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Visva-Bharati

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From the Office Desk

Dr. Dheeman Bhattacharyya

নূতন প্রাণ দাও, প্রাণসখা, আজি সুপ্রভাতে।।
বিষাদ সব করো দূর নবীন আনন্দে,
প্রাচীন রজনী নাশো নূতন উষালোকে।।

Based on raga Nachari touri, tala Dhamar, this Dhrupad anga song composed by young Rabindranath is a classic example of *Bhanga Gan* (derived from a different source and reshaped within a recipient culture). This lyrical reception resonates with the Vedic hymns which can be traced in several other songs of Rabindranath. This song is a prayer for a new life, new hope on a new dawn. *Subho Nobo Borsho!*

Hope matters. The Centre has remained afloat with this hope for the last ten years. Carca, the monthly lecture series organised by the centre was designed with this hope to interrogate and map the several interfaces of knowledge productions across the Bhavanas within Visva-Bharati. In this phase we had important presentations on Ankiya Naat or Ankiya Bhaona, the traditional dramatic representation of Assam, followed by a presentation on the interdisciplinarity in *Khuddur Jatra*, a curious case study in the field of literature and the other arts, a major thrust area of the Centre. We experienced the plausible intersections between language and culture in one of the Carca presentations, which could be related with the talks by Dr. Roberto Morales Harley and Rodolfo de Garcia Reynaldo on literary transactions, politics of dissemination of texts, repositioning the author as an intermediary and issues on literary fortune.

Several other events organised by the Centre cemented our faith in continuing with the work we have been doing collectively with our students – who have outnumbered their numbers in promoting the cause of the Centre over the years. We have been rigorously involved in designing a new syllabus for our MA course in Comparative Literature along the line with NEP. It will not be overambitious to claim that Comparative Literature will gain prominence as a discipline within Visva-Bharati in this new framework and subsequently embark on a new journey in India in the coming years with more than ten central universities inducting students in Comparative Literature through CUET this year. A roadmap has to be prepared for this renewed hope and visibility of a discipline which was always promising in a post-contact literary system but was overshadowed by other major players in the literary circuit for over sixty years. We have to keep our windows open to explore the doors ahead. This issue is edited by Dr. Nilanjana Bhattacharya.

Carca: Exercise in Comparativisms

Traditional Theatre of Assam

Ankana Bag



The first Carca (a monthly lecture series) session for the year of 2023 was hosted by the Centre for Comparative Literature, Visva-Bharati on January 20, 2023 where Professor Sangita Saikia of Department of Assamese, Bhasha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati delivered a lecture titled “The Journey of Ankiya Naat or Ankiya Bhaona: The Traditional Theatre of Assam”.

Dr. Saikia began the lecture by explaining the distinctions between Ankiya Naat (the text) and

Ankiya Bhaona (the performance of the text of Ankiya Naat). Ankiya Naat was introduced by Srimanta Sankardeva (1449-1568) who was a renowned Vaishnavite saint, poet-dramatist, philosopher and music composer. He traveled extensively and was familiar with the ongoing cultural trends at different provinces of India. Six texts attributed to him can be found at present. He was followed by many playwrights like Madhavdeva (his direct disciple), Gopal Ata, Ramcharan Thakur, and Deitari Thakur.

Dr. Saikia elaborated on the rich tradition of theatrical folk performances in Assam, including Ojapali, Api Oja, Putala nach, Bhasan jatra and Kusan gan. Srimanta Sankardeva was influenced by Oja pali and Putala nach which he imbibed in Ankiya Naat. He commenced a new tradition of Ankiya Naat through Chihnajatra. This particular performance did not have any dialogues, rather it consisted of the Sutradhar, use of musical instruments, masks, green room, as well as dances and songs. “Ankiya” was a new term that was coined by Srimanta Sankardeva’s followers and the composers of his *Charit puthi* (literature that ‘records’ his biographical details) to specify his special compositions which later became known as Ankiya Naat. Srimanta Sankardeva’s Ankiya Naat has only one act and is characterized by a serious tone, Rama or Krishna-centric narrative, and the presence of Brajabuli and Sanskrit words. He introduced prose with a poetic tempo for the first time in Assamese. The character of Vidushak is sometimes present in these performances to create a sentiment of mirth, whereas the Sutradhar acts as moderator between the audience and the actors.

The stage of Ankiya Naat is traditionally situated in the middle of the audience, which surrounds almost the entire stage, and the audience was mostly rural people. Srimanta Sankardeva’s legacy continued through other Ankiya Naat performances even after his demise. Gradually the focus of these performances shifted from religiosity to the entertainment of the masses. Dr. Saikia concluded the lecture by stating that while initially women did not take part in Bhaona as actors, the scenario has changed now and Ankiya Bhaona has spread to urban stages as well. The lecture was followed by an interactive session.

