabi,<sup>56</sup> Rāmprasādī and Bāul. Traditionally these tunes carried devotional lyrics, but Gupta utilised them for satirical purposes - as he had also done with Hindu mythological imagery. In this respect he displayed an originality, which undoubtedly heightened the comic effect he sought.

As poetry, however, the lyrics of these songs read best to nursery rhyme rhythms, as shown below:

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54. Ibid., p.218.

55. K.S., Part I, pp. 99-119, pp. 120-132; G.B., pp. 154-156.

56. K.S., Ibid., p.99, p.114, p.120.

(a) O mā, 'Queen tomār India dhām  
 'ruin koro 'nāka /  
 yadi 'sonār Bhārat 'khās korecha,  
 'bās kore mā 'thāka thāka /  
 'śāstre bale 'parāmarṣe,  
 'āpan cakṣe 'sonā barṣe,  
 'tumi ele 'Bhāratbarṣe  
 'harṣe rabe 'sab  
 'Cāridike 'uṭhche śudhu 'jaṃ jaṃ 'rab //57

[Nilkar]

(b) phere hāṭe ghāṭe bāṭe māṭhe  
 'nānā ṭhāṭe phandi nānā /  
 bale dīśī kṛṣṇa 'chere torā  
 'Iśu Khrīṣṭa 'kar bhajānā // 58

[Durbhikṣa]

(c) ghare hāri ṭhanṭhanānti  
 'maśā māchi bhanbhanānti

57. K.S., ibid., p.106.

58. Ibid, p.125.

śīte śarīr      kankanānti  
 'ektu kāpar      nāiko piṭhe /

dārā puttra      hanhanānti  
 'asti nāsti      na jānanti  
 'dibā rātri      khetē cānti  
 'āmi betā mari khetē //<sup>59</sup>

[Pauṣṭār Git]

It should be noted, however, that this rhythm is not identical with that of nursery rhymes. It merely contains the four-syllable feet ( ' - - - - ' - - - - ' - - - - ' - - - - e ) which suggest the nursery rhyme effect.

(x) Poetic diction. Gupta's diction varies according to subject. When expounding Hindu philosophy or speaking of India's decline, his diction grows Sanskritic, and when attacking communal or personal opponents, more colloquial and mixed; whilst his descriptions of nature are distinguished

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59. G.B., p.154.

mainly be indigenous Bengali elements.<sup>60</sup>

His mixed diction is probably a direct legacy from Kabi Songs, where the kind of English admixture Gupta favoured was used in witty invectives. In this connection Rūpçād Pakṣi<sup>61</sup> is noteworthy. One of his oft-quoted songs runs:

āmare fraud kare kāliyā damn! tui kothāy geli /  
 I am for you very sorry, golden body hala kāli //  
Ho my dear dearest, Madhupur tui geli Kṛṣṇa /  
O my dear! how to rest, hear dear Banamāli //  
Poor-creature milk-girl tāder breast-e mārlī śel,  
Nonsense tor nāiko ākkel, breach of contract karli //<sup>62</sup>

60. A comparative occurrence of words in three poems, one from each category, is shown in the following table:

Title	Lines	Total Words	Sanskrit	Pure Bengali	Perso-Arabic	English	Portuguese
1 <u>Ākārādyā</u> <u>Īśvarstuti</u>	44	202	158 (79%)	44 (22%)	nil	nil	nil
2 <u>Imreji</u> <u>Nababarṣa</u>	94	541	90 (19%)	466 (93%)	11 (2%)	73 (15%)	1
3 <u>Pauṣ</u> <u>Pārbban</u>	152	887	75 (8%)	807 (90%)	5	nil	nil

Here Rādhā's lament against Kṛṣṇa, who by slipping off to Madhupur has occasioned her distress, is expressed in a bizarre blend of English and Bengali, that is undoubtedly comic in its total effect.

Gupta rarely used English<sup>63</sup> except where the cultural context rendered it apt. In this respect he resembles the early Hindu poets who used Perso-Arabic admixtures in Muslim contexts to create verisimilitude. At a time, when many Hindus were attempting to purify Bengali of alien diction, it is perhaps surprising that Gupta's mixed diction should have proved so popular. A short list of examples<sup>64</sup> is cited below:

- (a) hip hip hurray hurray, dāke whole class /  
Dear madam you, take this glass //
- (b) Don't care Hīduāni, damn damn damn /
- (c) pātare khābanā bhāt, go to hell kālo /  
hotel-e total nās, se baram bhālo //
- (d) icchā kare dhannā pāri, rānnāghare dhuke /  
cook hayē mukh khāni, look kari sukhe //

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63. List of English words, Appendix V.

64. See also pp. 136, 155, 162, 169, 175, 183, 204.

(e) brandy-jal khāy tabu, thāṇḍi nāhi kare /  
kebal choice bharā ice-er tare //

Our remarks on Gupta's mixed diction should not, however, be interpreted as evidence of a cosmopolitan, non-communal attitude: indeed, the very reverse is true. Gupta used anything - proverbs included<sup>65</sup> - which would lend topicality and realism to his social and satirical verse.

(xi) Imagery. Gupta's imagery was all home-grown and previously marketed by Sanskrit or Bengali. On the whole his imagery falls into two classes: pictorial and dramatic.

In his poems on the seasons Gupta presents the panorama of Bengal with photographic fidelity. To convey the harshness of the hot season, he seizes upon that which is fiery. This is intensified by dramatic images of the flight of birds and beasts from their natural habitats and of the frantic efforts of the English to discover a means of keeping cool.<sup>66</sup>

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65. List of Proverbs, Appendix IV.

66. See also pp. 178-189, 216 of this present thesis.



In some poems a single image is elaborated at length. In Saṅgī, for example, feminine youth is conceived as a river into which man wishes to dive like a greedy fish.<sup>67</sup> In Yauban youth is a jewel dispelling darkness and effusing love.<sup>68</sup> In Milan the union of lovers is an island in a sea of happiness.<sup>69</sup> A number of Gupta's poems see man's life as an allegorical journey.<sup>70</sup> Similes entailed in such a journey are 'the fair', 'the grinder', 'the forest' and 'the ocean', all of which stress either life's transitoriness or its horror.

(xii) Gupta's place in literature. Thus Iśvarcandra Gupta inherited and passed on a tradition, which he was not great enough to transform. Poetic greatness in the last analysis rests upon the representativeness of the poet. Gupta's

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67. G.B., pp. 85-86.

68. Ibid., pp. 164-165.

69. Ibid., p.306.

70. Ibid., p.6. Samsār Kānan (The World's Grove) constitutes his most typical elaboration of this theme. The first stage of life's journey, pleasant to travellers, was known as childhood and renowned for purity. Cleared of thorns and weeds, its newly-grown trees beamed with fruits and flowers, luring innumerable murmurous bees to their every petal. Youth, the second stage, was a sixteen bigha (sixteen year) plot of beautiful woodland, cooled by fragrant breezes. It had much to offer, both attractive and exciting, but the real spiritual nectar lay in the 'garden of cessation' ('nibṛtti kānan') on the banks of the 'ocean of illusion' ('mayā sindhupār').

life was too narrow and warped to produce a vision that all could share. As a member of a community and of an emerging Hindu nation, he could present a point of view that many might claim echoed their own social and political views, but as an individual he had no voice: here his life was a blank and so was his poetry. Somewhere, somehow, life had dealt him a cruel, emasculating blow, which left him essentially a lone spirit in society, without a wife and without a home. Lonely troubled spirits such as his, sometimes spurred on by a burden of guilt, often seek solace in God, and this Gupta did, both in his reading and his writing. And at other times in the company of his boon companions he grew boisterous and witty, and when in his cups, wrote without pause, the comic, satirical verse for which he is justly famed.

But besides harvesting his rich, golden satire from Calcutta's stagnant clay, Gupta also kept the poetic soil of Bengal well-nourished and fertilised, and bequeathed to his successors the small stock of seeds, which he had garnered.

- Gupta was the first to begin to collect and publish Bengal's literary heritage, old poetry and the lines

of the poets. He is thus the precursor of Dīneścandra Sen - and Dakṣiṇārañjan Majumdar.

- The same spirit that set him studying the works of Bhāratcandra and Rāmprasād set Rabindranāth studying Vaiṣṇava lyrics.
- The same spirit that prompted his interest in the kabi songs of the Calcutta streets, sent Rabindranāth in search of the bāuls.
- Gupta's realism is of that same clay that was moulded so well by his predecessor Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy and his successor Tekcād Thākur. All three opposed the bābu and this same opposition is seen again in modern times in Rabindranāth's Karmaphal and Saratcandra's Śrīkānta.
- The style of verse he handed on from Bhāratcandra is seen again in Baṅkim's Bande Mātaram, which expresses much that Gupta had already felt. Yet it is noticeable that when Baṅkim wished to address not only urban Bengalis but also the rural masses, he had to do so in the manner of Īśvarcandra Gupta.
- There is a conceptual affinity between Gupta's religious verse and that of Rabindranāth that is more than co-incidental.

- Though Gupta's satirical spirit for historical reasons died with him, the grotesque verse he produced struck a fibre in his compatriot in this field, Sukumār Rāy.

Thus though not a major poet, Gupta was nevertheless a major literary figure, who cast upon the western sky the variegated glow of a fading medieval age and in his very passing hastened the dawn of modern literature.

-oOo-

Int.

'gh u m pā ṛā n i 'm ā sī p i s i 'mod er bār i 'j e yo

Osc.

Int.

'bā ṭ ā bhar ā 'p ā n d eb o 'g ā l bhor e 'khey o

Osc.

Int.

's ān bād hā no 'gh ā ṭ de bo 'be samm e khe 'n eyo

Osc.

Int.

'sī tal pā ṭ i 'p eṛ e d eb o 'p oṛ e gh u m 'jeyo

Osc.

50 Hz.

Int.

'b r̥ s̥ ʈi pa ɾe 't ā pur tu pur'n ad ĩ e lo 'bā n

Osc.

Int.

'siv̥h ā kure r'b iye h ol o 't in kanye 'd ā n

Osc.

Int.

'e k k anye'r ādhe nbaɾe n 'e k k any e'kh ā n

Osc.

Int.

'e k k any e'n ā kh eye 'b ā p erbā ɾi'j ā n

Osc.

50 Hz.



Int.

'ā y love 'c ala j ā i 'hotel e r'shop e

Osc.

Int.

'e kha nid e'khi ti pā bi 'ka t a ma ja 'ca p e

Osc.

Int.

'ga ṛā g aṛi 'chaṛā chaṛi 'k at a sa t a 'cake

Osc.

Int.

'ja ta pā ra 'ka's ekh ao 'take t\_ake 't\_ake

Osc.

Int.

'sherrycherry 'beer brandy 'a i de kha 'bhara

Osc.

Int.

'e k bin du 'peṭe g ele 'dharā de khi's arā

Osc.

Int.

Curry

'Curry d i m 'ā lu fish 'd\_ish p orā 'k āch e

Osc.

Int.

'p e ṭ pūr e 'khā o love 'j a ta s ā dh 'ā ch e

Osc.



Appendices

APPENDIX IA.i

nāiko āṛ teler kēre,  
 ekhan berē tetālā /  
 peṛe Rāmgopāler gopālgādan  
 seṛche khub bolbālā //  
 erā chila naṛī, becta curī,  
 hīdur bāṛī yetanā /  
 ekhan bāṛche rank pācche thank  
 ṭyāke bank-note āṛ dharenā /  
 kabir hāte thelo hūko,  
 bābur sāmne ālbolā //

ii

Śahure Kabī /  
 āmār kaśur kichu nāi gata bāre /  
 kathāy kathāy kaṭu kahiṃāchi tāre //  
 se yadi mānuṣ haṃ, jñān thāke tār /  
 āmār sahit raṇ karitanā āṛ //

caṭṭo //

tāi tāi tāi baṭe ati sukhamāy /  
 eman kabitā ār haibār naý //  
 bhāgye tumi bēce ācha, tāi bhāi merā /  
 kabitā dekhete pāi mūrkhā man corā //  
 kintu kabibar āmi, tar ṭhāi ṭhā i /  
 taba manogata kaṭu bhāb bujhi nāi //  
 kṛpā kari kaha sviyā, saral svabhābe /  
 'śākhāy kuraṅga' tumi balecha kiphābe //

Sahure //

hā hā bhāi bujhite pāraṇi, ei gāl /  
 er bhāb ṭhik yena pāṛā gēye ḍāl //  
 śākhāy kuraṅga āmi, e bhābe loṇechi;  
 kauśal kariyā mitra bānar bolechi //  
 ār ek ṭhāi dekha, kari anumān //  
 kahiṇāchi āmi tāre bir Hanumān //  
 buk cire Rām śikhe, ke bēdheche ṛṇe /  
 Rāmcaṇḍra, Dīnbandhu, Hanumān bine //

caṭṭo //

jāna kena Adhikārī, kabitā mājhāre /  
 more ādi kabi bale, dvitīyā tomāre //

. . . . .

tomār sahit kabhu nā pāribe buna /  
tūr ceṇe tumi bhāi buddhi dhara duno //

Śahure /

bunore yadyapi āmi bali kubacan /  
tāhāte Iśvar ruṣṭa habenā kakhan //  
Kāraṇ bhūlok mūjhe ihā jāne ke nā /  
Iśvar āmar kāche cirakāl kenā //

[By Dvārakānāth Adhikārī.

Śahure kabi = Dīnbandhu;

Caṭṭo kabi = Baṅkimcandra;

buno kabi = Dvārakānāth.]

iii

asurer priya peya sudhārasmarra /  
rasanā saras gātra paraśile pātra //  
yār lāgi halo dhvaṃsa yadu-baṃśa-gaṇ /  
svabhābe abhāb sadā Rebati-ramaṇ //  
adyābadhi madyapātra pāṇīya-pradhān /  
bidvajjan khādyamājhe sadā bidyamān //  
eman madhurā surā nāhi cāy man /  
yadi pāi prañayer pratham cumban //

B.

i.

vidyā nāi budhi nāi dāsgupta chabi /  
 tabu mane abhimān hām barā kabi //  
 kavitva kapitva pad kise siddha haī /  
 balato he dāsgupta vidyā paricaī //  
 tumi dās āmi dvij sarbatra prakāś /  
 gāru ba'be saṅge yābe dāsputra dās //  
 dhoīābe carandvaī padadhuli khābe /  
 bhaktibhābe pūjibe param pad pābe //  
 baiśyā garbhe dvijāti aurase janma yār /  
 se baṁse janmiyācha dekha śāstra sār //  
 sarba śāstre ei lekhe jagate prakāś /  
 śāstriyā pramaṇ suna dās baṁsa dās //  
 ki mantranā diyāchile indict tave /  
 khāṭenā muṣik bākya nṛsimher ghare //  
 siṁhakule Siṁha janma kāpuruṣ nan //  
 khacarer ki sādhyā bhulāy Siṁha man //  
 dāsputtra caṭṭagotra ekatra haiyā /  
 mukta ki karite cāha astrādi laiīā //  
 śuna bali sampādak nīti upadeś /  
 satye cala parihār kara himsā dveṣ //  
 antare bhābiyā dekha nij karma yata /  
 śeṣdine bicāre karibe mukh nata //

ye sakal indriyēṛā deha pure āche //

dāṛābenā se sakal se samaye kāche //

sākṣya dibe apakamma kariyācha yāhā //

asvikār karite ki pāṛibe he tāhā //

abhimān kara dhanī bijñāpan dhane //

ihāte pāibe pūr kena bhāba mane //

satyer nikāte satya prakāś pāibe //

peṭārthī bālakgaṇ saṅge nā yāibe //

ki janya āsiyā bhabe ki laile sār //

ki laiṛyā yāibe bala sampatti ki āṛ //

tumi kara barṣa śrāddha taba śrāddha keṭā //

karibe ki āche bala dharmmapatni beṭā //

bibāha kariyāchile śāstra mantre yāre //

ekāl panyanta kihe dekhiyācha tāre //

cakrabākī prāy sei tumi cakrabāk //

katabā ḍākila nārīśunilenā ḍāk //

dharmma dārā prati yār dayā nāhi hay //

se mānuṣ kena cāy pṛthibite jāy //

nagariyā śiśu yārā āche anugata //

piṇḍadān karibe ki tāṛā sāstramata //

pitāke nā dile anna mātā nā dekhile //

kebal bhaṇḍāmī kāṇḍa jibane lekhile //

yata lekha niṛe dekha niṛe para tāi //

tomār lekhār madhye śuddha kichu nāi //

dekhule tomār lekḥā duḥkha haṃ mane /  
 hrasva dīrgha bodh nāi hāse sarbajane //  
 ataeb cintā kara dāspuṭṭra dās /  
 śeṣe dine paritrāṇ kise habe trās //

(HRKK, Tuesday, the 20th April, 1858).

ii.

narendra āmār indra śuna gupta dās /  
 British padakī āmi kari śatrunāś //  
 jagati pracār āche barddhamāne bās /  
 kabi ki kapi he tumi bala gupta dās //

(HRKK, Tuesday, the 27th April, 1858).