Understanding a Distinct Narrative Style: Through the Lens of “Kutum-Katam” and *Khuddur Jatra*

Avipsa Mukherjee



On the afternoon of February 28, 2023, the Centre for Comparative Literature was more than glad to have Dr. Soumik Nandy Majumdar, Assistant Professor at the Department of History of Art, Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, for the Carca session of the month. This session was titled "Cutting Across Expressions: The Curious Case of Abanindranath

Tagore", where he discussed Abanindranath Tagore's versatility as an artist, and how he channelised his curiosity, to usher in a distinct form of art, which essentially involves a narrative. He illustrated how many of Abanindranth's works included nuances and traits of his own self and his areas of interest. The main highlights of his lecture were how “Kutum-Katam” and *Khuddur Jatra* became institutions in themselves to understand these intricacies of Abanindranath. Both *Khuddur Jatra* and “Kutum-Katam” mirrored the predominant traits of Abanindranth Tagore’s nature, be it playful seeking or finding exciting aspects in unusual objects.

Abanindranath was not just keen on experimenting with stylistic crossovers, but also chose to go beyond the domain-specific art practices, drawing inspiration from multiple cultural sources. Abanindranath's works also showcased the complexity of representations, choosing “characters” as its medium of portrayal. Through the lens of “Kutum-Katam” and *Khuddur Jatra*, he introduced a possibility of incessant narratives, by either choosing to stop abruptly or by keeping them incomplete, only to introduce another narrative. Dr. Nandy Majumdar also focused on Abanindranath's conscious choice of selection, be it the selection of newspaper or magazine cut-outs, which are pasted across the pages of *Khuddur Jatra*, or the selection of pieces of wood, twigs etc for the structure of “Kutum-Katam”. What is intriguing is the thought behind the process of first creating the structure called “Kutum-Katam”, then characterising it and thus deploying a narrative through them expressing the fluidity of human emotions. This highlights the performative nature of Abanindranath as the “story teller”, his flexibility in thoughts regarding human emotions and his instinctive sense of visual discovery. “Kutum-Katam” was inevitably left incomplete without narrative and vice versa. Interestingly, Abanindranath, at times, chose to leave it incomplete, or willingly left lapses or suggested a narrative through gestures and not words.

The genius that Abanindranath Tagore was, and insights into the process that he opted for his works, provided a beaming closure to an engaging conversation and reciprocation of views amongst all the members of CCL.

Discussing Linguistic Terms from the Perspective of Anthropology

Sayantika Ghosh



The monthly lecture series, “Carca: Exercise in Comparativisms”, organised by the Centre for Comparative Literature had its speaker for the month of March 30, 2023, Dr. Sipoy Sarveswar, Assistant Professor, from the Department of Anthropology. The lecture was inaugurated by Dr. Soma Mukherjee from the Centre for Comparative Literature who went on to introduce Dr. Sarveswar and the topic for his talk, “Intersectionality of Language and Culture: Linguistic-Anthropological Analysis of Indian Terms for Rainbow and Group Formation”.

Dr. Sarveswar, while introducing his topic showed how linguistic terms function across cultures within the Indian context. While engaging in the discussion he mentioned that linguistic anthropology is one of the four specialisations of anthropology as it provides an insight of the society by dealing with a cross cultural analysis of terms. Language was an integral part of Dr. Sarveswar’s study as it helped understanding the society as a whole while acknowledging the linguistic differences and different perceptions of culturally significant terms. He then goes on to speak at length referring to the term rainbow and its synonyms in various languages, showing how culturally and linguistically non-identical they are. Many linguistic terms for rainbow have religious meanings attached to it, but having said that, he also highlighted how language politics and hegemony have marginalized certain indigenous terms that were not mainstream in nature. He further discussed terms associated with group formations and states, which differ based on their objective of formations. Such a study can shed light over the masculinity that gets reflected through the naming of these group formations.

The talk was concluded over a series of questions and thoughtful discussions where members from other departments also participated along with the students and faculty members from the Centre of Comparative Literature.

Invited Lectures

***The Mahabharata* in Costa Rica: A Lecture by Dr. Roberto Morales Harley**

Ishani Dutta



The Centre for Comparative Literature, Bhasha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati opened the month of February with a series of lectures, the first of which was on February 13, 2023 by Dr. Roberto Morales Harley (Director, Department of Philology, University of Costa Rica). The lecture was organised in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Costa Rica in India and Indo Hispanic Language Academy, coordinated by Dr. Nilanjana Bhattacharya. The event began with a song sung by the

students and faculty members of the Centre which was followed by the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Dr. Sabita Pradhan (Principal, Bhasha Bhavana, Visva Bharati). This was followed by her inaugural address and an address by Arijit Gangopadhyay from Indo Hispanic Language Academy, Kolkata.

Dr. Harley's lecture titled "*The Mahabharata* in Costa Rica: From Bookstores to Classrooms and Beyond" not only discussed the way *The Mahabharata* was received in Spanish in Costa Rica but also talked about his encounter with the Sanskrit language. He began the lecture by talking about the history of Costa Rica and colonisation since Costa Rica was a Spanish colony for more than 300 years. As to why *The Mahabharata* and why Costa Rica, Dr. Harley mentioned how the former is considered a masterpiece of world literature due to the complex themes that it touches upon as well as its episodic nature which according to him are individual poetic pieces in their own right. About the theme, he stressed on how the concepts of good and evil are very complicated in the *itihasa*. *The Mahabharata* was the first text in Sanskrit to reach Costa Rica. Before going on to the main body of the lecture, Dr. Harley talked about the two kinds of translations of *The Mahabharata* into Spanish – from Sanskrit directly into Spanish, and from Sanskrit first into other European languages and then into Spanish. He also took up several episodes from *The Mahabharata* such as that of Savitri or Amba which do not have a direct connection to the action of the *itihasa* but are yet important for its progression.