iii

e bānar kothākār kare baṛa āśā /  
 biśāl banete uāki kariyāche bāsā //  
 pitā nāi mātā nāi nārī nāi ghare /  
 bānarī kumār niyā sadā kriyā kare //  
 bānarīyā poṛā mukh tabu mukhe dārī /  
 ucchiṣṭa bhojan kare yārtār bārī //  
 bānarerā sukhā khāy śuni nāhi kothā /  
 kacurī dekhile pare yāy yathā tathā //



hasta pad saru suru bara ek bhuṛī /  
 pāṭhāpāṭhī khāsī ādi khāy ghorāghorī //  
 paṅgat kariyā base paṅgapāl dale /  
 piśāci bānarī bhāṣā nā jāni ki bale //  
 deśe deśe bhikṣā kare udaver tare /  
 sandeś meṭhai cāy dhanider ghare //  
 godhūm carbaṇ tare dahe gehe yāy /  
 nā kare jāti bicār sab nāki khāy //  
 leṅgurer ber yena kaṭideśe darī /  
 lok bhaṣe sarbadā gopane rākhe jarī //  
 mukhporā bāndar tathāpi gāy gīt /  
 khaccar samān sabda bale jāne nīt //  
 añjanār puttra naṣ nahe bāyū sut /  
 khaccar svabhāb dhare nahe rājdūt //  
 e bānar kothākār bala Prabhākar /  
 prabhākare kare cāhe nahe prabhācar //  
 balite ki pāra anta baidya jātigan /  
 balite pāriḷe pare pābe mahādhan //  
 tāhār ākār bali dīrgha peṭ moṭā /  
 choṭa śīr dakṣa gaṇḍe kālobarna phōṭā //  
 nitambete māṃsa nāi śīśuder ṭhese /  
 kapiṛūp lukāiyā yārtār beśe //  
 sarbatra berāy khāy yathā tāthā mad /  
 laite prārthanā kare uccatara pad //  
 eṭa keṭā kār beṭā bala kār nāti /  
 Prabhākar sampādak e beṭā ki jāti //



anya ek menī care tāilider pārā /  
 jāti nāi jñāti nāi dharmma karmma chārā //  
 ek rūp nahe seta nānārūp dhare /  
 kuṭhī yāy chuṭi yāy sveccācār kare //  
 keha bale burī gāi keha bale ghorā /  
 tuṇḍa muṇḍa śire gandha rakta bhaṅga rogā //  
 e bānar saṅge sei bānarer saṅga /  
 dubānare kariteche nagare ki raṅga //  
 dubeṭā miṭhāi cāy dhanider kāche /  
 ihāder saṅge nāki bahu śīśu āche //  
 śīśugaṇ bāndar dekhite yadi pāy /  
 o bānar kalā khābi kahe saṅge dhāy //  
 rambhālōbhe sambhāṣaṇ bānarerā kare /  
 svabhābe markat jāti rambhā āge dhare //  
 rambhā nāhi pāy tāy śīśu rambhā cāy /  
 śīśurā bānar bhaṁye palāiyā yāy //  
 ek care śīśudale anye khāy kalā /  
 e dui bānar ke, ke, nāhi yāy lalā //

Prabhākar sampādak Gupta mahāśay /  
 bala dekhi dui śākhāmṛiga paricay //  
 samudra bandhan kāle ihārā ki chila /  
 chila yadi Śrīrāme ki paricay dila //  
 ihāder prasūti ki chila sei sane /  
 Hanumān sahite ki saṅga madhubane //  
 Sugrīb ki nal nīl haite utpanna /  
 bala dekhi Prabhākar haiyā prasanna //

tomāke miratī kari balibe he sār /  
 satya nā kahile naha Prabhākar-kār //  
 Rābaner saṅgi āmi Bibhiṣaṇ dūt /  
 satya satya tin satya bala baidyasut //

(HRKK, Tuesday, 4th May, 1858).

iv

saṃskṛita vidyāmandire āmi antebāsi /  
 Prabhākari uttare nitānta abhilāṣi //  
 uttar nā den yadi sampādak cāsi /  
 sahāyatā kariben Thākuraṇi Dāsi //

(HRKK, Tuesday, 11th May, 1858).

v.

prakāś haiyā gela bhaṇḍa kāṇḍa yata /  
 aśuddha pācāli lekha dekhāiba kata //  
 vidyā buddhi ghaṭe yāhā hailo prakāś /  
 bhikṣā hetu deṣe deṣe yāiyā prabās //  
 bara kabi abhimān chila yata mane /  
 jānite pārila sab śiṣya śiśugane //  
 made pad pade mad pade pade made /  
 akhyāti raṭila sab sampādaki pade //  
 giyāche sedin dīnbhāb dekhi ebe /  
 kabī kabī baliyā śiśurā nāhi sebe //

bala bhāb eki bhāb Gupta mahāśaṃ /  
 kothā gela gān mān tāne mahālaṃ //  
 Gaurīya bhāṣāṃ yadi nā chila pradeś /  
 tabe kena hāsāile Gaurīya pradeś //  
 diṃāchile ukiler patra baṛa rāge /  
 indict nā karibe kena agrabhāge //  
 yā karile yā karile bujhiācha sār /  
 dui hasta karṇe diṃā bala tumi ār //  
 karibenā ei karmma karile habe dāṃ /  
 paṛa giṃā Śrīgobinda Śrīharir pāṃ //  
 haiṃāche dalādali e biṣam leṭhā /  
 Śrīhari Gobinda bine rākhe kon beṭa //  
 suśikṣā haila taba ṭhāke yena mane /  
 Śrīhari Gobinda nām japa ei kṣane //

(HRKK, Tuesday, 11th May, 1858).

vi

apūrbba kautuk dekha jñānigaṇ yata /  
 lampaṭerā haiṃāche pāgalor mata //  
 dharmma karmma parityāge apakarmme rata /  
 kalidharmme e karmma haibe āro kata //  
 pitṛmātr śrāddha prāṃ keha nāhi kare /  
 ṭākār jhañjhan śuni bārkaṇtā ghare //

raṇḍār maṇḍape giyā pitāputtra mare /  
 antare nā cintā kare ki haibe pare //  
 pitāputtra ekatra gosvāmī duijan /  
 kharbbār mandire āsi dekha śiṣyagan //  
 bāhir haile puttra pitā den dhan /  
 kharbbāke balen taba pādapadme man //  
 Haiyāche kāmīnīr gr̥he lok melā /  
 rājpathe calite nā yāy bhir̥ thelā //  
 bālākhāna galimadhye mātāliyā khelā /  
 bābugan sundarīke dekha ei belā //  
 ihakālā parakāle tarāibe nārī /  
 eibhābe sakale haila pāpakārī //  
 dharmmer mandir kothā balite nā pāri /  
 haiyā uṭhila kali bali daṇḍadhārī //  
 dharmma gela daharmma karila rājya jāy /  
 ei hetu rājdroha dekha dharāmaṃ //  
 ki rūpe haibe nās̄ ghor pāpacaṃ /  
 kariben bujhi kali sarbbā dharmma kṣaṃ //  
 sābdhān haiben dhārmīkerā sabe //  
 lajjā bhaṃ kul mūl kichu nāhi rabe //  
 bujhi mahāpralāyer anuṣṭhān habe /  
 byādān badane kāl bālābr̥ddha labe //  
 kothāy Candrikā burī dharmma sabhā cerī /  
 dekhenā ki adharmme laila rājya berī //

kothāy 0 Bhagabatī haile ki bherī /  
 haibe Candrikā taba jabaner nerī //  
 e samāye kotha baidya Prabhākar-kār /  
 tomār se gadya-padya nāhi dekhi ār //  
 dekha deo bālak sahite ei bār /  
 āmitva tunitve bhabe nāhi pābe pār //

(HRKK, Tuesday, 1st June, 1858).

vii

ki he bābu Bhagabatī Caṭṭa Upādhyāy /  
 kothā he īśvar dādā taba upādhyāy //  
 barāye barāi chila indict tare /  
 ekṣaṇe se indict ḍhuke kār ghare //  
 Śrī Kālīprassana bābu Siṃha mahāśay /  
 tāhake baliyāchile indict hay //  
 Bhagabatī catuṣpad dui pad kothā /  
 dui pade caliyā berāo yathā tathā //  
 lekhak rākhiyāchile benye ek chōṛā /  
 sarbattrā balite tumi se tomār gōṛā //  
 chāriyā giyāche chōṛā ār nāhi dekhe /  
 ekṣaṇe Candrikā-patra kon chōṛā lekhe //  
 tumi nākā galpa kara saṃskṛta paṇḍit /  
 bāṅgālā bhāṣāy taba jñān akhaṇḍita //

dvipade tomār joṛā āche ār kothā /  
 catuṣpade pāite pāibe yathā tathā //  
 gupta bhābe Candrikāke rākhile ki habe /  
 chāpāy chāpār karmma cāpāy ki rabe //  
 abaśya paṛibe dharā kṣatriyer hothā /  
 ākāśe lāṅgul tulye palāibe kothā //

(HRKK, Tuesday, 8th June, 1858).

viii

jijñāsihe Prabhākar sampādak cāsā /  
 nagar chāṛiyā kothā kariyācha bāsā //  
 tyājile ki Prabhākar sampādaki āsā //  
 janmiyācha bujhi tumi dharmma karmma nāsā //  
 bibāha karile yāre tāre dile dūre /  
 nā karile bāsasthān sthiti anya pure //  
 āliṅgan sambhāsane śīśudal jhure /  
 tāhārā caras madya tvaritāy ghure //  
 bhikṣādhane abhimān karitecha mane /  
 calibenā ār kuṣi bijñāpan dhane //  
 jānilen vidyā budhi rāj karmmigane /  
 ki dhane kāṭābe kāl śīśuder sane //  
 tumi nā haiyāchile ekbār mate /  
 kothāy Gobinda kothā bandhu set //

ekaṣaṇe haila sār bāgāner gate /  
 pālitecha bhūpatir puṣpodyānepet //  
 pare pare pet pālā katakāl habe /  
 Prabhākar patra ār kata loka labe //  
 sukhyaṭi akhyaṭi yata cirakāl rabe /  
 tumi dās ki janya janmiyāchile bhabe //  
 kothā pitā kothā mātā kothā jñātigaṇ //  
 janmiyācha kon kule nāhi jāne jan //  
 dharmma-dārā bala yāre tāre dile ban /  
 bala narākār Gupta ekeman man //  
 yāite nā pāra kona biśiṣṭer bārī /  
 baidya nāme gadya kara nā bujhile nārī //  
 muṇḍan karite habe jholā gōp dārī /  
 caṇḍila tomār śire aśuddhir gārī //  
 āniyācha yata śiśu āpanār pāte /  
 tāhārā ki yābe taba śeṣdine sāte //  
 ramaṇī ki piṇḍadān dibe nij hāte /  
 śaṅkar caraṇe duḥkha bala praṇipāte //  
 ke kariyāchila rakṣā Policer ghare /  
 yāiyā Murśidābāde chile kār bare //  
 Caṭṭagrāme rakṣā kare kār anucare /  
 Dhākāy bācile kār prasāder tare //

(HRKK, 22nd June, 1858).

ix

Candrikār anta danta pariṣāche sab /  
 haiṣāche lokmukhe burī-burī rab //  
 Candrikā burīr cerī nak tolā Bhagī /  
 pratidin arśayoge raktagalā rogī //  
 jhuliṣāche bhagīmār dāri ar gop /  
 haiṣāche ekebāre buddhi śuddhi lop //  
 nā jāne bāṅgālā bhāṣā bale bhāṣā jāni /  
 haiṣāche śiśuyog roge abhimānī //  
 bās kare kaluṭolā yena kalugāi /  
 loke bale omā Bhagī jhuliṣāche māi //  
 pratidin sandhyā pare Gobinder ghare /  
 yāy Bhagī tāṛātari bicālir tare //  
 Saubhāge baṅk datta dhariṣāche śāl /  
 pratidin sandhyākāle preme deṣ tāl //  
 yātāyat kare Bhagī ukiler bārī /  
 kasāi dhariṣā tāre mukhe dibe tāri //  
 bāṅgālā bhāṣāy mūrkhā śvet jātigan /  
 kerānirā Candrikāy den bijñāpan //  
 bijñāpan dhane Bhagī haiṣāche bājhā /  
 kerānirā den bujhi pratidin gājā //  
 bāriṣāche Bhagīr lāṅgul saṅgamade /  
 mane kare basiṣāche sampādak pade //  
 sampādak dharmma Bhagā kichu nāhi jāne /  
 manuṣya bhulāy nitya madya abhimāne //



dekha lok Candrikār śuddhāśuddha sab /  
 haiyāche lokmukhe mātābhogī rab //  
 anveṣaṇ kariyā nagare nāhi pāi /  
 kothā gela Bhagabatī, Candrikār gāi //  
 bijñāpan balitechi sarbba sādharane /  
 Bhagīke dekhite pāy yadi kona jane //  
 dākiyā anibe tāre diba khali khud /  
 gophā de chādiyā gope dohāibe dudh //

(HRKK, 29th June, 1858.)

X

śuna he catur baidya,  
 ar nā calibe gadya,  
 taba padya haiyāche gandha /  
 biśiṣṭa loker kare,  
 ghrṇā ghrṇi Prabhākare,  
 kariteche sakaler dhandā //  
 bistāriā māyājāl,  
 kuhake kāṭile kāl,  
 kariyācha bara ek bhurī /  
 kukṣi pūrṇa kara pare,  
 nā khāile nij ghare,  
 haṃsāṇḍa picinḍe dhare kurī //

pratidin dugdhapāu,  
 cāri ser parimāṇ,  
 laite pāranā ātmadhane /  
 yekhāne sekhāne yāo,  
 bala eta dugdha khāo,  
 peṭ pāla nitya rājbane //  
 beṛāile deśe deśe,  
 āsiyā paṛile śeṣe,  
 rogī beśe udarer tare /  
 kuhake karit moha,  
 dhariyācha Khardaha,  
 garbbha-pūjā Gosvāmir ghare //  
 pautulik dharmme āś,  
 Bhabānīcaran dās,  
 pūrbbe dās jānāite sabe /  
 tāhāte bhābiyāchile,  
 apūrbba kuhak dile,  
 pautulik dale mānyahabe //  
 Brahma Sabhā parāyaṇ,  
 ye sakal hindugaṇ,  
 karite se sakaler nindā /  
 yāite sabār ghare,  
 balite pācāli svare,  
 yena tumi sab ghare bindā //

Dharmma-Sabhā gela tal,  
 bhāṅgila tomār bal,  
 āsiyā juṭile Brāhma-dale /  
 Debendra bābur ghare,  
 picinḍa toṣile pare,  
 kaci bābu bhāsāile jale //  
 Dakṣiṇārañjan bāse,  
 gele bhog abhilāṣe,  
 Kiśorī udyāne bhoj pare /  
 nā haila tathā bhog,  
 nā pāile jalayog,  
 gele Ramāprasāder ghare //  
 pa ṛile Bhāskar pāy,  
 kātāile kata dāy,  
 udare pūṛile māṃsa hār /  
 karile kabitā curī,  
 khāiyā luci kacurī,  
 śisūdale pūṛāile nār //  
 juṭile pācāli dale,  
 aṃśuk bāndhiyā gale,  
 giyāchile Annadā udyāne /  
 se barā kathin thāi,  
 guru śiṣye dekhā nāi,  
 Annadāke nā pāy bidvāne //

abhimāne mukhe tathā,  
 nā haila kona kathā,  
 bhikṣā beṣe berāile deś /  
 nā pāiyā kothā sukh,  
 biṣaṇṇa kariyā mukh,  
 āsiyā parile hethā śeṣ //  
 ebe kariyācha sār,  
 udyāne bhojanāgār,  
 yantrāgāre nāhi care hārī /  
 kuhak bhāṅgiyā yābe,  
 pare kothā anna pābe,  
 ei belā dekha śeś bārī //

(HRKK, Tuesday, 6th July, 1858)

xi

hāsiba ki dekhiba Iśvar mukh bhāṣā /  
 haiyāche dās janma dharmma karmma nāśā //  
 gadya padya lekhe bhāla abhimān mane /  
 nā jānen das puttra parihās jane //  
 padya bhāṣe baidya vidyā aprakāś nāi /  
 loke bale baidyabale gadya padya chāi //

sabe bale madya bale kibā gāñjābale /  
 Prabhākare padya bale parihās cchale //  
 gadya lekhe nāhi dekhe padārthe ki bale /  
 āśā kare bāsā pābe mahākabi dale //  
 kabitver svatva nāi udare yāhār /  
 kavitve mattatā hay ki janye tāhār //  
 cirakāl śisūdale kātāiṣā kāl /  
 pātīle ki pābe yaś bhaṇḍāmīr jāl //  
 uṭhiyāche lokmājhe akhyātīr dhvajā /  
 abhimān madyapān baidya mahāgajā //  
 lekhanī ke dhare kare buddhi nāhi sare /  
 mane kare dhariyāche dharātal kare //  
 bibāha karila yāre mātā bale tāre /  
 e manuṣye subīśvās ke karite pāre //  
 parityāg ye karila bibāhitā nārī /  
 ke āche tāhār tulya nare bhraṣṭācārī //  
 bidhabā bibāha dite sei nare cāy /  
 kākerā ki nāi deśe hāge tār gāy //  
 bhadralok carane ki nāi upānaha /  
 Prabhākar pāṭhakerā e sambād kaha //  
 mātṛ pitṛ śrāddha yei hindu nāhi kare /  
 ki rūpe se jan yāy bhādra jan ghare //

sab jāti kāche bale āmi baidya jāti /  
 jāna nāki baidyagan kon baidya nāti //  
 pitā pitāmaha nām kahite nā pāre /  
 mukhl bale baidyaaāmi chale kaṣṭācāre //  
 pautulik dale bale pautulik nāmī /  
 Brahmādale spaṣṭa bale Brahma-dharmma kāmī //  
 kona dharmme nāhi yāy dharmma nāhi cāy /  
 eman dhārmik lok ke kothāy pāy //  
 śiśūdale miliyā karila patra kata /  
 brahmāṇḍe nā dekhi ār e bhaṇḍer mata //  
 dainik māsik ār bārṣiker bojhā /  
 kāgaj prakāṣe bhūt śiśubhūt rojā //  
 dekha sabe ki āche māsik Prabhākabe /  
 prātyahik Prabhākare ki suprabhā dhare //  
 mane kari lāthi mārī bārṣiker śire /  
 Prabhākar phela sabe Jahṇabīr nīre //  
 nāsā karṇa kāṭiyā muṇḍan kara cul /  
 dūr kara prthibīr anarther mūl //  
 anādare Prabhākare dūr kara sabe /  
 eman asuddha bhāṣ hay nāhi bhabe //

(HRKK, 13th July, 1858.)

xii

hinduratna ratnamāy he kamalākar /  
 śuna bali dāspuṭtra ki amalākar //  
 cirakāl pargṛhe yār gṛhabās /  
 parāṇne udar pūjā karen ye dās //  
 unune nā caṛe hāṛī peṭbhār pare /  
 banitā nā pāy anna khāy anya ghare //  
 kār puṭtna kār nāti kon jāti han /  
 pṛthibītse paricaṛ nāhi jāne jan //  
 keha bale dāsī puṭtra keha bale dās /  
 keha bale dharmmahīn ceṣṭā dharmmanās //  
 Prabhākare yata lekhā nij lekhā naṛ /  
 purātan Prabhākare Prathākar haṛ //  
 iṣṭa nāi jñāti nāi nāi bandhu keha /  
 parāṇne udar ṭālā bhuṇḍisār deha //  
 anyatra yāiṇā khān dui ser dūdh /  
 nijālaye māspakṣe nāhi yaṛe khudh //  
 deṣe deṣe bhikṣāy laiṇā kichu ṭākā /  
 abhimān madādhanī haiṇāchi pākā //  
 ḍhākā kop jhālā gōp āciler chaṭā /  
 anyer kabitā curī āmoder ghaṭā //  
 dui cakṣu mudile dekhibe andhakār /  
 prakāś haibe tabe mandā bhāb sār //  
 bali śuni Prabhākar kon deṣe yāy /  
 e deṣe kon lok Prabhākar cāy //

āgā nāi goṛā nāi paṛā māi savar /  
 hale hale saṁyog nā tthāke Prabhākar //  
 baṛa kabi abhimān kara abhimāne /  
 kāhār nandan tumi ke tomāy jāne //  
 bālakerā Prabhākri dokāne nā yāy /  
 baidya kule keha taba jal nāhi Khāy //  
 bācā marā dui tubya Kalankī ye haṛ /  
 Prabhākari kalaṅka raṭila deśmaṛ //  
 jaṛiyā paṛile dās bhāṇḍamaṛ phāde /  
 ebāre nā dekhiben Śrīgabinda cāde //  
 lakṣīcharā haiyācha lakṣī nāi hāre /  
 pūritecha dhāmyamaṛī dhanya bhunḍināre //  
 biṣaṛ-pipāsā yena ār nāhi raṛ /  
 cīntā kara śeṣdine Dharmmarāj bhaṛ //  
 baidyak puṭulī ār nāhi rabe kare /  
 abaṣya yāite habe Dharmmarāj ghare //  
 bhārā diyā rahiṛācha aparer bāṭī /  
 śeṣdine tāṛaiyā dibe chaṛājhaṭī //  
 upārjjan kariṛācha nā haila bhog /  
 nā karile dīne dān satkarmme saṁyog //  
 tarite cāhibe pare tarāben yini /  
 sabdige andhakār dekhāben tini //  
 ki dibe uttar tathā kathā nā saribe /  
 din yāy cintā kara kirūpe taribe //

[HRKK, 16th November, 20th July, 1858.]

[The above extracts form part of the attack made upon  
 Iśvarcandra Gupta by Gaurīśaṅkar in the Hinduratna Kamalākar.  
 The main allegations were made in the introductory prose  
 portions, but were repeated in the verse portions as above.]



C

i

biphal bicār man biphal bicār /  
 ek binā ār nāhi ek binā ār //  
 eketei sab haý, eketei sab laý,  
 eketei ekmaý sab ekākār /  
 ek binā ār nāhi ek binā ār //

man re āmār śuna man re āmār /  
 sakali asār ār sakali asār //  
 ek bhābe bhāb rākhi, ye dike phirābe ākhi,  
 dekhibe sakal phāki, ek mātra sār /  
 sakali asār ār sakali asār //

ii

Biśvakar, Icchāmaý, Manomaý, Dayāmaý, Adhikārī,  
 Bhūtarāth, Guṇātīta-Guṇakark, Parātpar, Nitya-Nirāmaý,  
 Nirguṇa, Param-Maṅgalmaý, Siddhajñān, Svataḥ,  
 Satya, Sarbbagata, Sarbbasvadhan, Sarbbamūlādhār,  
 Nirādhār, Nirañjan, Nitya, Nirākār, Svarūp, Param-  
 Puruṣ, Anāthnāth, Jagadātmā, Paramātmā, Karuṇāmaý,  
 Patitapāban, Cidānanda, Sadānanda, Cinmay, Sasvarūp,  
 Caitanyarūp, Bhūtātīta-Nirañjan, Anādi, Ananta,  
 Aja, Ajar, Akṣar, Akṣaý, Abhaý, Aṃar, Anirbbacanīya,

Abibhakta, Arūp, Atīndriya, Abijñāya, Adihīn, Adināth,  
 Ādi, Atmanāth, Sarbbasār, Sarbba-śakti-mān, Dhātā,  
 Pātā, Trātā, Bisvarūp.

iii

jagater adhīśvar Maheśvar han /  
 jagater antarānā nije Nārāyaṇ //

ubhaṇe abhed tārā śāstre śuni tāi /  
 bāstabik āmate se debajñān nāi //

tathāpio śasikhaṇḍa bhūṣaṇ yāhār /  
 sadāi acalā bhakti tātei āmār //

mahāyogī jyotirmay yoge annrata /  
 kājei tāhār preme man haṇ rata //

iv

biśvarūp nāṭyaśālā, dṛśya manohar /  
 śobhita sucāru ālo, sūrya śaśadhar //

svabhāb svabhābe loṇe, sampādan bhār /  
 kariche sakal sūtra, hoṇe sūtradhār //

jaladhar bādyakar, bādyā kare kata /  
 samīrap saṅgīt, kariche abirata //

chaṇṇ kālē chaṇṇ kāl, haṇṇ chaṇṇ rūp /  
 raṅgabhūme raṅga kare, bhāṇṇer svarūp //

adhikārī ek mātra, akhilpālak /  
 āmrā sakale tār, yātrār bālak //

v

mohinī māyār khelā mahā mohakar /  
 kichu tār nāhi hay jñāner gocar //  
 keman kautuke ēṭe kuhak-kapāt /  
 bhaba hāṭe kata ṭhāṭe kariteche nāt //  
 bāhirer nāt śudhu dekhiyā berāi /  
 bhitare ki āche tār dekhite nā pāi //

vi

ei dekha māyik saṁsār /  
 e kebal maner bikār /  
 māyāy maṇḍita bhaba, māyāy mohita sab,  
 yata kichu māyār byāpār //

amāyik Paramātmā yini /  
 māyār prerak han tini /  
 prabīnā Prakṛti-Māyā haye Iśvarer jāyā,  
 pratidin pati-birahiṇī //

vii

ei ta raṇecha tumi antare āmār /  
 antar-antar tabe kena bhābi ār?  
 miche kāl harilām, miche ghure marilām,  
 etadin karilām miche hāhākār /  
 ei ta raṇecha tumi antare āmār //

viii

pitaler gopāler param ādar /  
 nirmmāṇ karaha śiva, kāṭiyā pāthar //  
 laiṃyā pittal khaṇḍa, mākhāo candan /  
 mane mane bhāba tāy, Nander nandan //  
 ghāṭiyā prastar kāsā, yogī yadi haṃ /  
 kāsāri bhāskar tabe, yogī kena naṃ?

ix

jīban jībanbimba sthāyī kabhu naṃ //  
 bomār ye kalebar, kebal kaler ghar,  
 dr̥śya baṭe manohar, pañcabhūtamāy /  
 yakhan ṭuṭibe kal, chuṭibe sakal bal,  
 sukhadal hatabal, duḥkher uday /  
 jīban jīban bimba sthāyī kabhu naṃ //

x

Ohe Kāl kāl-rūp, karālbadan /  
 tomār radanyukta, marālbhān //  
 deb debī katā tumi, kariyā saṃhār /  
 bhārater svādhīnatā, karile āhār //  
 kichu bujhi nāhi pāo, cāridik ceye /  
 ekhan bharābe peṭ, Hindudharmma kheṃe?  
 dohāi dohāi Kāl, śāntiguṇ dhara /  
 uṭha uṭha pān lao, ācaman kara //

xi

sakalei ghor śākta, kona krame nahe bhākta,  
 seirūp ācār byābhār /  
 sahaje sukher yog, ripur pañcam bhog,  
 ādya tār kare sahakār //  
 ... .. gāye gāṭī, tabbār mukhe cāṭī,  
 paripāṭī khān kose kose /  
 pūrṇa holo icchā yeṭā, snān ār dekhe keṭā,  
 snān pān ek ṭhāi bose //  
 bakhil nā haṭ tāy, akhil bhariyā khāy,  
 mane mane sādḥ āche khub /  
 bilātir śeṣ hole, den śeṣ bhābe gole,  
 dhenō gāṅge beṇō jale ḍub //  
 prathamete cupi cupi, śeṣ han bahurūpī,  
 ār nāhi thāke lajjā bhāy /  
 cāle uṭhe nagna chabi, hāsā mūrṭṭh gān kabi,  
 loke bale jaṭy bābu jaṭy?  
 lampāṭ yubak yārā, bāc kore phere tārā,  
 dhīre dhīre tīre cāle ḍiṅge /  
 yekhāne ... .., seikhāne gāy sārī,  
 kāker paścāte yena phiṅge //

xii

rākha mati Rādhākānta Rādhā-kānta pade /  
 debīpūjā kari kena ṭākā chāṇa made //

bikaṭ prakat bhaṅgi dharmma sab gāye /  
 Debīr samīpe ācha jutā diyā pāye //  
 Bhabānī bhābiyā yār bhābanā prakat /  
 bhāre mā bhabānī kena tāhār nikaṭ //  
 Bhabānī kothāy ācha Dharmmasabhā niyā /  
 tomār sākṣāte hay ei sab diyā //

### xiii

nijrñate śātramāt kariyā khaṇḍan /  
 tār kāche kara kena mleccha nimantran //  
 pūjāsthale biparīt āyojan nānā /  
 mandirer madhyabhāge kena deha khānā //  
 dharmmamate pāpkarmma manete jāniyā /  
 miche kena jāk kara sāheb āniyā // ...  
 pūjāsthale Kālīkṛṣṇa Śivakṛṣṇa yathā /  
 Iśukṛṣṇa nibedita madya kena tathā //

### xiv

'A', 'B' - paṛā ḍabi chele, prati ghare ghare /  
 sājāyēche gādā-gādā, desk-er upare //  
 paṛeniko ucca pāṭh, alpe māre turī /  
 tākāy odige baṭe, pākāy khicuṛi //  
 śāsaner bhaṭe nāhi, yāy upabane /  
 pāyese āyes rākhi, tuṣṭa hay mane //

xv

yata kāler yubo,      yēna subo,  
          imrājī kay bākā bhābe /  
 dhore guru purut      māre juto,  
          bhikhārī ki anna pābe?  
 yadi anāth bāmun hāt pete cāy,  
          ghusi dhare othen tabe!  
 bale, gator āche,      khetē khege,  
          tor peṭer bhār keṭā ba'be?

xvi

             .... tesugaṇ yata /  
 jhāke jhāke, mahā jāke, cale śata śata //  
 pore dress han fresh, dekhā yāy beṛe /  
 bākābhābe kathā kan, kālāmknkh neṛe //  
 pūrkhārā cihiṛir, kore bhuṣṭinās /  
Ma'm saṅge, nānā raṅge, garimā prakās //  
 cuṇāgali adhibās, kholār ālay /  
 tāhātei katarūp, ārambar haṅ //  
 chāren bāṅgāli dekhi, bilāter buli /  
 lichu yāo coloured-man, native beṅgāli //  
 jutā goṛe prāṇ yāy, kare hei dhei /  
 rupi binā rūpibhāb, kaṛāmātra nei //  
 baṛadine bābu seje, katarūp khei /  
 jāhāj haite yena, nāmilen ei //

tētule-bāgdī yena, phiringir jhāk /  
bācineko dekhiyā, tader photo jāk //

xviii

... .. convert, gr̥hatyāgī yārā /  
kata sukhe yāciteche, nāciteche tārā // ...  
edike duḥkher dāy, mane jhole phāsi /  
bāhire prakāś kare, caṇukīr hāsi //  
chērā pacā kāmej, tāhār nāi hātā /  
tāi pare bābu han, khāli kore mātā //  
bhāngā ek tablete dish sājāiyā /  
Iśubhābe Khānā khān bāhu bājāiyā //  
mane mane khed barā, kānnā hay rete /  
paramānna piṭāpuli, nāhi pān khete //

xix

toṣāmode yārā tārā, sabāi asār /  
kebal berāy khūje, āpan susār //  
tuṛi māre ṭappā gāy, ṭākā behebe sār /  
baye mare rāsi rāsi, 'ye ājñār' bhār // ...  
takhan serūp kare, bujhe abhiprāy /  
bābujī balen yāhā, tahe dey sāy //  
yadyapi baben bābu, "keman Gabīn /  
mānuṣ ki bhāla naý, bāmun Nabīn?"



Gabīn balen, "bābu tāi baṭe baṭe /  
 guṇ jñān kichu nāi, se beṭār ghaṭe // ...  
 Gabīner kathā śuni, śrīyut takhan /  
 bhaṅgimā kariyā yadiḥ balen eman //  
 "Gobīn ki śuna nāi, erūp prakār /  
 Nabīn banedī lok, vidyā āche tār //  
 kahite balite bhāla, ati subhājan /  
 ācār byābhār sab, Hīdur matan //"   
 Gobīn kahen śune, "hā hā mahāśay /  
 bābu yāhā kahilen, satya samuday //  
 cirakāl mānyatārā, sakaler kāche /  
 pākā ghar pākā bāṛī, dhan bhāla āche //  
 yeman surūp niḥe, guṇ sei mata /  
 Pārsi imṛāji jāne, śāstra jāne kata //  
 goṣṭipati baṭe tārā, gāyer pradhān /  
 akātare yāre tāre, anna kare dān //  
 Nabīner bāṛī āmi, ye samaye yāi /  
 nanī kṣīr chānā kata, peṭ bhore khāi //

XX

śrīmān dhīmān nīti-nirmāṇkarak /  
 yārā sabe ha'te cān bidhabā-tarak //  
 natabhābe nibedan prati jane jane //  
 āin-brkṣer phal phalibe kemane //

bidhabār biye dite yāhārā udyata /  
 tār mājhe baṛa baṛa lok āche kata //  
 yāre icchā tāre haṃ ḍākiyā āniyā /  
 gharete bidhabā kata paricay niyā //  
 gopanete ei kathā baliben tāre /  
 janānīr biye dite pāre ki nā pāre //  
 yadi pāre tabe tāre bali bāhādur /  
 emani karile sab ḍuḥkha haṃ dūr //

xxi

āge meṃegulo, chilo bhālo,  
 brata-dharmma kortto sabe /  
 ekā 'Bethume' ese šeṣ kareche,  
 ār ki tader teman pābe //  
 yata chuṃṃgulo tuṛi mere,  
 ketāb hāte nicche yabe /  
 takhan 'AB' śikhe, bibi seje,  
 bilāti bal kabei kabe //  
 ekhan ār ki tārā sājī niyek  
 sāj sējotir brata gābe /  
 sab kāṭā cāmce dhorbe šeṣe,  
 piṛi pete ār ki khābe /  
 O bhāi! ār kichu din bēce thākle  
 pābei pābei dekhte pābe,  
 erā āpan hāte hākiye bagī,  
 gaṛer māṭhe hāoyā khābe //