Apart from a discussion about the concept of *itihasa*, Dr. Harley also talked about how the contributions of Peter Brooks to the Spanish world cannot be refuted though he was criticised to a great extent for his Orientalism. This brought into light Peter Brook's play, "Battlefield", based on *The Mahabharata*. This also brought into focus a significant journal of Costa Rica in the twentieth century named *Repertorio Americano*. The lecture focussed on the key concepts of *dharma* (duty to oneself, one's family, and one's society which form the basis of life), *artha* (profit) and *kama* (desire) which are interconnected but can exist independently, unlike *The Iliad*, where each of these bases are co-dependent and cannot exist independently. Similarly, he also stressed on how the notion of transcendence in *The Iliad* comes up time and again but the concept of *moksha* does not exist in Greek epics.

The lecture concluded with an insight into the problems faced by Latin American Indologists since the twentieth century which makes *The Mahabharata* the most researched subject from Sanskrit literature in Costa Rica. Apart from Costa Rica, Argentina and Mexico are the other two Latin American countries researching to a great extent not only on Sanskrit literature but also on *The Mahabharata*. The day ended with a discussion in which the students of the Centre as well as faculty members from within and outside the Centre participated, followed by the *ashrama sangeet*. A recording of the lecture is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwK1RQ4gi-I>.



Coordinates of the Poetry of Rogelio Sinan: A Lecture by Rodolfo de Garcia Reynaldo

Sounak Dutta



The Centre for Comparative Literature, with the support of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Embassy of the Republic of Panama in India, arranged a lecture on February 20, 2023, by Rodolfo de Gracia Reynaldo on the poetry of Rogelio Sinán. The lecture, coordinated by Dr. Nilanjana Bhattacharya, was a part of the commemoration of 60 years of diplomatic relationship between India and Panama. The speaker currently serves as the Academic Secretary of the

Panamanian Academy of Languages and exhibited specific expertise on the topic. The lecture was structurally a unique one for the Centre as, for the very first time, there was a live interpretation of the Spanish language to English for the audience. Dr. Nilanjana Bhattacharya successfully adapted to the role of a language mediator in both ways, and the audience was quite responsive to this whole new attempt. The event began with the traditional inaugural rituals of Visva-Bharati.

The speaker quoted Octavio Paz to discuss his understanding of the poet's relationship with society, the narrative of "poetic speech" and discourse. A poet can transcend the mechanism of material functioning and be an observer. After introducing the subject, the speaker carried on his discussion of Rogelio Sinán and the avant-garde movement. He also informed that Sinán was the initiator of the Panamanian avant-garde. The incorporation of Panama with the Latin American avant-garde happened in 1929 through Sinán's *Onda*. Critical analysis got merged with the greater Spanish literature during the next few years.

The Fire by Sinán became a point of departure in the discussion to ensure the poet's versatility. Panic, agony, and prayer were the three components of Sinán's poems in the collection. Plurality and humanitarian values made Sinán a representative of World Literature, and the speaker quoted from several poems. The poet aimed to achieve the conclusive transparency of human beings during his literary career. The speaker showed some pictures of Rogelio Sinán from his years in India.



Other delegates, Ms. Minakshi Mishra from the ICCR, and Señor José Antonio Fraiz from the Embassy of the Republic of Panama, also shared their inputs. There was a healthy post-lecture discussion where language did not remain a barrier. The event ended on a collaborative note with the chorus presentation of the *ashrama sangeet*, followed by tea and refreshments. The students of the Centre played a significant role in making this event successful.

A recording of the lecture is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIUqsknfCs0>

Research Scholar's Talk by Edu Sherpa

Antara Singha



On April 11, 2023, Edu Sherpa, PhD scholar of the Centre for Comparative Literature, delivered a talk focused on an aspect of her research work, "Problematizing Indian Nepali Literature through the study of Periodicals from 1900-1950". She started with the history of Nepali Literature and Indian Nepali Literature and how both literary traditions are different. Her work traced the oral tradition of various lyrical compositions in Nepali Literature and how in the early twentieth century print culture created a major shift in the literary genres. She then focused on the two important centres, Darjeeling and Banaras, where Indian Nepali literature flourished. Banaras' periodicals were written in a Sanskritised Nepali

language whereas the periodicals from Darjeeling were written in a colloquial Nepali language. She focused on the shared traditions and interactions between the two contact points rather than dissecting the differences and similarities. After this, she showed a detailed catalogue comprising details of the periodicals and asked for inputs which will aid her work. The teachers and students appreciated the work and the talk ended with a detailed discussion between professors and students.