āche goṭākatak buro yadin  
 tadin kichu rakṣā pābe /  
 O bhāi! tārā malei daphāraphā,  
 ekkāle sab phuriye yābe /  
 yakhan āsbe śaman, karbe daman,  
 ki ba'le tāy bujhāibe /  
 bujhi 'hoot' bale 'boot' pāy diye,  
 cheroot phūke svarge yābi //

xxii

kuler sambhram bala kariba kemane /  
 śatek bidhabā haṃ eker maraṇe //  
 bagalete bṛṣakāṣṭha śaktihīn yei /  
 koler kumārī laye biye kare sei //  
 dudhe dāt bhāṅge nāi śīśu nām yār /  
 pitāmahī sama nārī dārā haṃ tār //  
 naranārī tulya binā kise man toṣe /  
 byabhicār haṃ śuddha ei sab doṣe //  
 kulkalpe naṃ rūp sulakṣan yāhā /  
 abaśya prāmānya kari śirodhārya tāhā //  
 nacet ye kul tāhā doṣer kāraṇ /  
 pāper gaurab kena kariba dhāraṇ //  
 he Bibhu Karuṇāmaṃ binaṃ āmar /  
 e deśer kuldharmma karaha saṃhār //

xxiii

Node Sāntipur phire phirýā Huglī /  
 šeṣ kariýāche yata deṣer guglī //  
 nirāmiṣ āhārete thekechen śikhe /  
 ghuriteche māthā muṇḍu māthāmuṇḍu likhe //  
 kothā tār 'bāhya bastu' mānab-prakṛti /  
 ekhan ghuṭeche tār biṣam bikṛti //  
 udarer roge ār arṣe pāy dukh /  
 dibāniśi māthā ghore sadāi asukh //  
 mat cālābār tare likhilen bai /  
 ekhan se likhibār śakti tār kai //  
 kalam dharile hāte māthā yāy ghure /  
 racanār kāle ār kathā nāhi sphure //  
 mās māch binā āge chilānā āhār /  
 kichudin karilen biparīt tār //  
 šeṣete pelen tār samucit phal /  
 bhāsālen balbuddhi hāsālen dal //  
 samāj hāsiche tār bhāb ēce ēce /  
 ghare tule pākā ghūṭi basilen kēce //  
 dāye pore purbbabhāb dharilen pichu /  
 śudhu māch mās naý āro āche kichu //  
 samuday phuṭe lekhā nā hay bihit /  
 masalā caleche kata pāner sahit //

xxiv

kṣaṇmātra bibādh kalaha nāhi chāṛi /  
 kariyāchi kārāgār svaśurer bāṛi //  
 iyārer bhābe yadi tuṣṭa rahe del /  
 tulya rūpe jñān kari svarga ār jail //  
 kichukāl sācābhābe khācāy rahiṃyā /  
 jāhir kariba guṇ bāhir baiṃyā //  
 āmār pratāpe dharā haibe asthir /  
 dekhā yābe bīr haṃy kata baṛa bīr //

xxv

baṃyas bāṛiche yata pākitechē keś /  
 tatai dhāraṇ kari naṭabar beś //  
 goḍim bhāngeni yabe uṭhe nāi gop /  
 takham karichi āmi pitṛpiṇḍa lop //  
 śālagrām phele diṃyā beśyā āni ghare /  
 bhāryā tare rēdhe diṃyā padasebā kare //  
 cakṣe dekhe cup mere kāṣṭha han Bābā /  
go to hell old fox damn damn hābā //

xxvi

jāri ka're dīle tumi yata paricaṃy /  
 se taphāte kona aṃśe āmi kam naṃy //  
 kata śata hātīghoṛā gela rasātal /  
 lyāj neṛe bale bhyāṛā dekhamor bal //

āmār nikāṭe tui nāhi pās fa'm /  
lāṭhālāṭhi kāṭākāṭi kise tumi kam?

xxvii

nagarer dakṣiṇete, yata svet nar /  
khāṭāye khaser ṭāṭi, muṛiyāche ghar //  
tāhate cāmer jal, ḍhāle nirantar /  
tathāca śītal nāhi, haṃ kalebar //  
O God O God bali, tub-etē uliyā /  
manohar hāsā mūrṭti, kāmij khuliyā //  
brandy-jal khāy tabu, ṭhāṇḍi nāhi kare /  
kebal choice bharā, ice-er tare //  
śukhāyeche bibider, mukh śataḍal /  
de jal de jal bābā, de jal de jal //

xxviii

sāheberā sārā haṃ, kāmij pheliyā kaṃ,  
O God O God damn hoot /  
baraphe milāye jal, gāle ḍhāle anargal,  
tabu sadā galā haṃ kāṭh //  
dvāre morā khaskhas, jal deṃ phas phas,  
se jal anal bodh haṃ /  
nirantar khāy soda jōḍā mukhe lāge bodā,  
bibider bidare hrday. //

xxix

Bhārater adhīśvarī mātā mahārājī /  
 āhlād prakāś hetu, ātoṣer bājī //  
 byāpila pr̥thibīmaṃ, śubha samācār /  
 ghoratar dhūmdhām, dhūmer byāpār //  
 bājī dekhe sukhī haba, bhābiyā antare /  
 jale sthale kata lok, āila nagare //  
 chaṭa baṭa kata lok māṭher dudhāri /  
 kilibili kare yena pipīṛār sārī //  
 ghār tule cār diṇe, nāhi yāy neoyā /  
 ye dikete dr̥ṣṭi kare se dikei 'dhōyā' /

xxx

bilātī sabhatā tore balihāri yāi /  
 eman apūrbba rīti ār kothā nāi //  
 hāsi-khusi, raṅgaras aśeṣ prakār /  
 kṣaṇpare sei bhāb nāhi thāke ār //  
 nij guṇ la'ṇe sadā biśeṣ baṛāi /  
 kathāy kathāy haṃ duell laṛāi //  
 mārīte marīte paṭu bhāb bhayāṅkar /  
 kichumātra dayā nāi prāṇer upar //  
 prathame pratham guṇe dharā dekhe śarā /  
 ekākī pañcam naṃ chāykhāni bharā //

xxx

pathe rathe gutāgūti jutājuti hañ /  
 svabhāber dharmma seṭā doṣ bara nañ //  
 e kemaṇ doṣ bala e kemaṇ doṣ /  
 sāper svadharmma baṭe nāhi chāre phōs //  
 prathamete mātāmāti kathār kaṇṣale /  
 hātāhāti lāthālāthi bicārer sthale //  
 bhitar bāhir lāl kichu nañ kālo /  
 lāle lāle lāl kare śobhā pāy bhālo //

xxxii

pāpī-paritrāṇ hetu karuṇānidhān /  
 Jewser Grosser ghāye tyajilen prāṇ //  
 tadabadhi śiṣyader bhaktir prabhāb /  
 prabhuprem prāpta hañe kata rūp bhāb //  
 serūp Christian-gaṇ bhābe ḍhalḍhal /  
 Gorā-preme matta yathā neṇāneṇī-dal //

xxxiii

chelekāle cheledharā śuniyāchi kāne /  
 ekhan haila bodh biṣeṣ pramāṇe //  
 kahite maner khed buk pheṭe yāy /  
 missionary cheledharā chele dha're khāy //



mātr̥mukhe jujukathā āchi abagata /  
 ei bujhi sei juju rāṅgāmukh yata //  
 cup cupchele sab hao sābdhān /  
 kānkāṭā ... .. keṭe nebe kān //  
 ghumāo ghumāo bāp thāka śāntabhābe /  
 bāṭā bha're pān deba gāl bha're khābe //  
 cini diba kṣīr diba diba gur piṭe /  
 bāpdhan bāchā mor cheṇāre bhiṭe //  
 ki jāni ki ghaṭe pāche buddhi tor kācā /  
 okhāne jujur bhaṭ yeo nāre bāchā //

xxxiv

pitār sukher nidhi tanaṭ-ratan /  
 kichu nāhi bujhe tār maner matan //  
 śūnya kari janānīr hṛday-bhāṇḍār /  
 haraṇ kariyā laṭ sādher kumār //  
 lākyer kuhak-yoge Iśumantra cheṭe /  
 yubatīr buk cire pati laṭ keṭe //  
 kaminīr kol śūnya kṣuṇṇa man tāṭ /  
 e khed kahiba kāre hāṭ hāṭ hāṭ //  
 vidyādān chal kari missionary Duff /  
 pātiyāche bhāla ek bidharmmer tub //  
 madhur lacan jhāṭe jānāiyā love /  
Iśumantre abhiṣikta kare śiśusab //

siśu sabe trāṅkarttā jñān kare Duffee /  
biparīt love-e pa're dub deṃ tub-e //

xxxv

yekhānete bālaker biparīt mati /  
sekhānei missionary balabān ati //

pātiyā kuhakī-phād pheliyāche pere /  
eman mukher grās kena debe cheṃ ?  
gāchpākā marttamān barttamān coke /  
buddidoṣe cheṃ diṃ kena yābe phoke ?

xxxvi

tumi ta subodh Caṇḍī vaiṣṇaver chele /  
kothā yāo manohar mālsābhog phele ?  
Hindu haṃe kena cala sāheber cele ?  
udare asahya habe māṃsa mad khele //

kṣīr sar nanī kheṃe br̥ddhi kara kāyā /  
bidharmma-ḍabār jal kheyonā he bhāyā //

yadyapi āhār hetu icchā tor haṃ /  
āy bhāi ghare āy kichu nāi bhāy //

kata kārkhānā ka're khete diba Khānā /  
go to hell don't care, ke karibe mānā ?

sarpaṭe ba'se khāba khusi merā khusi /  
 yadi keha kichu bale dha're degā ghusi //  
 āhār-bihāre bhāi bhaṭ kār kāche ?

xxxvii

Dharmma Sabhā nāhi laṭy Brahma Sabhā āche //  
 āpan bikrame haba Russiar king /  
table-e basiba khete hāte diṭe ring //  
 gāyatrī kariba pāṭh prati budhbāre /  
 pāba nitya cittarūp śarīr-āgāre //  
 jñān-astre keṭe deha-māyārūp gaṇḍī /  
 bhrama daṇḍe daṇḍī haṭe kena hao daṇḍī ?  
 pūrbabat Hindu hao Jesu-mat khaṇḍī /  
 hārīṇhī Caṇḍīr ājñā ghare āy Caṇḍī //

xxxviii

bam bam bam bab bam bam bam /  
 kise tumi kam ?  
 bājāo British śiṅge bham bham bham //  
 bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //  
 Srīdhām Serampore Kailās-sikhar /  
 biśvamājhe aparūp dr̥śya manohar //  
Companyer pratiṭhita tumi burā-Siv /  
 tathāṭ birāj kari tvarāteche jīb //

śubhradeha Bhūtanāth bholā Maheśvar /  
 Gaṅgār tarāṅga taba māthār upar //  
 kakhano prakhar beg kabhu tham tham /  
 bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //

kise tumi kam ?

bājāo British śiṅge bham bham bham /  
 bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //

xxxix

Friend of India br̥ṣabhe ārohan /  
 ahaṁkār alaṁkār bhujaṅga-bhūṣaṇ //  
 pakṣapāt hārmālā sadā suśobhan /  
 mithyāchal toṣāmodī triśūl dhāraṇ //  
 dhūmpān chal taba kāgajer kal /  
 Urdha bhāge dhak dhak jvalicke anal //  
 dame dame dam bājī nāhi khāo dam /  
 bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //

kise tumi kam ?

bājāo British śiṅge bham bham bham /  
 bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //

XXXX

Townsend Robertson nandī bhr̥ngī duṭo /  
 niyata nikāṭe āche dāte kari kuṭo //  
 Chāi-bhasma-bibhūṣita eṭokāṭā khāy /  
 gālbadya kari sadā bagal bājāy //  
devil dupāṣe tārā table dhariyā /  
evil hateche sukhe tomāre smariyā //  
 Kāj bāla lājhin rāj-priyatam /  
 bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //  
 kise tumi kam ?  
 bājāo British śiṅge bham bham bham /  
 bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //

xxxxi

lāñchanār bāghchāl bañcanār jhulī /  
 ek mukhe pañcānan sādhe bale śūli //  
 tiraskār puraskār atul bibhab /  
 nij nindā śrabapete haṇe thāka śab //  
 kālīrūpe kālī taba hr̥daye bihare /  
 sṛṣṭir maṣār kāthā jamā āche ghare //  
 tribhuban jāy kare taba parākram /  
 bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //  
 kise tumi kam ?  
 bājāo British śiṅge bham bham bham /  
 bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //

xxxxii

Dharmmatalā dharmmahīn gohatyār dhām /

Friend of India serūp taba nām //

biśeṣ mahimā āmi ki kahiba ār /

friend haye friender khejecha tumi ār //

kata bhāb dhara tumi kata bhāb dhara /

rājāy karile khun guṇ gān kara //

bhramite anyāy path kichu nāhi bham /

bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //

kise tumi kam ?

bājāo British śiṅge gham bham bham /

bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //

xxxxiii

kālo tumi śādā kara śādā kara kālo /

ālo kara andhakāre andhakāre ālo //

sthalere ākāś kara ākāśere sthal /

jalere anal kara analere jal //

kācāre bānāo pākā pākā kara kācā /

sācāre bānāo jhuṭo jhuṭo kara sācā //

kāṅgālīr duṣkhaḍātā Bāṅgālīr yam /

bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //

kise tumi kam ?

bājāo British śiṅge bham bham bham /

bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //

xxxxiv

śunitechī bābājān ei tabe paṇ /  
 sākṣya dite karitechā balāte gaman //  
 yor kare Paśupati kari nibedan /  
 sekhāne karo nā giye prajār pīṇan //  
 bhūt pret saṅgīguli saṅge laṅge yāo /  
 ekhāne basiṃyā kena māthā ār khāo ?  
 bājāi bidāyī-bādyā ṭani ṭam ṭam /  
 bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //  
 kise tumi kam ?  
 bājāo British śiṅge bam bam bam /  
 bam bam bam bab bam bam bam //

xxxxv

ogo mā, Victoria kar go mānā,  
 kar go mānā //  
 yata tor rāṅgā chele ār yena mā /  
 cok rāṅgenā cok rāṅgenā //  
 prā-loker jāti-dharmme,  
 keha yena jor karenā /  
 yena sei pratijñā bajāy thāke,  
 diṃecha mā, ye ghoṣaṇā /  
 O mā, jātibhede bhajan sādhan,  
 dharmmamate ārādhanā //

mahā amūlya dhan dharmma ratan,  
 eman dhan ta ār pābenā /  
 yata missionary e deśete,  
 ese kare ki kārkhānā /  
 tārā Iṣu-mantra kāne phūke,  
 śiśuke deḡ kumantranā /  
 phere hāṭe ghāṭe bāṭe māṭhe,  
 nānā ṭhāṭe phandi nānā /  
 bale diśī Kṛṣṇa cheṛe torā,  
Iṣu-Christa kar bhajanā /  
 O mā Hedū bane kēdo care,  
 tār bhayete prāṇ bācenā /  
 tār pāṣe Humo hutum-thumo,  
 ghumo cheler jāt rākhenā /  
 yata śādā juju joṭe buṛī,  
 'Cheledrara' pratijanā /  
 erā jananīr kal śūnya ka're,  
 keṛe nicche dudher chānā /  
 Sadā dharmma dharmma ka're mare  
 dharmma-marmma ken brojhenā /  
 ha're parer dharmma dharmma habe  
 eiṭi mane bibecanā /  
 yena āpan dharmma āpni pāle,  
 parer dharmma nās karenā /  
 eder dharmma-pather svādhīnatā,  
 rekhonā mā ār rekhonā /



kēman kuhak jāne erā,  
 upadeśe kare kāṇā /  
 O mā, baṃṣa-piṇḍa dhaṃsa ka're,  
 kata chele khele khānā /  
 naṃ tomār adhīn svādhīn erā,  
 kēman ke're karbbe mānā ?  
 O mā āmrā seṭā bujhte pāri,  
 khoṭyā loke tā bojhenā /  
 tumi sarbbesvarī yadi tāder,  
 cok rāṅgāye kar mānā /  
 tabe ṭupī khule āḍḍā tule,  
 pāliye yābār path pābenā /

xxxxvi

cāridike yuddher analrāśi jvale /  
 nirbbāṇ karaha bidhu sandhirūp jale //  
 rap raṅge prāṇināś biṣāder hetu /  
 bibād-sāgare bāndha aikyarūp setu //  
 sandhi yoge dān kara śāntiguṇ ras /  
 pr̥thibīr lok yata preme habe baś //  
 praśaṃsā -puṣper gandha yābe sab ṭhāi /  
 śudhu subicār cāi śudhu subicār cāi //

xxxxvii

e deśete āche yata sampādak śādā /  
 sakalei āmāder barābhāi - dādā //  
 tomrā sakal mate sabāi pradhān /  
 rājājāti, rāj-priya rājbat mān //  
 dhīr baṭa bīr baṭa dudikei daṛa /  
 āmāder ceyē hao sarbbamate baṛa //  
 dekhe śune jene sab tomāder kriyā /  
 dharechi lekhanī šeṣ sampādakī niyā //  
 kichutei tomāder tudya kabhu nai /  
 bal bīrya sāhas saḥāyḥīn hai //  
 āgei tomrā ācha uparete core /  
 āmrā rayechi nīce ek pāśe pa're //  
 tulate haṇechi nīcu khed kichu nāi /  
 Ojane haile ūcu hese mari tāi //  
 āpnārā baṛa baṛa ki tāy saṁśay /  
 baṛa bole prakāśita baṛa paricaṇ //

xxxxviii

kintu kise khed yāy kise kari sthir /  
 samān dekhine kena bitar bāhir ?  
 bāhirete dhopdasta dhapdhape śādā /  
 bhitarete ghinghin pāk-bharā kādā //

Iśvarer icchā yāhā, nahe anya mat /  
 dudik samān ha'le sukh hata kata //

xxxxix

yakhan ba'secha bhāi sampādakī pade /  
 matta yena haonāko abhimān-made //  
 rāgdveṣ abhimān ār ahaṁkāra /  
 pāpkar pakṣapāt kara parihār //  
 niyāta birāḥ kari tomāder kare /  
 pakṣer lekhanī kena pakṣapāt kare ?  
editori karmme śudhu dharmmer sañcār /  
 tāhatī nā haḥ yena kalasika pracār //  
 dharmmer āsane bōse sei dharmma dhara /  
 nṛpatire nyāyāyata upadeś kara //

xxxxx

ekjan karmaphale kariyāche doṣ /  
 e bole ki jātimātre bidhi haḥ roṣ ?  
 śarīrer ekbhāge doṣ yadi haḥ /  
 e bole ki sab dena kāṭā bidhi haḥ //  
 ek daṇḍa duḥkhakar ha'le pare sabe /  
 noṛā diḥe sab dāt ke bheṅgeche kabe ?  
 nānā pāpe pāpī Nānā daṇḍa tār labe /  
 e bale ki Hindumātre doṣī haḥ rabe ?