Book Review

Restless Waters of the Ichhamati
Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay
 Translated by Rimli Bhattacharya
 Rupa Publications, 2018
 Price: 495/-

সুপর্ণা মণ্ডল

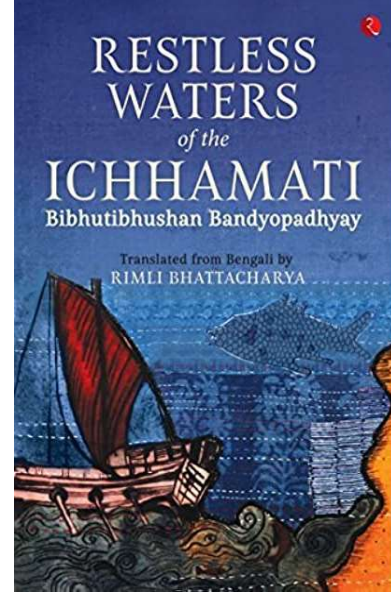
নদীমাতৃক দেশ এই বঙ্গভূমি। নদীকে কেন্দ্র করে প্রবহমান জীবনধারা বাংলা কথাসাহিত্যে বারংবার উঠে এসেছে। বিভূতিভূষণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের *ইছামতী* (১৯৫০) এমনই একটি উপন্যাস। রিমলি ভট্টাচার্যের এই অনুবাদটি সম্ভবত এই উপন্যাসের দ্বিতীয় ইংরেজি অনুবাদ। তবে অনুবাদকের স্বাতন্ত্র্যের ছাপ যে কোন অনুবাদ গ্রন্থের অভিনবত্বের পরিচায়ক হতে পারে। এখানেও তার ব্যতিক্রম ঘটেনি।

বিভূতিভূষণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের জীবৎকালে প্রকাশিত শেষ উপন্যাস *ইছামতী*। জন্মভূমি যশোর জেলার *ইছামতী* নদী তীরবর্তী এই অঞ্চলকে নিয়ে উপন্যাস রচনার ইচ্ছা অনেক আগে থেকেই তিনি প্রকাশ করেছিলেন তাঁর দিনলিপিতে। ১৯৪৭ সালে *অভ্যুদয়* পত্রিকায় ধারাবাহিকভাবে উপন্যাসটি প্রকাশিত হতে শুরু করে। উপন্যাসের প্রেক্ষাপট হিসাবে তিনি বেছে নিয়েছিলেন ঊনবিংশ শতকের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধে নীলকর সাহেবদের আমলকে। মোল্লাহাটির নীলকুঠি ও পাঁচপোতা গ্রামের অধিবাসীরা এই উপন্যাসে মুখ্য ভূমিকা পালন করে। সেই সঙ্গে নদীয়া থেকে আগত কুলীন ব্রাহ্মণ ভবানী বাঁড়ুয়োর এই গ্রামের তিন বোনকে বিবাহ এবং সংসার স্থাপন উপন্যাসের গতিপথ নির্ধারিত করে।

রিমলি ভট্টাচার্যের অনুবাদে প্রথমেই যে বিষয়টি আমাদের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করে তা হল নামকরণ। ২০১২ সালে প্যাপিরাস থেকে প্রকাশিত অরুণ রুদ্রের ইংরেজি অনুবাদে বাংলা নামটি পরিবর্তন করা হয়নি। কিন্তু বর্তমান অনুবাদে “Restless Waters” এই শব্দগুচ্ছ যোগ করা হয়েছে। *ইছামতী* নদীর সঙ্গে পরিচিত নন এমন পাঠকের কাছে একটি প্রাথমিক প্রতীতি দিতে পারে এই নামকরণ। প্রথম পৃষ্ঠায় অনুবাদক ও লেখকের সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিচয়ের পর সংযোজিত হয়েছে যশোর অঞ্চলের একটি মানচিত্র। এই মানচিত্রের মাধ্যমে উপন্যাসের ভৌগোলিক অবস্থান আরো সুস্পষ্ট হয়ে ওঠে।

মূল উপন্যাসের ইংরেজি অনুবাদ ছাড়াও এই গ্রন্থের শুরুতে একটি ভূমিকা অংশ এবং শেষে অনুবাদকের টিপ্পনি ও শব্দকোষ রয়েছে। ভূমিকা অংশে অনুবাদকের পক্ষ থেকে *ইছামতী* উপন্যাসের একটি সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিচয় দেওয়া হয়েছে। লেখকের জন্মভূমি বারাকপুর গ্রামের স্মৃতির সঙ্গে কিভাবে জড়িয়ে আছে এই উপন্যাসের বুনন, তা এই অংশে তুলে ধরার চেষ্টা করেছেন অনুবাদক। বঙ্গদেশের ইতিহাসের একটি বিশেষ কালপর্ব নিয়ে রচিত হলেও এই উপন্যাসটি যে ঐতিহাসিক উপন্যাস রূপে নিজেই প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে চায়নি সে বিষয়েও আলোকপাত করেছেন তিনি। জাতি, বর্ণ, শ্রেণী ইত্যাদি বিষয় কিভাবে তৎকালীন সমাজকে চালনা করত তাও এই উপন্যাসে লক্ষ করা যায়। এছাড়া অনুবাদক আলোচ্য ভূমিকা অংশে *ইছামতী* উপন্যাসে নারীদের অবস্থান নিয়েও সংক্ষিপ্ত আলোচনা করেছেন। এ বিষয়ে তিনি বিভূতিভূষণের সীমাবদ্ধতার দিকগুলিও দেখাতে ভোলেননি। নীলচামের প্রসঙ্গে বিভূতিভূষণের ঐতিহাসিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির প্রমাণ এই আলোচনায় উঠে এসেছে। তাছাড়া দুটি পৃথক সংস্কৃতির মধ্যে লিঙ্গ ও জাতিগত বিভেদের জাঁতাকলে পড়ে গয়ামেমের মতো বাগদী রমণীর পরিণতির কথাও এখানে আলোচিত হয়েছে।