Di

śvetkānti sabākār,      cāridike śabākār,  
 anibār hāhākār rab /  
 śṛgāl kukkur yata,      gṛdhinyādi śata śata,  
 mahānande khāy sab śab //  
 himsra jantu āro sab,      śabāhāre parābhab,  
 kata śab saṃkhyā nāi tār /  
 sab śab kari dr̥ṣṭi,      bodh haṃ anāsṛṣṭi,  
 śabdr̥ṣṭi haṃeche ebār //

ii

abaśiṣṭa yata sainya,      āhār abhābe dainya,  
 kācā māṃsa chīre chīre khāy /  
 śukhāila rāṅgāmukh,      Imrājer eta dukh,  
 phāṭe buk hāy hāy hāy //  
 cāridike gulī golā,      kothā pābe dānā cholā,  
 aśva kāde senā-mukh ceṃe /

iii

phale kichu nahe anya,      niścaṃ maraṇ janya,  
 uṭhiyāche pipīrār ḍenā /

yabaner yata baṁṣa, ekebāre habe dhuam̐sa,  
 sājiyāche Companyer senā // ...  
 jvaleche Governor krodhe, baliche biṣam bodhe,  
 Caleche Shah Shuja Chal ka're / ...  
 eibār bācā bhār, ye prakār ghor-ghār,  
 jorjār śorsār tāy /  
 jorbal gorā-dal, ḍhal ḍhal ṭal ṭal,  
 dharātal rasātal yāy //  
 gilijir lok yata, sakali kariyā hata,  
sepoy ṭhukibe sukhe tāl /  
 garu jaru labe kere, cāpdeṛe yata nere,  
 ei belā sāmāl sāmāl //

iv

thank Lord dhanya tumi, Ferozeporer bhūmi,  
 Sikh-rakte prabāhita nadī /  
 ek haste e prakār, nā jāni ki ha'ta ār,  
 dui hasta prāpta ha'te yadi //  
 yuddhe buddhe āpanār, samatulya kothā ār,  
 mahimār nāhi haṁ seṣ /  
Duker haṁ party, badh kari Bonaparte,  
 rekhechile Britisher deś //  
 tulanā tomār kāche, tulya guṇ kār āche,  
 bahubal buddhibal dhare /

pratiyñā maner priyā,      sāhase sakal kriyā,  
     hasta diyā deś rakṣā kare //  
 dhik dhik Sikh-pakṣa,      kise habe pratipakṣa,  
     konarūpe lakṣanīya naṣ /  
 yuddha kari upalakṣa,      esechila kata lakṣa,  
     lakṣya mātṛe gela samuday // ...  
 āmāder senā sab,      mere sabe kare śab,  
     chere rab dile sab tere /  
 gulī golā nile kere,      yata byāṭā cāpdere,  
     palāila purbbapār chere //  
 gorā sab rāge rāge,      jor kari top dāge,  
     kāmāner āge yāy ure /  
 ka're kōp buddhilop,      miche hope kheye top  
     dāṛī gop sab gela ure //

v

fire fire foot,      phāi phāi bhūṭ hoot,  
     damn damn gorāgaṇ dāke /  
 ... ... kāhā yāgā,      ābi terā śer legā,  
     sepoyerā ei rab hāke //  
 yuddher biṣam dhūm,      gagane uṭhila dhūm,  
     ghūm nāi naṣan-nikaṭe /

vi

śatadru-salil-aṅge,      rudhir-taraṅga-raṅge,  
     bibhūṣita Sikh-bahār //

srote sab śab bhāse,      bātāse puline āse,  
ki kahiba bhayānak kathā /  
gr̥hapāl pherupāl,      śakuni gr̥dhinī jāl,  
śabāhāre sab hāre tathā //

vii

Mahārāṇī Sikheśvarī,      śisu-sūt kroṇe kari,  
 dāruṇ duḥkhita aharaha /  
 Nānak bābār ghare,      ei abhilāṣ kare  
 sandhi hauk Imrājer saha /  
 nije Tej ati hej,      kise tār eta tej,  
 gandhahīn Golāb kāṭh /  
 kon tuccha Ranjor,      nahe tār raṇ jor,  
 michāmichi kare mālsāṭ //  
 ka're lāl cakṣu Lāl,      ṭhuke tāl dhare ḡhāl,  
 senājāl enechila raṇe /  
 Smither dekhe yuddha,      nij pakṣa kari ruddha,  
 palāilā bhaṛ peṛe mane //  
 Lahorer darbār,      āśu habe adhikār,  
 dekhi tār anuṣṭhān nānā /  
able English yata,      devil kariyā hata,  
table pāṭiyā khābe khānā //  
 cāridike senāgaṇ,      madhyabhāge chaplain,  
 sermon paṛiben jore /  
 yatek gorār class,      dhariyā sherryr glass,  
 kahibek 'Hip, Hip, Hooray!'

viii

Sikh bhū, pāl / dudher bāl /  
 tāre ki, Kāl / yātanā jāl //  
 he guṇ, nidhi / biphal nidhi //  
 e nahe, bidhi, bidita, bidhi //  
 karuṇā, kara / karuṇā, kara /  
 raṇ nā, kara / samar, hara //

ix

Pāñjābīya Sikhder āsā chila mane /  
 British bināś kari jāyī habe raṇe //  
 ... ..  
 māṭhe ese buk phāṭe mukh śuṣka haṭ /  
 ... ..  
 bipakṣer baṛa baṛa sardār yārā /  
 siddhipāne śuddhi khāy bal buddhi hārā //  
 Lahore rāṇīr kāche adhomukhe thāke /

x

e deṣer prajā sab aikya haṭe sukhe /  
 Rājār maṅgal gīt gān kara mukhe //  
 dhanya Chief Commander dhanya deo horde /  
 Imrājer rank bāre thank deo Gode //  
 ganya baṭe sainyaṅ dhanya deo tāy /



Lorder rahiṇa mān Goder kṛpāy //  
sadaḃ samarkalpe Bibhu Dayāmaḃ /

xi

Bhārater abodh durbbal lok yata /  
ḡā'l bhāt māch kheḃe nidrā yābe kata ?  
peḃe khele piṭhe saḃ ei bākya dhara /  
Rājār sāhāyya hetu rapasajjā kara //  
Lahorer Sikh-senā śakta atiśaḃ /  
ekhan ālasya karā samucit naḃ //  
keha kharḡa keha ḡhāl keha yaḡṭi lao /  
yāhār yeman sādhta seirūp hao //  
karite tumul yuddha āmāder sane /  
Lahoreīya prajāpuñja sājiḃāche rane //  
āmā tāder saḡge roke roke ruke /  
dārī dha're diba ṭān bārī mere buke //  
adhikar yadi pāi Sikhdār kṡiti /  
āmāder prati habe Bhūpatir prīti //  
sāhase karibe yuddha yata buddhi ḡhaṭe /  
konakrame nāhi yābe golār nikaḡe //  
akarmmaḃya śakti śunya officer yārā /  
ḡāk peḃe ḡākyoge yuddhe yān tāra //  
śire rākha bilvadal mukhe bala Hari /  
saḡge saḡge cala sab śubhayātrā kari //

gāye deha cāpkān pāye caṭi juti /  
 māthāy pāgrī bādha para śādā dhuti //  
 dobjā dochaṭ kari coṭ kara mane /  
 hōcaṭ nā khāo yena ghoratar raṇe //  
signer agrabhāge yeṇo nāka ruke /  
 coṭ cāṭ kāṭ kāṭ mālsāṭ mukhe //

xii

Rangooner Governor habe hatamān /  
 āsibe śikal pāye haṇe bādiyān //  
Hurray diyā gorā sab khete dibe dhān /  
 athabā karibe tār deha khān khān //  
 ki kare ābār rājā yubā Jambubān /  
 bhāgyer dibas tār haṇe abasān //  
 Imrāj sahit raṇe pāibe āsān /  
 bhek haṇe dhariyāche bhujaṅger bhān //  
 kṣaṇamātra nāhi kare mane prapīdhān /  
 kemane haibe rakṣā jāti kul mān //  
 Sobhā peto ha'le pare samān samān /  
 parbbater saha kothā tṛṇer pramān ?  
 bandirūpe rabe kintu yābe nāka prāṇ /  
Van Diemen's land-e pābe basatir sthān //  
 sekhāne Christian haṇe ḍhēkir pradhān /  
 mekir nikaṭe labe dharmmer bidhān //

dharāiṃyā hāte hāte karāibe pān /

Mekoy ekāi tāre kariben trāṇ //

### xiii

Imrāj karibe dūr kadākār mage /

kothāy lāgen 'bagā bāṅgāler lage // ...

rāṅgāmukh dal yadi bal kare bhālo /

ākābākā kālāmukh āro habe kālo //

### xiv

uṭhila yuddher bhāb nṛpatir mane /

chuṭila Imrāj senā Rangooner rape //

luṭila Brahmer deṣ, anubhab haṃ /

kuṭil mager bujhi, maraṇ niścaṃ //

jaṭil kucakrī yata, cakra kari mane /

phuṭila pramād-puṣpa saṃhārer bane //

khūṭila khūṭer khūṭ, matta haṃ roṣe /

ṭuṭila sakal khal svabhāber doṣe //

raṭila raṇer rab, kāpe basumati /

ghaṭila bipad tathā, abodh bhūpati //

ābār tāhār doṣe Imrājer krodh /

thābār prahāre kare himsā pariśodh //

chalila kariṃyā chal khal mantrī tār /

phalila pāper phal, rājya rākhā bhār ///

jvalila rāger agni dalila hr̥day /  
 salil-sandhir yoge, nirbbāṇ ki haṃ //  
 calila British-senā, ṭalila dharanī /  
 balila badane śudhu mār mār dhvani //  
 dharila saṃhār-beś, parila basan /  
 harila prāṇer māyā, karila gaman //

xv

kāra kara kara dayā, dīrdayāmay /  
 hara hara hara nāth, bipakṣer bhaṃ //  
 ār yena nāhi thāke, konarūp dāy /  
 rājā prajā sukhī hok, tomār kṛpāy // ...  
 atyācār kariteche, yata durāśay /  
 tāder pāper bhār, kata ār say ?  
 dhan, prāṇ, mān ādi, sab haṃ lōp /  
 Bhārater prati nāth, eta kena kop ?

xvi

Sakali dekhicha, hr̥daye roṃe /  
 bihit karaha, saday hoṃe //  
 tomāri caran, smaran kari /  
 tomāri bhābnā, dhyānete dhari //  
 kātare tomāre, antare ḍāki /  
 maner biṣay, manete rākhi //

dhara he āpan, prabhāb dhara /  
 kara he bihit bicār kara //  
 pālan śāsan, tumi e bhabe /  
 nāher mahimā, rākhite habe //  
 pāmar pātakī, pāṣaṇḍa yata /  
 pāper ghaṭanā, kariche kata //  
 adoṣe haiyā, kupathe rata /  
 ramānī bālak, kariche hata //  
 śuniyā badhir, hatechi kāne /  
 sahenā sahenā, sahenā prāṇe //  
 esab dekhiyā, hoṃe pāṣaṇ /  
 kemane dehete, dhariba prāṇ ?  
 dekhite kichu to, nāhika bāki /  
 tapan-śaśāṅka, tomār ākhi //  
 Jiber antare, ye kichu āche /  
 se sab bidita, tomār kāche //  
 antar bāhir, adhīp hoṃe /  
 kirūpe ekhano, raṃecha soṃe ?

xvii

bhaṃ nāi ār kichu bhaṃ nāi ār /  
 śubha samācār baṃa śubha samācār //  
 punarbbār haiyāche Delhi adhikār /  
 'Bādśā Begum' dōhe ghoge kāragār //

akāraṇe kriyādoṣe kare atyācār /  
 marila dujan tār prāṇer kumār // ...  
 kothā sei āsphālan kothā darbār ?  
 hāṇe māṭī bāṇe durbbā haṇe gela sār //  
 ekebāre jhāṇe baṃse ha'la chārkhar /  
 śiśusab mārā yābe bihane āhār // ...  
 karechila ye prakār biṣam byāpār /  
 hāte hāte pratiphal pha'le gela tār //  
 adyāpio rabi śaśī hateche pracār /  
 adyāpio dharmma ek karṇ bihār //  
 tim ki kakhano san eta pāpbhār ?  
 kothā dīndayāmay sarbbamūlādhār /  
 antarīkṣe theke sab karicha bicār /  
 tomā bine jāy dāne sādhyā āche kār //  
 samucit śāsti pele yata durācār /  
 ataeb taba paḍe kari namaskār //

### xviii

tṛṣṇāy se jāl āṛ kemaṇete khāi re ?  
 bhāsiḥe tāhāte sab śab thāi thāi re //  
 jhāp diḥe mariteche sakal sepoṇ re /  
 e kūl o kūle tār bhasma āṛ chāi re //

kukur śrīgāl heri ye dikete cāi re /  
 śakuni gr̥dhinī ure śabda sāi sāi re //  
 Shāhjādār śonitete miṭe gela khāi re /  
 kheṭe sab parābhab meneche savāi re //

### xix

sthāne sthāne mṛtadeha parbbater cāi re /  
 pacāgandhe nāk jvale kothāy dāṛāi re ?  
 malhīn ekṭuku sthān nāhi pāi re /  
 kothā kheṭe kothā śūṇye sukhe nidrā yāi re ?  
 sabdike samadaśā kondike cāi re ?  
 e deśete nāhi dekhi hiṃsāhīn thāi re //  
 Yamunār taṭe ese yamunār bhāi re /  
 bikaṭ badane ek bistārila hāi re //  
 sādhu sādhu dharṃmarāj bali hāri yāi re /  
 ghucāila yata kichu āpad bālāi re //  
 Britisher jaṭ jaṭ bala sabe bhāi re /  
 eso eso necā kūde Bibhu-guṇ gāi re //

### xx

Agrāy nāgrāy māriyāche kāṭhi /  
 bīrdāpe dāpiyāche kāpiyāche māṭī //  
 cakrayoge śaṛyantra kariyāche yārā /  
 bhaṭ peṭe konkhāne bhāgiyāche tārā //

hellā ka're kellā luṭhe Delhir bhitare /  
 jellā mere berāita ahaṅkār bhare /  
 ekham se kellā kothā hellā kothā ār ?  
 jellā mere kebā deṃ dārīr bāhār ?  
 cheṛe pāllā bale Allah paṛechi bipāke /  
 kāchā khollā yata mollā talā tīlā ḍāke //  
 sabār pradhān haṃe ye tuleche khaṛi /  
 Delhir durgete theke guṇiyāche khaṛi //  
 haiyā hujur āli hāte niṃe chaṛi /  
 kareche hukum jāri tāji ghoṛā caṛi //  
 nidaṃ svabhāb dhari dhanāgāre paṛi /  
 tuṭhiyā kareche jāra yata dhan khaṛi //  
 mane mane Laṅkābhāg āk diyā khaṛi /  
 tākāyeche cāridik pākāyeche daṛi //  
 manorājya kari āge ye bājāle dāmā /  
 raṇaraṅga dekhāila chūre ḍhil jhāmā //  
 dhariyāche rājbeś pore ṭupī jāmā /  
 kothā sei kālnemi Rābaner māmā ?

xxi

kothākār mahāpāp,  
 kothākār mahāpāp, bale bāp,  
 puttra ha'la 'Nānā' /  
 kāker bāsāy yathā, kokiler chānā //



seṭā ta puṣyi ēre,  
 seṭā ta puṣyi ēre, dasyi bhere,  
 nasyi kara tāre /  
 uṭhe dhāne patti yena, nā karite pāre //  
 Nānā ki nānākele,  
 Nānā ki nānākele, rājya pele,  
 tāite etā jāri ?  
 yāhā svecchā, tāhā kare, haṃ svecchācarī //  
 ha'le se pāsār chele,  
 ha'le se pāsār chele, cāṣār cele,  
 kena tabe calē ?  
 haṃ kāl, bāmā, bāl nāṣe nānā chale //  
 ha'la se ha'lai Hindū,  
 ha'la se ha'lai Hindū, doṣer sindhu,  
 dveṣanale dahe /

### xxii

nā nā, nā, pāpī Nānā, kathā nānā,  
 kaṃ nāre keha /  
 yathā tathā nānā-kathā, cheṣe sabe deha //  
 lekhanī thāko theme,  
 lekhanī thāko theme, nitya preme,  
 matta ha'te habe /

xxiii

tabu ta atyācārī,  
 tabu ta atyācārī, hatyākārī,  
 bolte tāre habe /  
 rājdvēṣī mahāpāpī, kabei kabe sabe //  
 haṃ se rājya chārā,  
 haṃ se rājya chārā, lakṣīchārā,  
 rakṣā kise pābe ?  
 karma-dōṣe dharmma-dōṣe, adhaṃpāte yābe /

xxiv

hyāde ki śuni bānī ?  
 hyāde ki śuni bānī, Jhānsīr Rāpī,  
 theṭ kātā kākī /  
 meṃ haṃ senā niṃ, sājiyāche nāki ?  
 Nānā tār gharer dḥeki,  
 Nānā tār gharer dḥeki māgī khēkī,  
 goṃāler dale /  
 etadine dhane jane, yābe rasātale //

xxv

baṃ sab dḥere dḥere,  
 baṃ sab dḥere dḥere, chāgalḍere,  
 nerepāne ruke /  
 ca're ghāre ka'se deo, hāre hāre ṭhuke //

paścime miyā mollā,  
 paścime miyā mollā, kēcākhollā,  
 tobātāllā ba'le /  
 kope pa're, tope ure, yābe sab jva'le //  
 keballi marji terā,  
 keballi marji terā, kāje bherā,  
 nerā māthā yata //  
 narādham nīc nāi, nereder mata //  
 yena jhāl Laṅkā porā,  
 yena jhāl Laṅkā porā, āgā gorā,  
 naṣtāmīte bharā /  
 ṭeni pa're caṭe ba'se, dharā dekhe sarā //  
 tārā ta haṭe ḍhorā,  
 tārā ta haṭe ḍhorā, yena borā,  
 dite elo ṭakra /  
 ekratti biṣ nāika, kulopānā cakra //

### xxvi

sāj re yata gorā, mere hurray,  
 teṛe dharo neṛe /  
 takta luṭe śakta haṭe rakta khāo phēṛe //  
 yata pāo, kheṭe sherry,  
 yata pāo kheṭe sherry, haṭe merry,  
 pātra hāte dhā're /  
 nece nece mukhe bala 'Hip hip hurray! //

e śīte bara thāṇḍi,  
 e śīte bara thāṇḍi, rum brandy,  
 kichu kichu kheṃe /  
 maner ānande deo, Isu-guṇ geṃe //  
 ghucila śatru-bhaṃ,  
 ghucila śatrubhaṃ, yuddhe jaṃ,  
 jaṃ senāpati /  
 karilen bāhubale, agatir gati //  
 rākhilen rank God,  
 rākhilen rank God, thank Lord,  
Golin Campbell /  
 sādhu, sādhu, sādhu tumi, bipakṣer śel //  
 kothā mā Bhagabatī,  
 kothā mā Bhagabatī, kari nati,  
 prakāśīyā dayā /  
 ekebāre śatrukule, ka're dāo Gayā //

### xxvii

Annapūrṇa nām dhara,  
 annadrṣṭi brṣṭi kara, māgo!  
 xxx                      xxx  
 kuputtra aneke haṃ,  
 kumātā ta keha naṃ, māgo!

tumi jagater mā, āmāder mā,  
 ḍākbo jagadambā ba'le /  
 xxxx                      xxx  
 prajāgaṇe kale ṭene,  
 chele ba'le ḍāka ḍāka //

xxx                      xxxx  
 thāko thāko thāko tumi,  
 rāṅgā chele ka're kale //

o mā, āmāder mukh dekhbine ki,  
 kālāmukho kāṅgāl bale ?  
 xxx                      xxx  
 kuputtra yadyapi hai,  
 tomā chārā kār naṃ, mā go!