মূল উপন্যাসের অনুবাদটি সার্বিকভাবে সুখপাঠ্যই বলা যায়। বাংলায় উপভাষাগত পার্থক্যগুলি ইংরেজিতেও এক রকম ভাবে ফুটিয়ে তোলার চেষ্টা করেছেন অনুবাদক। অনেক সময় ইংরেজি শব্দের বানানের বিকল্প প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে

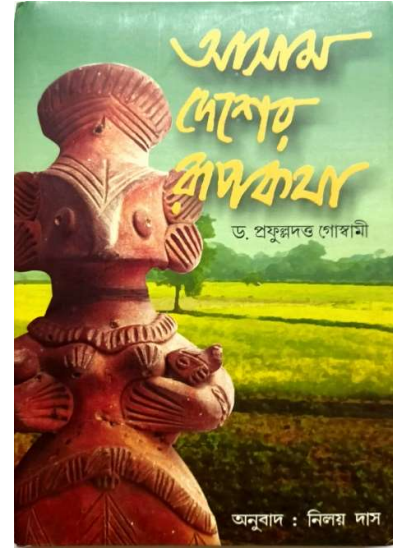


কখনভঙ্গির বৈচিত্র সূচিত হয়েছে। অনুবাদকের টিপ্পনি অংশেও এ বিষয়ে অনুবাদকের সচেতনতার ব্যাপারে জানতে পারি আমরা। সম্বন্ধ বা সম্বোধনসূচক শব্দ, বাংলার ঋতু ও মাসের নাম, গাছপালা ও পাখির নাম, জমি সংক্রান্ত পরিভাষা ইত্যাদি কিছু বিষয় মূলের সঙ্গে অপরিবর্তিত রাখা হয়েছে। এর মধ্যে কিছু শব্দের অর্থ “Glossary” বা শব্দকোষ অংশে যুক্ত করা হয়েছে। এই বাহ্যিক শব্দকোষ ছাড়াও প্রসঙ্গবিশেষে উপন্যাসের মধ্যেও আভ্যন্তরীণ ব্যাখ্যা দিয়েছেন অনুবাদক। উপন্যাসে উদ্ধৃত সংস্কৃত শ্লোকগুলির ক্ষেত্রে এই দৃষ্টান্ত দেখা যায়। তবে চিড়ে, মুড়ি, পান্তা, অন্নপ্রাশন ইত্যাদি কিছু শব্দ ইংরেজিতে আক্ষরিক অনুবাদ করেছেন অনুবাদক, যা হয়তো না করলেও হত। “Glossary” অংশটি সংক্ষিপ্ত, বিষয়ের ভিত্তিতে কয়েকটি ভাগে বিভক্ত। প্রথমেই রয়েছে “Calendar” অংশ যেখানে বাংলা মাসের হিসাবগুলি গ্রেগরিয়ান ক্যালেন্ডারের অনুসারে দেওয়া আছে। পরের অংশে সম্বন্ধ বা সম্বোধনসূচক শব্দের ব্যাখ্যা। এরপর “Measurements” অংশে উপন্যাসে উল্লিখিত বাংলার প্রথাগত মাপজোকের পরিভাষাগুলির বিবরণ রয়েছে। এরপর একটি সাধারণ শব্দকোষ যেখানে নানাবিধ শব্দের অর্থ সংযোজিত। সবশেষে রয়েছে ধর্মীয় ও দার্শনিক শব্দের ব্যাখ্যা। সমগ্র “Glossary” অংশেই খুব সংক্ষেপে সহজবোধ্য ভাবে প্রতিটি শব্দের ব্যাখ্যা করা হয়েছে। তবে বিষয়গত বিভাজন না করে একটি সার্বিক বর্ণানুক্রমিক সূচি করা যেত কিনা সে বিষয়েও ভাবনার অবকাশ থেকে যায়।

রূপা পাবলিকেশনস থেকে প্রকাশিত এই বইটির প্রচ্ছদচিত্র অঙ্কন করেছেন লাভণ্য মণি। নদীর প্রবহমানতার প্রেক্ষিতে চলমান জীবন যেন অন্য মাত্রা পেয়েছে এই প্রচ্ছদচিত্রের পশ্চৎপটে কাঁথাফোঁড়ের গতিময়তায়। বইটি মুদ্রণ এবং বৈদ্যুতিন দুই মাধ্যমেই উপলব্ধ।

Assam Desher Rupkotha
Dr. Prafulla Dutta Goswami
 Translated by Niloy Das
 Department of Assamese
 Visva-Bharati
 Price: ₹ 125/-

Shambhabee Bose



Dr. Prafulla Dutta Goswami has penned over 70 books on the language, literature and folk culture in Assam both in English and Assamese, and this book also talks about the interesting world of legends, myths and fairy tales in the land of undivided Assam. Through the tales, the reader will get a glimpse of the conventional belief systems, traditions, social life, language and culture of the various indigenous communities inhabiting the north-east of India. The book tries to bring out how the age-old beliefs, legends and myths still exist in twenty-first century life and how the tales have been interwoven within the fabric of the very conscience and speech system of the people of Assam.