### xxviii

yārā chila muṭe majur,            tārā ha'la hujur,  
 ca'le yāy pathe pāye ṭhele /  
 yata ghāṭer dāṛī mājhi,            kāme nahe rāji,  
 kājir mejāj dhare dhvajī ṭhele //

theke nadīnade,            jhil bil hrade,  
 māch dha're khāy mālā jele /  
 tāder kāche gele par,            kāpe kalebar,  
 duno dare bece, cuṇo bele //

xxix

Pradīper dīptirūp prapañca āmode /  
 mugdha man madhukar pramadā-pramode //  
 pradyumna prabal ati prasakti prasaṅga /  
 praśray pāiyā sadā dagdha kare aṅga /  
 rāge amrāg hata rasāl rasanā /  
 naḃane naḃan kare āguner koṇā //  
 garal miśrita tāhe mukher bacan /  
 kṣamā śānti ādi haḃ yāhāte nidhan //  
 kaṭākṣer śare kare sakale aṣṭhir /  
 pracaṇḁa samīre yena sarobar nīr //  
 lalita haḃeche punḁ lobhrūp phās /  
 parāḃ maner gale bāsanā-batās //  
 pardārā pardhan haraṇe byākul /  
 bihbal lālasā made sadā sṭhule bhul //  
 moha-megh ka're āche bibek ācchanna /  
 cetanā candrikā yāhe gupta pratipanna-//  
 dārāsut saha samābeś sarbbakṣaṇ /  
 citter kamale māyā haḃ sañcāraṇ //  
 madete pramatta man bipad ghaṭāḃ /  
 parer sampade sadā kātar karāḃ //  
 īrṣyā biṃsā dveṣ made purṇa ei deś /  
 sakale samān nāi itar-biśeṣ //  
 garima-garale gela guṇer gaural /  
 āpani kaibalyadhām apar raural //

eirūp ṣarripu nibārīta nahe /  
 sonār Bhāratbhūmi bhasma kari dahe //  
 yata lok alase abas kalebar /  
 daridra parer chidra sandhāne tatpar //  
 nāhi mātra aikya sakhyabhāber sañcār /  
 hīn dharmma karmma marmma gupta sabākār //  
 kukarmmete śunya haṃ dhaner bhāṇḍār /  
 sukarmme mudita hasta kamal-ākār //

xxx

konamate br̥ddhi yāhe haṃ sviyā garbba /  
 karen bibidh parbba śrāddha ādi sarbba //  
 kirūp pātak-br̥ddhi utsaber dine /  
 likhite lekhanī yāy dajjār adhīne //  
 Hindu-dharmma rakṣā hetu ye haṃ udyog /  
 bālir setur prāy sei karmma bhog //  
 dharmma-rakṣā hetu ek vidyālay āche /  
 katadin praeś asthir haiyāche //  
 abaśeṣe dhanābhābe halo chāyābāji /  
 bipakṣe diteche gāli bali chūcopāji //  
 dharmma-sabhāpati sabe dharmma-adhikārī /  
 ki karmma kariche yata uttarādhi kārī //  
 pitā panttalik puttru ekeśvarbādī /  
 nāmmātra matākrānta sarbbadharmmabādī //

Hindu nām ihāder haýeche kemañ /  
 nāmete bihaṅga mātra marāl yemañ //  
 ihārā karen ghrṇā Christiangañ  
 kokil doṣeñ yena kāker baraṇe //  
 erūpete puṇyabhūmi halo chārkhār /  
 Bḡbhur karuṇā binā rakṣā nāi ār //

xxxi

bhābharā Bhārater yaśojalāśāy /  
 kālrabi kare kare śuṣka samudāy //  
 jalhīn mīn sama yata Hindugañ /  
 jīban jīban kari hārāy jīban //  
 tṛṣāy haiyā kṛśā yāy mātṛbhāṣā /  
 punarbbār nāhi ār bācibār āśā //  
 paṇḍiter mane mane biṣam bilāp /  
 ekebāre ghuciṇāche śāstrer ālāp //  
 vidyā sab lop haý carccā nāi tār /  
 maṇihārā phaṇī prāy dhvani mātra sār //  
 apamān anādar prati ghare ghare /  
 konarūpe keha nāhi samādar kare //  
 dharmma karma saha deś parihari /  
 marmmaḥbed maje bed miche khed kari //  
 smṛtvi bismṛti hetu smṛti haý śeś /  
 śruti ār śrutipathe karenā prabeś //



kutarker tarka uthe tarker bicāre /  
 nyāy haṇe nyāy chārā thakite kipāre ?  
 tanter svatantra tantra se tantra ke jāne /  
 svatantra kutantra hale tantra kebā māne //  
 kābyer adhīn haṇe kābya haṇ gata /  
 alaṅkar haiyāche alaṅkār-hata //  
 Bhārāte nā rahe ār bhārāter bās /  
 purāṇ purāṇ bali kare upahās //  
 kebā cale śāstrapthe sabāi acal /  
 nāhi man gītāy kitāy pābe phal //  
 kemane dikhibe path dṛṣṭi āche kār /  
 eke sab ghor andha tāhe andhakār //  
 sindhubharā āche sudhā dekhe nā cāhiyā /  
 jānāy saral bhāb garal khāiyā //  
 dveṣācār-made matta deśācār hare /  
 kūṭbharā kālkuṭ sudhā jñān kare //

### xxxii

hāy hāy paritāpe paripūrṇa deś /  
 deśer bhāṣār prati sakaler dveṣ //  
 agādh duḥkher jale sadā bhāse bhāṣā /  
 konamate nāhi tār jībaner āśā //  
 niśāyoge nalinī yerūp haṇ kṣīṇā /  
 Baṅgabhāṣā seirūp din din dīnā //

apamān anādar prati ghare ghare /  
 konamate keha nāhi samādar kare //  
 paṇḍiter mane mane biṣam bilāp /  
 ekebāre ghuciyāche śāstrer ālāp //  
 dharmma yān satya saha deṣ parihari /  
 dharmmabhed maje Ved miche khed kari //  
 bismṛti haila smṛti smṛti tāy kata /  
 śruti hay sakaler śrutipathhata //  
 tantrer svatantra tantra se tantra ke jāne /  
 kutarke laile tarka tarka kebā māne //  
 purāṇ purāṇ ba'le kare nānā chal /  
 nāhi man gītāy kitāy pābe phal //  
 eirūpe aiteche śāstrer saṃhār /  
 rīti-nīti prāṇ tyaje saṅge saṅge tār //  
 loker bhāṣār prati bhāb dekhe bākā /  
 samācārpatre likhe kata yābe rākhā //  
 śuna he deṣer lok dveṣ parihara /  
 paraspar patra prati samādar kara //  
 jānile jādīya vidyā sukh tāhe nānā /  
 thākite ujjval netra kena hao kāṇā //  
 jñān vidyā sukh ādi labhya hay yāhe /  
 rītimata subidita yatna kara tāhe //  
 yāhār icchāy sṛṣṭṭṭ haila sakal /  
 saṃbādpatrer tini karun maṅgal //

xxxiii

māyer kalete śuṣe,      ūrute mastak theye,  
     khal khal sahāśya badan /  
 adhare amṛta kṣare,      ādho ādho mṛdusvare,  
     ādho ādho bacan racan //  
 kahite antare āśā,      mukhe nāhi kaṭubhāṣā,  
     byākul haṃche kata tāy /  
 ma-mmā mā mā bābbā bā bā,      ābo ābo  
     ābā, ābā,  
     samuday debabānī prāy //  
 kramete phuṭila mukh,      uṭhila maner sukh,  
     eke eke śikhile sakal /  
 meso, pise, khurā, bāp,      juju bhūt chūco sāp,  
     sthal, jal, ākāś, anal //  
 bhāla manda jānite nā,      mal mūtra mānitenā,  
     upadeś sikṣā ha'la yata /  
 pañeamete hāte khari,      khāiyā gurur chari,  
     pāṭhśāle pariṣācha kata //  
 yaubaner āgamane,      jñāner pratibhā mane,  
     bastu bodh haila tomār /  
 pustak kariyā pāṭh,      deckhiyā bhaber nāṭ,  
     hitāhit karicha bicār //

ye bhāṣāy haṃ prīta      parameś-guṇ-gīta,  
 brādhakāle gān kara mukhe /  
 mātr̥sama mātr̥bhāṣā,      pūrāle tomār āśā,  
 tumi tār sebā kara sukhe //

xxxiv

jāna nā ki jīb tumi,      janani janamabhūmi,  
 se tomāy hṛdaye rekheche /  
 thākiyā māyer kole,      santāne janani bhole,  
 kē kothāy eman dekheche //  
 bhūmite kariye bās,      ghumete pūrāo ās,  
 jāgilenā bidā bibhābarī /  
 katakāl hariyācha,      ei dharā dhariyācha,  
 janani-jaṭhar parihari //  
 yār bale balitecha,      yār bale calitecha,  
 yār bale cālitecha deha /  
 yār bale tumi balī,      tār bale āmi bali,  
 bhaktibhābe kara tāre sneha //  
 prasūti tomār sei,      tāhār prasūti ei,  
 basumātā mātā sabākar /  
 ke bujhe kṣitir rīti,      tomār janani kṣiti,  
 janaker janani tomār //  
 kata śasya kata mūl,      nā haṃ yāhār mūl,  
 hīrakādi rajata kāñcan /  
 bācāte jīber asu,      bakṣete bipul basu,  
 basumati karen dhāraṇ //

sugabhīr ratnākar, haiyāche ratnākar,  
 ratnamayī basudhār bare /  
 śūnye kari abasthān, kare kare kar dān,  
 taraṇi dharāṇi rāṇi kare //  
 dhariyā dharār pad, peye pad nadī nad,  
 jībane jīban rakṣā kare /  
 mohinī mahīr mohe, baṇhi bāri bandhu dōhe,  
 prembhābe care carācare //  
 prakīrti pūjā dhara, pulake praṇām kara,  
 premmayā prthibīr pade /

xxxv

biśeṣataḥ nijdeśe, prīti rākha sabiśeṣe,  
 mugdha jīb yār mohamade //  
 Indrer Amarābatī, bhogete nā hay mati,  
 svarga-bhog upasarga sār /  
 Śiver kailāsdhām, Śivpūrṇa baṭe nām,  
 Śivdhām svadeś tomār //  
 michā maṇi muktā hem, svadeśer priya prem,  
 tār ceṣe ratna nāi ār /  
 sudhākare kata sudhā, dūr kare tṛṣṇā kṣudhā,  
 svadeśer śubha samācār //

xxxvi

bhātr̥bhāb bhābi mane,      dekha deśbāsigane,  
     prempūrṇa naṇan meliyā /  
 katarūp sneha kari,      deśer kukur dhari,  
     bideśer ṭhākur pheliyā //  
 svadeśer prem yata,      seimātra abagata,  
     bideśete adhibās yār /  
 bhāb-tuli dhyane dhare,      citrapaṭe citra kare,  
     svadeśer sakal byapār //  
 svadeśer śāstramate,      cala satya dharmmapathe,  
     sukhe kara jñān ālocan /  
 br̥ddhi kara māt̥rbhāṣā,      pūrāo tāhār āśā,  
     deśe kara vidyā bitaraṇ //  
 din gata haṇ krame,      kena ār bhrama bhrame,  
 Bibhu-preme kara abadhān /  
 bās kari ei bārṣe,      ei bhābe ei bārṣe,  
     aharaha kara Bibhu-gān //  
 upadeś bākya dhara,      deśe kenā dveṣ kara,  
     seṣ kara miche sukh-āśā /  
 tomār ye bhālabāsā,      se ha'lanā bhālabāsā,  
     ār kothā pābe bhālabāsā ?  
 e bāsā chāribe yabe,      ār ki he āśā rabe,  
     prāpta haṇe āśā-nāśā bāsā /  
 kebā ār pāy dekhā,      ele ekā yābe ekā,  
     punarbhār nāhi ār āśā //

xxxvii

par par din yata krame hay gata /  
 bhrāntirūp nidrābaṣe rabe āṛ kata //  
 kramete haila śūnya suḥer kalas /  
 ekhan haricha kāl haiyā alas //  
 uṭha uṭha śayyā chāṛa śuṣe kena āṛ /  
 bāhirete ki hayeche dekha ekbār //  
 kena āṛ ghumāiyā samay hārāo /  
 maśārīr dvār khule mukh tule cāo //  
 ekhan ālasya nahe bidhān bihita /  
 sādhyamate siddha kara śvadeśer hita //  
 Iśvarer kāche kari āśā eimata /  
 rājā hon subicāre sadācāre rata //  
 bāṇīr kṛpāy hok Rānīr kuśal /  
 sukhī hao bhārater santān sakal //

xxxviii

śukāye sindhur jal jaiyāche dvīp /  
 nibiyāche ekebāre Hindur pradīp //  
 dīnbandhu kṛpāsindhu Bibhu-biśvasār /  
 Bhārater bandhu yadi han punarbbār //  
 Hindur suḥer āṛ bhābnā ki tabe ?  
 chila sindhu, ha'la bindu punaḥ sindhu habe /  
 dīnbandhu bale Hindu yadi sindhu hay /  
 sahaje haibe tabe Hindur uday //

Hindur kapālkrame sukh-dinakar /  
 hañechila ekkāle ati kharatar //  
 kālete ekhan ār nāhi sei din /  
 dinakar hīnakar din din din //  
 prāpta hañe Iśvarer kṛpāmegh jal /  
 jañechila bhāgyanad pracur prabal //  
 sukh-dheu ānanda-anile abirata /  
 drutabege nece nece chuñechila kata //  
 adr̥ṣṭa adr̥ṣṭa him pañe nij kāl /  
 kālkrame ekkāle haiñāche kāl //  
 ekhan Hindur sei bhāgyarūp nad /  
 ekebāre śukāñeche hārāñeche pad //  
 kāl peñe phuñechila kusumer kali /  
 uñechila gandha tār chuñechila ali //  
 ekhan śukāñe dal jhariñāche sab /  
 nāhi gandha makaranda nāhi bhr̥ṅga-rab //

xxxix

jāga jāga jāga sab Bhārat-kumār /  
 ālasyer baś hañe ghumāonā ār //  
 tola tola tola mukh khola re locan /  
 janāñir āśrupāt kara re mocan //  
 bheñgeche śobār khāṭ pariñāche bhūme /  
 ekhano tomār eta sādñ kena ghume ?





pūrbbakār deśācār, kichumātra nāhi ār,

anācāre abirata rata /

kothā purbba-rītinīti, adharmmar prati prīti,

śruti haṃ śrutipath hata //

deśer dāruṇ dukh, dekhiyā bidare buk,

cintāy cañcal haṃ man /

likhite lekhanī kāde, mlānmukh masichāde,

śok-āśru kare bariṣaṇ //

ki chila ki ha'la āhā, ār ki haibe tāhā,

Bhārater bhābhharā yaś /

ghucibe sakal riṣṭi, habe sadā sukh-brṣṭi,

sarbbādhāre sañcāribe ras //

bhababhūp-priyārāṇi, bāṇīr prakṛta bāṇi,

mṛtaprāy purātan bhāṣā /

Sacetan haṃe puna, gāibe Bibhur guṇ,

rasanāy nitya kari bāsā //

sabhatā sarojlatā, prāpta habe prabalatā,

mānuṣer manasarobare /

pramod praphullakāy, sukh-śatadal tāy,

phuṭibek jñān-sūryya-kare //

surab saurab haṃe, daśdike yaś laṃe,

prakāśibe śubha samācār /

svādhīnatā mātṛsnehe, Bhārater jarā-dehe,

kariben śobhār sañcār //

dūr habe sab klānti, palābe prabalā bhrānti,

śāntigal habe bariṣaṇ /

punṇabhūmi punarbbār, pūrbba-sukh sahakār,

prāpta habe jīban jauban //

prabīnā nabīnā haṇe, santān samūha laṇe,

kole kari karibe pālan /

sudhā sama stanpāne, janānīr mukhpāne,

ekdṛṣṭe karibe īkṣaṇ //

erūp svapan mata, kata haṇ manogata,

manomata bhāber sañcār /

phale tāhā kabe habe, prasūtīr hāhārabe,

sūt sabe kare hāhākār //

APPENDIX II

## Chronology

[The dates of composition shown below are determined approximately on internal or circumstantial evidence.]