The book, being a compilation of numerous legends and fairy tales from different regions of undivided Assam is sectioned into eleven parts each pertaining to the popular fairy tales of that particular region. These tales sometimes evoke a certain humour, some are witty, some are didactic in nature and others carry markers of the belief systems of the different communities of this region. It can be said that this book is an honest attempt at compiling and bringing forth the less common stories of the people which somehow connect the readers to the roots of what undivided Assam was and how the people lived their lives.

It is interesting how these legends have an overlapping quality which suggests a point of intersection and reception. The illustrations by Professor Rishi Barua, Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati add a new dimension to the enjoyable reading of the book. The book being intended to

be read by young readers to enlighten them about the rich folk culture of undivided Assam serves its purpose by providing an in-depth knowledge of different legends, their origin and well researched backgrounds. Along with being a thoroughly entertaining read, as a reader of the translated text, it reminded me of my afternoons with my grandmother, idling in the veranda and listening to her stories. It invokes the feeling of nostalgia and makes the reader reminisce about not only the legends being talked about but also their own folk tales, fairy tales and stories that connect them to their past, irrespective of the barriers of time, location or language.

My sole point of discontent comes from the cover of the book. The cover of any book being a brief review itself must contain something that catches the eye of the reader or provide a wink of what the content is about, but in spite of brilliant illustrations throughout the book, the cover keeps something to be desired.

The book aims to connect the readers back to their roots, emphasising on the language, style and culture of the people of northeast India, of undivided Assam, and it does achieve it to a certain level. Such sincere attempts in reconnecting to one's past and bringing light to the stories of the unheard are genuinely commendable and rewarding.

Other Departmental Activities

Celebrating International Mother Language Day

Anushree Das



On February 21, 2023, the International Mother Language Day was celebrated by the students and teachers of Centre for Comparative Literature, Visva-Bharati. The programme started off with the opening song "Ora amar mukher bhasha kaira nite chai" performed by Suparna Mondal, Sayantika Ghosh, Tanushree Basak, Anushree Das, and Sumon De. After that Sumon De and Tanushree Basak each recited a poem. Then Edu Sherpa, a Senior Research Fellow of the Centre, enthralled the audience by her mellifluous Nepali song. Another research scholar Suparna Mondal recited her own Bangla

translation of a poem by Alok Dhanwa. After that Arnab Das recited a poem. Another group of students, Antara Singha, Shambhabee Bose, and Shubham Bhaumik sang a song together. Sounak Dutta regaled all with his reading of "Boi Kena" by Syed Mujtaba Ali. The programme ended with Ankana Bag's recitation of Japanese poems known as "Waka" and Purnima Singh's recitation of another Bangla poem. The whole programme was hosted by none other than Shambhabee Bose from Masters second year.

Among the professors, Dheeman Bhattacharyya graced the occasion with a rendition of a Rabindra Sangeet. Soma Mukherjee gave comic relief by reading out a small piece from Parashuram. Nilanjana Bhattacharya raised a very important point about the connotation of the word "Matribhasha".

Celebrating International Women's Day

Rina Biswas



The International Women's Day celebration at the Centre for Comparative Literature, Visva-Bharati, was held with immense zeal on March 8, 2023. Professors and students across the various batches were present there. This year the students arranged a screening of the film *Devi*, directed by Satyajit Ray for the celebration. Before the screening of the film, Suparna Mondal, a research scholar or CCL, introduced the film. After the screening of the film, there was a discussion. Dr. Dheeman Bhattacharya talked about the history and significance of Women's Day across the world, and Dr. Soma Mukherjee discussed how the very idea of "labour" is associated with "womanhood". Thereafter, students of the Centre took part in this conversation and several crucial areas were brought up throughout the discussion.

The film *Devi* is based on the worship of a woman as an incarnation of a goddess. Suparna Mondal highlighted how women were deified while being deprived of their basic human rights. Another research scholar, Ankana Bag mentioned a Hindi movie, named *Stree* which was based on a similar theme. Her discussion also included the second wave of feminist theory which emphasised on various different identities of women and how these identities had encountered each other in contemporary socio-political context. Keeping the discussion of economy and commercialisation in mind, Dr. Dheeman Bhattacharyya shared his opinion on how mercantile economy is linked to Women's Day celebration.

গান্ধী পুণ্যাহ উদযাপন

তনুশ্রী বসাক

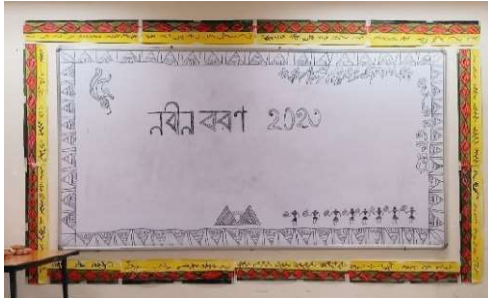


বিগত বছরগুলির ন্যায় এবছরও মার্চ ১০, ২০২৩, তুলনামূলক সাহিত্য কেন্দ্রে গান্ধী পুণ্যাহ পালন করা হয়। ১৯১৫ সালে এই দিন মহাত্মা গান্ধী বিশ্বভারতীতে তাঁর প্রয়োগমূলক শিক্ষার আদর্শ প্রচারের জন্য শিক্ষক, ছাত্রছাত্রী, কর্মীবৃন্দ সকলকে নিয়ে আশ্রমের পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্নতা সহ যাবতীয় সব কাজ নিজের হাতে করার ব্রত প্রদান করেছিলেন। যেখানে তাঁর প্রতিষ্ঠিত ফিনিক্স স্কুলের ছাত্ররাও ছিল। এই ব্রত বিষয়ে তিনি তাঁর

আত্মজীবনীতেও উল্লেখ করেছেন। নিজের কাজ নিজে করার যে স্বাবলম্বী ব্রতানুষ্ঠান সেই ১৯১৫ সাল থেকেই পালন করা হয়। এই দিন বিশ্বভারতীর অন্যান্য বিভাগের মতো তুলনামূলক সাহিত্য কেন্দ্রেও ছাত্রছাত্রী ও অধ্যাপকেরা মিলিতভাবে শ্রেণীকক্ষ ও অফিসঘরগুলি পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্ন করেন।

Freshers' Welcome at CCL

Edu Sherpa



On March 3, 2023, the present MA second year students organised Freshers' Welcome for the new MA batch of 2022. The inaugural session began with a Rabindra Sangeet performed by the students. After that, we witnessed the traditional ceremony of *Nabin Baran*, a welcoming gesture for guests or newcomers at Visva-Bharati.

The programme proceeded forward by various performances by the students of the department. Suparna Mondal, a PhD Research scholar of the Centre recited a poem. Arnotri Majumdar, a second year MA student performed a spectacular dance. Then, another performance followed by a Nepali song by Edu Sherpa. Arnab Das, a MPhil scholar also recited an engaging poem for all. Purnima Singh also performed a dance. After that, another group song was sung by the students of the Centre.

Later noteworthy performances were added when our professors performed for the day. Our multi-talented Teacher-in-Charge Dr. Dheeman Bhattacharyya performed two songs. The freshers program concluded with performances by some of our first year MA students. Above all, the day was a retreat for all of us.

Students' Achievements

- Md. Arif Uddin Mondal (MPhil 2019-2021) joined as an Assistant Professor at Department of English and Literary Studies, Brainware University, on February 1, 2023
- Ujaan Pal Chowdhury (MA 2020-2022) joined as an Associate Instructional Designer at LearningMate on October 6, 2022.
- Snigdha Roy (MA 2020-2022) joined India Spelling Bee as an Executive Content Editor on February 20, 2023.
- Santu Mukherjee (MA 2020-2022) joined All India Radio Shantiniketan as a Broadcast Assistant in March 2022.
- Sourya Chowdhury (MA 2020-2022) joined as an Academic Researcher at Royal Research in November, 2022.
- Anushree Das (MA 2022-2024) has received the Post Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship Scheme for single girl child.
- Tanushree Basak, Suman De and Sayantika Ghosh (MA 2022-2024) have received the Swami Vivekananda Merit Cum Means Scholarship for the year 2022-24.
- Suparna Mondal PhD student was invited to present her poems at the Anyatra Literary Festival organised by Anyatra Magazine on January 29, 2023, at Nibhrita Purnima Natyagram, Shantiniketan.

Ongoing Research Works

- Ishani Dutta: Of Recitals and Performances: Reading New Modes of Representation in Contemporary Indian Nepali Poetry in the Darjeeling Hills and Sikkim (2000- 2022)
- Sounak Dutta: Translation-based Reception of the 'Soviet' in Bengali Literature in the Post- World War II Era (1945-1965)
- Mrityika Ghosh: Contextualising the 'Canon' and 'Periphery': Historicising the Works of Select Nigerian Women Writers (1960 - 2020)
- Ankana Bag: Exploring Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism: The 'Travel Writings' (1942-52) of Ramnath Biswas
- Edu Sherpa: The Rise of the Indian Nepali Periodicals: A Historiography from 1900-1950
- Subham Bhaumik: Intermedial and Audio-visual Translation in Literary Studies: English Subtitles in Satyajit Ray's film adaptations of Rabindranath's *Noshto Nirh* and *Ghare Baire*
- Arnab Das: Reading Interactive Fiction: Production and Reception

Students' Publications

Chowdhury, Narayan. "Rabindranath, Vivekananda and Gandhi." Translated by Ishani Dutta and Sneha Karak, *Mahatma Gandhi in Bangla*, edited by Indranil Acharya, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2022, pp. 429-44.

Thakur, Kapil Krishna. "The Tale of Ujantali". Translated by Ishani Dutta and Sankha Ghosh, *Janajati Darpan*, Volume 9, December 2022, pp. 51-74.