- 1812 March 8, Friday, Iśvarcandra Gupta was born in the village of Kācrāpārā, District of the 24-Parganas, Bengal.
- 1813 East India Company's charter renewed - retirement of Lord Minto I - appointment of Lord Hastings as Governor-General (1813-23). Charter Act permits Christian Missionaries to preach in British India.
- 1814 Rāmmohan Rāy retires from service and settles at Calcutta. English School established at Chinsura.
- 1815 Rāmmohan Rāy founds Atmīya Sabhā.
- 1817 January 20, Anglo-Indian College (Hindu College) founded. Establishment of the Calcutta School Book Society.
- 1818 May 23, publication of Samācār Darpan (Bengali Weekly). Legal restriction on the Indian Press withdrawn. Serampore College established. Gupta composes the couplet: rete maśā dīnē māchi, ei tārīe kolketāy āchi.
- 1820 Birth of Akṣaykumār Datta and Iśvarcandra Vidyāsāgar.
- 1822 Death of Srīmatī Debi, Gupta's mother. Harinārāyaṇ Gupta takes a second wife: Iśvarcandra moves to Calcutta.
- 1824 January 1, Sanskrit College, Calcutta begins to function. Birth of Michael Madhusūdan Datta.
- 1826 Derozio appointed teacher in the Hindu College.
- 1827 Birth of Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy. Harinārāyaṇ celebrated Gupta's marriage with Durgāmaṇi.

- 1828 Death of Rām Basu, the famous Kabiwala. Rāmmohan founds the first samāj.
- 1829 Suttee abolished by Regulation XVII. Išvarcandra Gupta reads Mugddhabodh and engages in a Kabi contest with Maheś Pāglā.
- 1830 January 16: An address of welcome to Lord William Bentinck by Rāmmohan Rāy in a meeting held at the Town Hall, for abolition of the Suttee.
- January 17: Dharmma Sabhā founded by the orthodox elements of Hindu Society. They launched a movement for reintroducing the rite of Suttee.
- Death of Harinārāyaṇ, the father of Išvarcandra Gupta. Alexander Duff arrives at Calcutta: his school founded in the house of Kamallocan Basu, with the assistance of Rāmmohan Rāy. Rāmmohan goes to England.
- 1831 January 28, Weekly Sambād Prabhākar published.
- April 8, Rāmmohan arrives at Liverpool.
- April 25, Derozio resigns his post at the Hindu College.
- Kāśīprasād Ghos's The Shair and Other Poems (English) published. Publication of Gyananneshun.
- December 24, death of Henry Vivian Derozio.
- 1832 March: Išvarcandra Gupta resigns from the post of editor of Sambād Prabhākar.
- May, death of Gupta's patron, Jogendramohan Thākur.
- May 25, the last issue of the weekly Sambād Prabhākar appeared.
- July 15, Jogannāth Prasād Mallik, the zemindār of Andul brings out Sambād Ratnābali, appointing Gupta as its editor.

- 1833 Renewal of the Charter of the East India Company.  
Gupta writes preface to Rāmprasād Sen's Kālikīrttan.
- 1834 Gupta's visit to Patna and Cuttack; he learns  
Tantra from a learned mendicant.
- 1835 February 2; Lord Macaulay's Minutes on imparting  
European knowledge in India through the English  
language.  
March 7, Lord Bentinck adopted Macaulay's views, and  
recorded the famous Resolution on the 'promotion of  
European literature and science among the natives of  
India'. Press Law of Sir Charles Metcalfe passed.
- 1836 August 10; Sambād Prabhākar reappeared as a thrice-  
weekly paper. Persian replaced by English as Court  
language.
- 1838 Birth of Baṅkimcandra Caṭṭopādhyāy, Surendranāth  
Majumdar and Hemcandra Bandyopādhyāy. Debendranāth  
Thākur becomes a Brāhma.
- 1839 June 14; Sambād Prabhākar published as a daily newspaper.  
October 6; Debendranāth Thākur establishes the Tattva-  
bodhinī Sabhā.  
October 26; Gupta writes a letter to the Editor of  
Baṅgadūt alleging that one Kālimohan Bandyopādhyāy  
had stolen some of the expressions of his verses, in-  
clusive of which he planned to publish a book very  
shortly.  
November 29; publication of Sambād Rasarāj by Gaurī-  
śaṅkar Tarkabāgīś.  
Death of Rājīt Singh - First Afghan War (1839-42) -  
capture of Ghazni and occupation of Kabul.
- 1840 Risings of Afghan tribes - deposition of Dost Muhammad.

- 1841 Murders of Burnes and Macnaughten by the Afghans.
- 1842 British disaster in Afghanistan - Lord Ellenborough became Governor-General (1842-44) - re-occupation of Kabul - restoration of Dost Muhammad - British evacuation of Afghanistan.
- Gupta's poem: Kābuler Yuddha.
- 1843 February 9; Madhusūdan Datta converted to Christianity.
- August 5; Regulation for appointing natives as Deputy Magistrate passed. Tattvabodhini Patrikā commenced by Debendranāth Thākur.
- 1844 Recall of Lord Ellenborough - Lord Hardinge became Governor-General (1844-48).
- 1845 The First Sikh War (1845-46) - battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshah. Gupta's poems: Moodkeer Yuddha, Ferozeporer Yuddhe Jay, Sikh Yuddha, Sikh-Yuddhe Imrajer Jay.
- 1846 Battles of Aliwal and Sobraon - The Sikh army completely shattered, with great loss on the part of the English. Duleep Singh, the young Rājā surrenders together with influential chieftains headed by Golāb Singh. Gupta's poem: Capalābalī Chanda.
- August 1, death of Dvārakānāth Thākur in England.
- Gupta's poem: Bābu Dvārakānāth Thākurer Mṛtyu.
- 1847 Gupta's first dispute with Gaurīśaṅkar, editor of Bhāskar and Rasarāj.
- June 7, Gupta launced Pāṣaṇḍa Pīraṇ.
- August, Sitānāth Ghos fled with the letter-head block of Pāṣaṇḍa Pīraṇ.

- 1848 March 18: Gupta's editorial on Bhāskar, showing its mistakes.
- Lord Dalhousie became Governor-General (1848-56).
- Revolt of Moolrāj - the second Sikh War (1848-49) - enunciation of the Doctrine of Lapse and annexation of Satara by the application of the Doctrine.
- Gupta's poem: Dvitiya Yudda. Sambād Sādhurañjan published.
- 1849 Battles of Chillianwalla and Gujarat - annexation of the Punjab - Bethune School for girls ('Hindu Bālikā Vidyālay') started in Calcutta. Michael Madhusūdan publishes his first work, the Captive Ladie (English).
- 1850 April 13: Tīsvarcandra Gupta introduces his Annual Literary Gathering.
- 1851 Telegraph offices opened for business purpose. (Gupta's poem: Tārer Khabar).
- July 7: Bethune in a letter requested Gupta to compose a book of verse which could be prescribed as a text in Girls' Schools.
- October 29, British Indian Association founded with Debendranāth as its Secretary.
- Publication of Bāhya Bastur Sahit Mānab Prakṛtir Sambandha Bicār by Akṣaykumār Datta.
- 1852 Second Burmese War - annexation of Pegu. Gupta's poems: Imreji Nababarsa, Brahmadeśer Saṅgrām, Yuddha-Sajjā.
- Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy reads his paper Bāṅgālā Kabitā Biśayak Prabandha at a meeting of the Bethune Society.
- 1853 Renewal of the Company's Charter - entrance into I.C.S. thrown open to competition.
- December 15: Gupta publishes the life and songs of Kabirañjan Rāmprasād Sen in Sambād Prabhākar (Friday, 1 Paus, 1260 B.S.)



1854 First section of the East Indian Railway, from Howrah to Hooghly opened. (Gupta's poem: Reler Gari). Gupta continues publishing the lives of poets such as Rāmnidhi Gupta (S.P., 15th July, 1854), Rām Basu (S.P., 16 Sept. 1854), Nityānanda Bairāgi (S.P., 15 November, 1854).

1855 The Mahārājā of Burdwan petitions the Legislative Council for restraining polygamy among the Kūlins in Bengal. (Gupta's poem: Kulīn) Lives continued: Lakṣmikānta Biśvās (S.P., 13 January, 1855), Rām Basu (S.P., 13 January, 1855).

Gupta publishes his first original book: Kabibar Bhāratcandra Rāy Guṇākarer Jīban Br̥ttānta.

1856 July 26, Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act passed.

December 7, first widow remarriage at Calcutta, which inspired a vigorous movement by orthodox Hindus. Gupta's poems: Bidhabā Bibāha, Bidhabā Bibāha Ain.

Departure of Lord Dalhousie and appointment of Lord Canning as Governor-General. General Service Order - Persian War - war in China (1856-60) - introduction of the Enfield rifle and greased cartridges.

1857 January-April, local mutinies and incendiary fires at Barrackpore and Berhampore.

May 25; Rebellion spread throughout India: in 20 places simultaneously, sepoy risings and the murder of the English. (Gupta's poem: Sipāhī Yuddhe Śānti Prārthanā).

June 30: General Havelock, arriving at Allahabad, took command and repulsed the sepoys. (Gupta's poem: Allahabader Yuddha.)

July 16: Havelock marched into Nānā's nest, Bithur, took it unresisted, destroyed the palace, blew up the fort and then marched back to Kanpore. (Gupta's poem: Nānā Saheb).

Sept. 20: Delhi captured, after six days of fighting, under General Wilson. Hodson at the head of his body of horse, broke into the Palace, seized the old king and Queen; they were thrown in prison. Hodson killed the princes by shooting with his own hands. (Gupta's poem: Dillir Yuddha, Yuddha Sānti).

Oct. 10: Colonel Greathed took Agrā. (Gupta's poem: Agrār Yuddha).

November: death of Dvārakānāth Adhikārī, prominent figure among the trio of Kalejīya Kabitā Yuddha. (Gupta's poem: Sokocchvās).

Dec. 6: victorious battle by Colin Campbell at Kanpur. (Gupta's poem: Kānpurer Yuddhe Jay).

1858

Jan.-March: trial of Emperor Bahādur Shāh.

May: Rāni of Jhānsi and Tatīā Topi spread the Mutiny to Gwalior and proclaimed Nānā Sāheb as Peshwā.

June: defeat and death of Rāni of Jhānsi.

July: Proclamation of peace by Lord Canning.

August: Act for the better government of India.

Nov., Queen's Proclamation.

Gupta's poems: Barṣa Bidāy, Nilkar, Durbhikṣa, Bāji, Imrej Sampādak, Hemante Bibidha Khādyā.

Gupta publishes: Prabodh Prabhākar, Bodhendu Bikāś.

Composes: Kalinātāk (part).

1859

January 23, Saturday. Death of Isvarcandra Gupta.

### APPENDIX III

#### A Complete List of Literary and Journalistic works by Tśvarcandra Gupta.

##### First Group: Edited journals and newspapers.

- a. Weekly: (i) Sambād Prabhākar, from 24th January,  
1831 (16th Māgh, 1237 B.S.).
- (ii) Sambād Ratnābalī, from 24th July,  
1832 (10th Śrābaṇ, 1239 B.S.).
- (iii) Pāṣaṇḍa Pīraṇ, from 24th June, 1846  
(7th Aṣārh, 1253 B.S.).
- (iv) Sambād Sādhurañjan, from August-September,  
1847 (Bhādra, 1254 B.S.).
- b. Thrice-  
Weekly: Sambād Prabhākar, from 10th August, 1836  
(27th Śrābaṇ, 1243 B.S.) to 13th June  
(31st Jyaiṣṭha, 1246 B.S.).
- c. Daily: Sambād Prabhākar, from 14th June, 1839  
(1st Aṣārh, 1246).
- d. Monthly: Māsik Prabhākar, from 1st Baiśākh,  
1260 B.S.

Second Group: Complete books

- (i) Kālikīrttan (ed.)
- (ii) Bhāratcandra Rāy Guṇākarer Jīban Br̥ttānta.
- (iii) Hita Prabhākar
- (iv) Prabodh Prabhākar (Part I.)
- (v) Bodhendu Bikāś

Third Group: Short Poems.

- (i) Mahākavi Iśvarcandra Gupta Mahāsāyē Racita  
Kabitābalīr Sār Saṁgraha ed. Rāmcandra Gupta;
- (ii) Kabitā Saṁgraha (part I) ed. Bāṅkimcandra Caṭṭopādhyāy
- (iii) Kabitā Saṁgraha (part II) ed. Gopālcandra Mukhopādhyāy
- (iv) Granthābalī, ed. Kālīprasanna Bidyāratna
- (v) Iśvar Gupter Granthābalī (parts I & II) ed.  
Manindrakṛṣṇa Gupta.

# APPENDIX IV

Proverbs used in the Poems of Iśvarcandra Gupta.

Proverb	Gupta's Version	English Equivalent
1. āgune āgun nebhenā /	āgune āgun diya āgun nibhāi /	
2. āge hāte diye kholā, ekhan hale manbholā /	pathe pathe mege khābe, hāte ka're kholā /	
3. āpan cokhe sonā barṣe, parer cokhe rūpā /	śāstre bale parāmarṣe āpan cakṣe sonā barṣe /	
4. ek pāgaler rakṣā nei, tin pāgaler melā /	ek bhūte rakṣā nāi, pācbhūter melā /	
5. āske khāy, tār phōṛ gaṇenā /	ka'se ka'se khāo āske, guṇe guṇe phōṛ /	You have seen the sweet fruit, but not the bitter labour.
6. udor piṇḍi budor ghāṇe	diye, udor piṇḍi budhor ghāṇe baṅgālike kāṭe bale /	One doth the scath and another hath the scorn.
7. ek kāne sone, anyakāne beroy /	ek kāne kathāguli prabeś kariyā / bāhir haiyā gela ār kān diyā //	In at one ear and out at the other.
8. ek kere dudhe ek chite conā /	ek kalsi dudhe gholer chite / kolor bātās diye kar re bidāy //	
9. ek hāte tāli bājena /	ek hāte kakhano ki beje thāke tāli /	It takes two to make a quarrel.