Faculty Members' Publications

Bhattacharya, Nilanjana. "Genre and Gender: A Reading of *Mṛcchakaṭikam*". *Śūdraka's Mṛcchakaṭikam: A Reader*, edited by Saptarshi Mallick, Birutjatiyo, 2022, pp. 26-41.

Tumulayan: Call for Submissions

Edu Sherpa and Suparna Mondal

The students of the Centre for Comparative Literature, Visva-Bharati have been publishing *Tumulayan*, their annual literary initiative for the past seven years on the occasion of Anandabazar. The upcoming issue of *Tumulayan* will engage with the idea of ‘leisure’. The term “leisure” means a free time or time taken outside of work; to relax, refresh and enjoy. Leisure can be considered in three primary ways: leisure as time, leisure as activity, and leisure as state of mind. In today's world of hustle culture and capitalist economy, having some leisure time seems to be a luxury rather than a basic human right. In “Right Leisure: Serious, Casual, or Project” sociologist Robert A Stebbins, differentiated among three kinds of leisure which are casual leisure, serious leisure, and project-based leisure. Thus, leisure can be perceived as a completely free time or an opportunity to do something other than work.

However, the idea of leisure varies from person to person depending on class, caste, gender and so on. In the case of literature, there can be two ways of discussion, leisure as depicted in literature, and literature as a product of leisure. Historically, leisure has also been associated with the act of reading. In more recent times, the advent of the internet and New Media has impacted how we perceive leisure in our day-to-day life. Therefore, we look forward to exploring these diverse aspects of leisure in this issue.

The sub-themes can explore the following areas (but are not limited to):

- Literature and leisure
- Leisure and contemplation
- Serious leisure
- Women and leisure
- Relationship of class and caste with leisure
- Leisure activities in different cultures
- Leisure reading
- Leisure and disability

We invite original, unpublished thoughts on the idea and the variety of leisure and literary productivities. You may write in any of the following languages – English, Bangla, Nepali, Hindi, Japanese, Sanskrit, French, Spanish, and Russian. The word limit should not exceed 600 words. The publication of the works is subject to the selection of the Review Committee. If selected, authors will be contacted.

Please send your contributions along with a short bio-note in a single word document to tumulayancl@gmail.com. The last date of submission is July 31, 2023.

তু.মু.লায়ন : লেখা আহ্বান

নিরুদ্যম অবকাশ শূন্য শুধু,

শান্তি তাহা নয়-

যে কর্মে রয়েছে সত্য

তাহাতে শান্তির পরিচয়।

বিগত সাত বছর যাবৎ বিশ্বভারতীর তুলনামূলক সাহিত্য কেন্দ্রের শিক্ষার্থীরা আনন্দবাজারের সময় তাদের বার্ষিক সাহিত্য পত্রিকা *তু.মু.লায়ন* প্রকাশ করেছে। *তু.মু.লায়ন*-এর পরবর্তী সংখ্যার বিষয় 'অবকাশ'। কর্মের অপরিহার্য অঙ্গ হিসাবে অবকাশ আসে। কিন্তু এই অবকাশও সকলের জন্য একরকম নয়। উপরে উদ্ধৃত রবীন্দ্রনাথের 'স্কুলিঙ্গ' কাব্যগ্রন্থের কবিতাটিতে আমরা দেখি যে অবকাশের ধারণার মধ্যে তিনি আলস্যকে প্রশ্রয় দিতে চাননি। অবকাশের এই ধারণাটির পাশাপাশি নিছক বিনা কাজের সময় যাপনের গুরুত্বকেও অবহেলা করা যায় না। পুঁজিবাদী অর্থনীতিতে 'হাসল্ কালচার'-এর নাম দিয়ে অতিরিক্ত পরিমাণে কাজ করাকে স্বাভাবিকীকরণের চেষ্টা চলছে যা মানুষের শারীরিক ও মানসিক স্বাস্থ্যের উপর খারাপ প্রভাব ফেলছে।

শিল্প-সাহিত্যের ক্ষেত্রে অবকাশকে দুই ভাবে দেখা যায়- শিল্প-সাহিত্যে অবকাশের চিত্রণ এবং অবকাশের ফলাফল রূপে সৃষ্ট শিল্প-সাহিত্য। এমনকি, সাহিত্য পাঠের সঙ্গেও অবকাশের প্রাচীন সম্পর্ক রয়েছে। বর্তমান যুগে আন্তর্জালের সার্বজনীন উপস্থিতি অবকাশের ধারণাকে অন্যভাবে দেখার সুযোগ করে দিয়েছে।

নিম্নলিখিত বিষয়গুলি অবলম্বন করে লেখা পাঠাতে পারেন (তবে এর মধ্যেই সীমাবদ্ধ নয়)-

- সাহিত্য ও অবকাশ
- নারীদের অবকাশ
- অবকাশের সঙ্গে শ্রেণি ও জাতির সম্পর্ক
- বিভিন্ন সংস্কৃতিতে অবকাশ যাপনের পদ্ধতি
- অবসরকালীন পাঠ
- প্রতিবন্ধকতা ও অবকাশ
- চিন্তা ও মননের অবকাশ

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