Proverb	Gupta's Version	English Equivalent
10. ekā Rāme rakṣā nāi, Sugrib dosar /	eke Rāme rakṣā nāi, Sugrib tār hala senā /	He alone is supremely powerful, reinforced he will make a bid for the highest power.
11. eke Manasā, tāi dhunar gandha /	eke Mansār phōsphosāni, dhunor gandha tāy /	To add fuel to the fire
12. ecāre pākā	koṣete dhareche doṣ jal nā pāiṃyā kāñhal haila jyethā ecāre pākāyā //	<u>Enfant terrible.</u>
13. etokātā kheṃe pittī rakṣā	konarūpe pittirakṣā etokātā kheṃe /	
14. kāker piche phinge lāgā	kāker pāscāte yena phinge /	
15. kātā ghāṃe nuner chite	kātā ghāṃe nuner chite poṛār upar poṛā /	
16. kālasya kuṭilā gatiḥ	kāler kuṭil gati ke bujhite pāre /	Time runs in a devious way.
17. kuputtra yadio haṃ, kumātā kakhano naṃ /	kuputra anek haṃ, kumātā ta keha naṃ /	A son may be bad but never the mother.
18. kulor bātās diṃe bidāy karā /	lakṣmichārā bacharer haṃe gela sāy /	
19. kēde jetā	āmār haṃeche haṃ hite biparīt / kōdal kariyā seṣe kēde kara jit //	

Proverb	Gupta's Version	English Equivalent
20. khāṭ bhāṅgle bhūmīśayya / jānana bhāṅgile khāṭ sār habe bhūmī /		
21. khāṇā keṭe nonājal ghare āṇā /	khāṇā keṭe nonā jal dhukāila ghare /	To bring on calamity by one's own imprudence.
22. khedāi ne, toruṭhān caṣi	khedāi ne tor uṭhān caṣi, bāstubrīkṣa rākhenāka /	
23. gāche tule diye bādhu, keṭe nile mai /	āpani tulīfā gāche, keṭe lao mai go /	To leave one in the lurch.
24. gāye pare bhāp bā jhagṛā karā /	dāye pa're gāye pa're karis kodai /	
25. goṛā keṭe āgāy jal /	ditecha āgāy jal goṛā keṭe āge /	To water the top of a plant after laying the axe to its root.
26. goḍim ekhano bhāṅgeni /	goḍim bhāṅgeni yabe, uṭhe nāi gop /	
27. goder upare biṣphōṛā /	poṛā upar poṛā, yena goder upar biṣphōṛā /	
28. gole haribol	golemāle haribol gaṇḍagol sār /	

Proverb	Gupta's Version	English Equivalent
29. gōsāīyēr cēyē kasāi bhālo	bṛthāy tilak dhare chāibhasma kheyē/ kasāi anek bhāla gōsāīyēr cēyē //	
30. ghare nei aṣṭrambhā, bāhirete kōcā lambā /	bāhirete kōcā lambā, aṣṭarambhā ghare //	Impudence.
31. ghughu dekhecha phāḍ dekhanī/	āgete dekhecha ghughu, ṣeṣe dekha phāḍ /	You must not see things with half an eye.
32. Caṛkīr hāsi	edike dukkher dāy mane jhole phāsi / bāhire prakāś kare caṛkīr hāsi //	
33. cunopūtīr pharpharānī	sapharīr pharpharī pūṭī yāre kāy /	
34. cul nei tār peṭo pāṛā	khōpā bēdhe peṭo peṛe, copā ka're nath nere /	
35. cokher bāli	chilām cakṣer bāli āmi he tomār /	
36. corā nā śone dharmmer kāhinī	corer kache dharmmakathā marmma bojhenā /	The devil would not listen to the Scriptures.
37. core-theko doṛā garu	(This became a proverb.)	
38. tele jale miś khāy nā /	jale nāhi tel miśe /	



Proverb	Gupta's Version	English Equivalent
39. jagā ghare curi nei /	bhogā mere dāgā dile sādher samāy /	
	jāgā ghare curi ār ekhan ki haý //	
40. jāṭ-bhikārīr bheke ki kāj	svabhābe Vaiṣṇab jāṭi ki karibe bheke /	
41. jibhe-dāṭe sambandha /	rasanāre kare sadā daśan āghāṭ /	
42. dub diye jal khele Siver bāpo ṭer pāyṇā /	dub diye jal khāy, Śiv nāhi ṭer pāy /	
43. dā'ner hāte po samarpan /	hala ḍāiner kole chele sāpā /	To set a fox to keep one's geese.
44. dubechi nā dubte āchi, dekhi pātāl kata dūr /	ḍubiyāchi dekhiba pātāl katadūr /	
45. dñeki bha'je sarge yāoṃā /	dñeki bha'je svargalābh, sune pāy hāsi /	
46. tuphāne pa're bale pīr badar-badar /	badar-badar gāji mukhe sadā bale mājhi /	
47. tumi khāo bhāre jal, āmi khāi ghāṭe /	lalanā, tomār kāche chalanā ki khāṭe / tumi khāo bhāre jāṭ, āmi khāi ghāṭe //	

Proverb	Gupta's Version	English Equivalent
48.	tumi phera dāle dāle, tumi yāo dāle-dāle, āmi yāi āmi phiri pātāy pātāy / pātāy / tomār cāturi bojhā yāy kinā yāy//	I know the ins and outs more than you do.
49.	daphā ekebāre raphā / tārā ma'lei daphā-raphā, ek kāle sab phurīe yābe /	
50.	daśdinkār pacā khāy, goce-gāce bābu hala pacā śāl sājo dekhle nekār pāy / kheyē /	
51.	dāte keṭo karā / pā'yē kata paṛīfāchi dāte kare kuṭo/	To eat humble pie.
52.	dāskhat likhe deoyā / dāskhat likhe diyē paṛe yadi pā'y/ tathāca nārīr man puruṣe ki pāy//	
53.	nāke kāne khat deoyā / nāke khat, kāne khat, duno sude likhe khat, āpātata dūr kare dukh /	
54.	nun khāi yār, guṇ gāi tār /	
55.	pākā ghūṭi kācān / ghare tule pākā ghūṭi basilen kēce /	
56.	peṭe khele piṭhe saṅ / peṭe khele piṭhe saṅ ei bākya dhara/Pain is forgotten where gain follows	
57.	mārgē bās / bahire sukhyaṭi gāy, edike donār dāy bābujīr mārgē yāy bās /	

58. phato jāk / tetule bāgdī yena phairīngir jhāk /  
bācināka dekhe ār tāder phato jāk /
59. phāṭale paṛla kalā, phāṭāy paṛeche kalā Gobindāy nama /  
gopālāy nama /
60. baṁse bāti deoyā / baṁse yena dite bāti nāhi thāke keha /
61. bāgher ābār gobadh / bāgher ki mane āche gobadher bhaṛ?
62. bāgher pichane pheu / kothā bā bāgher piche lāgiyāche pheu /
63. bāman haṛe cāde hāt / bāman haiyā dhare ākāśer cād / Fools rush in where  
angels fear to tread.
64. biṣer saṅge khōj nei, ekratti biṣ nāika, kulopānā A snake with a large  
kulopānā cakkār / cakra / hood but without venom.
65. buṛo bayese dheṛe rog / buṛo kāle dheṛe rog kakhano ki Childish behaviour of  
sāje / an old man.
66. bhāṛe mā bhabānī / jānen kiñcit guṇ bhāṛe mā  
bhabānī /
67. bhūter begār khāṭā / michāmichi kheṭe gela bhūter To work for nothing.  
begār /
68. bhūter bojhā baoyā / svabhābe haore sojā, bhūter  
bojhā ār katadin mātāy ra'be /

## English Equivalent

## Gupta's Version

## Proverb

69. bhetō Bāṅgālī / bhāt bīne bācīne āmrā bhetō  
Bāṅgālī /
70. marā garu ghās khāy nā / marā garu kakhān ki kheyē thāke  
ghās?
71. mātār ghāyē kukur pāgal / mātār ghāyēte tumi hāyēcha  
pūgal / To have a bee in  
one's bonnet.
72. māner gorāy chāi / pariṇāme bāre mān māne dile chāi /
73. miṣṭi lāgla chāi, / puli sab uthe gela kichu nāi chāi /  
svāmī-putke nāi / nārikel tel guṛ sab pher cāi /
74. munīnaṃ ca matibhramāḥ / munīnaṃca matibhram ei sthale  
ghaṭe / Sages too are liable  
to error.  
natubā ayukti hena ki kārāṇe  
ghaṭe //
75. yata hāsi tata kānnā, / yata hāsi tata kānnā rāmsannā  
bale geche rāmsannā / bale / If you laugh today,  
you may cry tomorrow.
76. yadi hāy luci, mucir / śuci nāi mucī nāi lucir nikāṭe /  
bārīi ruci
77. yār nei pūjipātā, se / yāder nāhi pūjipātā, giye  
yāk Belegghātā, bārīr pātā bece /  
khele /

## Proverb

## Gupta's Version

## English Equivalent

78. yekhāne bāgher bhaý, yekhānete bāgher bhaý, Danger often comes  
sekhānei sandhyā haý / sekhānete sandhyā haý / where danger is  
feared.
79. rāṭ ghāṭiye car khāyā miche kena car khāi rāṭ ghēṭaiye/  
rete maśā dine māchi, *(This accident happened.)*
80. ei tarýe kalketāy āchi /
81. śarītram byādhimandiram byādhir mandir baṭe śarīr tomār / The body is the seat  
of diseases.
82. śāpe bar tomār sāpete hala āmāder bar / A blessing in disguise.
83. śrīghar japun śrīhari nām śrīghare basiýā /
84. sannyaśir tumbanāṛā sannyaśi haiýā tumi yadi śekha yog /  
tathāpi yābenā prāṇ tumbanāṛā rog //
85. sāt careo rā kārenā sāper kache kēco yena, sāt care rā Belabour him as you  
photo nāka / like, he will keep  
mum.
86. sonā phele kāce ādar kācete yatan kena kācā sonā phele /
87. svabhāb yāyānā ma'le, svabhāber doṣ kabhu nāhi yāy male / Black will take no  
illat yāyānā dhule other hue.
88. hāte hāṛi bhāṅgā āj bhāla thāṭe thāṭe hāṭe bhāṅge To wash one's dirty  
hāṛi / linen in public.

Proverb	Gupta's Version	English Equivalent
89. hāṛ bhājā-bhājā	bhājā bhājā karitechā hāṛ hālā kālī/	
90. hāṛe bātās lāgā	kāch theke calē gele phelite niśvās/ lāgita tomār yena hāṛete bātās //	To enjoy peace and rest.
91. hāṭi-ghorā gela tal, bheṛā bale katajal /	kataśata hāṭighorā gela rasātal / leṅ neṛe bheṛā bale dekha mor bal //	Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

APPENDIX V

English words used in Gupta's  
verse.

Able	Civil	Fame	Hurray
Andrew	Chapel	Fashion	Honorary
Anarchist	Cherry	Fathom	India
Asia	Church	Feather	Ice
Beer	Coachman	Foot	Jail
Bengal	Choice	Foolish	Jews
Best	Cunning	Fox	John
Bible	Cheroot	Fish	King
Bill	Chief	Flourish	Miss
Bishop	Commander	Fire	Kite
Bite	Commissioner	Fight	Lady
Black	Cross	Fresh	Look
Boat	Christ	Friend	Love
Bottle	Damn	Gold	Lord
Brandy	Dear	Gown	Light
British	Don't	Good	Madam
Care	Desk	Go to	Mary
Cake	Devil	God	Mate
Catholic	Dish	Glass	Magistrate
Coat	Dog	Governor	Merry
Come	Duke	Ham	Military
Company	Duel	Held	Missionary
Cold	Dress	Hope	Name
Cook	English	Hotel	Native
Class	Editor	Hoot	Nigger
Convert	Envoy	Hip Hip	Night

Old Testament	Table
Party	Take
Piece	Taste
Protestant	Tent
Queen	Tight
Race	Tory
Radical	Total
Rank	Thank
Reform	Trade
Regiment	Tub
Rest	Very
Register	Victoria
Rome	Whole
Ribbon	Whig
Ring	You
Right	Young
Rum	
Sailor	
Sepoy	
Sent	
Sermon	
Shame	
Shop	
Slipper	
Sherry	
Soda	
Sight	



APPENDIX VI

Facsimile of Hinduratna

Kamalākar.

বানবেরা মুখা খায় শুনি নাহি কোথা  
কচুরী দেখিলে পরে যায় যথা তথা  
হস্ত পদ সত্ত্ব বড় এক ভুড়ী ।

পাঠা পাঠী খাণ্ডী আদি খায় ঘোড়া বুড়ী  
পঞ্চভ করিয়া বসে পঞ্চপাল দিলে ।

পিশাচী বানরী ভাষা না জানিকি বলে  
দেশে ভিক্ষা করে উদরের তরে ।

সন্দেশ মেঠাই চায় ধনি দেব ঘরে ॥  
গোধূম চর্বণ তরে দহে গেছে যায় ।

না করে জাতি বিচার সব নাকি খায়  
লেঙ্গুড়ের বেড় যেন কটি দেশে দড়ী

লোকতয়ে সর্বদা গোপনে রাখে জড়ী  
মুখপোড়া বান্দর তথাপি গায় গীত

খচ্চর সমান শব্দ বলে জানে নীত ॥  
অঞ্জনার পুত্র নয় নহে বায়ু সূত ।

খচ্চর স্বভাব ধরে নহে রাজ দূত ॥  
এ বানর কোথাকার বল প্রভাকর ।

প্রভাকরে করে চাহে নহে প্রভাচর  
বলিতে কি পার অস্ত বৈদ্য জাতিগণ

বলিতে পারিলে পরে পাবে মহাধন  
তাহার আকার বলি দীর্ঘ পেট মোটা

ছোট শির দক্ষগণ্ডেকালো বর্ণ ফোঁটা  
নিতব্ধে মাংস নাই শিশুদের ঠেসে

কপিকপ লুকাইয়া যারতার বেশে ॥  
সর্বত্র বেড়ায় খায় যথা তথা মদ ।

লইতে প্রার্থনা করে উচ্চতর পদ ॥  
এটা কেটা কার বেটা বল কার নাতি

প্রভাকর সম্পাদক এবোট কি জাতি  
অন্য এক মেনীচরে তৈলিদের পাড়া

জাতি নাই জাতি নাই ধর্ম কর্ম ছাড়া  
এক রূপ নহে সেটা নানা রূপ ধরে ।

কুঠীয়ায় ছুটি চায় স্বেচ্ছাচার করে ॥  
কেহ বলে বুড়ী গাই কেহ বলে ঘোড়া

তুণ্ড যুগু শিরে গন্ধ রক্ত ভক্ষ রোগা  
এবানর সঙ্গে সেই বানরের সঙ্গ ।

ছুবানরে করিতেছে নগরে কি রঙ্গ ॥  
ছুবেটা মিঠাই চায় ধনিদের কাছে ।

ইহাদের সঙ্গে নাকি বহু শিশু আছে  
শিশুগণ বান্দর দেখিতে যদি পায় ।

ওবানর কলা খাবি কহে সঙ্গে ধায় ॥  
রত্না লোভে সন্তাষণ বানরেরা করে

স্বভাবে মকটে জাতি রত্না আগে ধরে  
রত্না নাহি পায় তার শিশু রত্নাচায়

শিশুরা বানর ভয়ে পলাইয়া যায় ॥  
এক চরে শিশু দলে অন্যে খায় কলা

এ দুই বানর কে,কে, নাহি যায় বলা  
প্রভাকর সম্পাদক গুণ্ড মহাশয় ।

বল শুনি দুই শাখা মৃগ পরিচয় ॥  
সমুদ্র বন্দন কালে ইহার কি ছিল ।

ছিল যদি শ্রীরামে কি পরিচয় দিল  
ইহাদের প্রস্তুতী কি ছিল সেই সনে

হনুমান সহিতে কি সঙ্গ মধুবনে ॥  
সুগ্রীব কি বল নীল হইতে উৎপন্ন ।

বল শুনি প্রভাকর হইয়া প্রসন্ন ॥  
তোমাকে নিমতি করি বলিবে হে সার

সত্য না কহিলে নহ প্রভাকর কার ॥  
রাবণের সঙ্গী আমি বিভীষণ দূত ।

সত্য সত্য তিন সত্য বল বৈদ্যসূত ॥

**নাতিসার।**

ধাত্রী জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন, রাজকি  
শোর, অন্য দিবস তুমি যে সময়ে

বিদ্যালয় হইতে প্রত্যাগমন কর অ  
দ্য সে সময় অতিক্রম করিয়াছ ইহা

র হেতু কি ? রাজকুমার কহিলেন,  
মা, আমি প্রত্যাগমন কালে রাজপ

থে বহু জনতা দেখিয়া তথায় উপস্থি  
ত হইলাম প্রভু হইল ব্যাধেরা গর্ত

হইতে দুই কণ্টকি পশুকে বহির্গত  
করিয়াছিল যে পশুদ্বয় এক প্রকার

মৃগ বিশেষ, তাহার দিগের সর্বাঙ্গ  
দীর্ঘাকার কণ্টকময়, কণ্টকাঘাতে

ব্যাধগণকে ক্ষত বিক্ষত করিয়া পশু  
দ্বয় পলায়ন পর হইয়াছে ব্যাধেরা

এ পশু দিগের দুই শিশুকে লইয়া  
যাইতেছে, পশুিত মহাশয়কে জি

জ্ঞাসা করিলাম এ পশুর নাম কি ?  
তিনি কহিলেন ইহার স্বাভাবিক না

ম কণ্টকী, পশুিতেরা শল্লকীও বলে  
ন, এই সকল দর্শন গ্রহণে আমার

প্রত্যাগমনে বিলম্ব হইয়াছে, ধাত্রী  
কহিলেন রাজধানী মধ্যে এ প্রকার

অবিহিত ব্যাপার কি জন্য হইল,  
শজার নারী, নর, সন্তানাদি সহিত

রাজনগরে বাস করিতেছিল, মাং  
সাশ্রিতা অন্যান্য পূর্বক তাহার দিগে

র সুখ ধ্বংস করিয়াছে, এ পশুদ্বয় সু  
যোগ পাইলে ব্যাধগণকে ইহার প্র

তিফল দিবে, প্রবলেরা দুর্বল দিগে  
র অনিষ্ট করিলে দুর্বলেরাও অল

ক্ষিত রূপে প্রবল দিগের অনিষ্ট ক  
রিতে চেষ্টা পায় এবং কালক্রমে সু

কৌশল পরাক্রমে তাহা সুসিদ্ধও  
করে, ও কিশোর, ইহার এক উদাহ

রণ গ্রহণ কর ।

চম্পকারণ্যে অনেক শৃগাল বসতি  
করিত তাহার দিগের মধ্যে শৃগাল

দম্পতী পাষণ সকল উদ্ঘাটন পূর্ব  
ক এক বৃহৎ গর্ত করিয়াছিল, কাল

ক্রমে চতুর্দিগ হইতে মালতী লতা  
বিস্তারিত হইয়া এ গর্তের উপরি

ভাগ আচ্ছাদন করিল, তাহাতে এ  
মত মনোহর গৃহের ন্যায় হইয়াছি

ল বাড় জলেও উপদ্রব করিতে পা  
রিত না, গন্ধবহ কুমুদগন্ধসহ মন্দ

APPENDIX VII

## Portrait Gallery





Rāmmohan Rāy



Henry Vivian Derozio





Kāśīprasād Ghoṣ



John Elliot Drinkwater Bethune



Debendranāth Thākur



Iśvarcandra Vidyāsāgar





Alexander Duff



Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy



Iśvarcandra Gupta

ইস্বরচন্দ্র গুপ্তা

The Signature of Iśvarcandra Gupta.



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