

# TAMILNADU-BENGAL CULTURAL RELATIONS



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Dr. Ranganayaki Mahapatra

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**International Institute of Tamil  
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# FOREWORD

Departments of literature these days are being enriched by inter-disciplinary seminars because, in India literature still forms the major or sometimes even the only source material for the study of subjects like religion, philosophy, culture, history and even politics. Studies in Tamil literature involve not only other Dravidian languages, but also other Indian languages—Tamil being one of the two most ancient languages of India and also one of the most modern.

Relationships between Bengal and Tamil Nadu have been deeper than what appear on the surface. It is not only the freedom struggle of the past decades that knitted them together in matters political, social and literary movements but their ties are as old as history itself. It was felt that study of the various links between peoples of the two regions would not only throw light on their mutual relationships but also on the ways in which they had contributed to a common 'Indian culture' which has been taking shape over the centuries and that in a dynamic way.

It is a matter of satisfaction to note that our Department of Modern Indian Languages has been able to bring together in a seminar, as a part of its Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, eminent men and scholars whose contributions to the subject have been of great importance. It is hoped that bringing out these contributions in the form of a book would be of considerable help to scholars in the field.

S. K. Bhattacharya,  
Vice-Chancellor,  
University of Calcutta.

November 11, 1987.



# PREFACE

This book comprises many valuable contributions by scholars of both Tamil Nadu and Bengal on the inter-linking cultural and other relationships between two highly progressive States of India. It gives me therefore great pleasure writing this short preface.

The collected papers published herein deal with the many and multifarious inter-linking factors such as poetry, drama, novel and folk-art which should enable future build-up of mutual relationships on the strength of something abiding and beneficial.

These collected papers cover wide ranges in the fields of culture mainly, but the influence of stalwarts such as Rabindranath Tagore on modern Tamil literary growth cannot be underestimated. I am sure this publication will be the harbinger of things that will unite not merely Bengal and Tamil Nadu but all other States of the Indian Union for whom India's culture has been from time immemorial the most unifying force because it transcended all parochialism.

Aurobindo and Tagore have left something lasting on the Indian mind in the same way they have on peoples of the world. Inter-cultural relationships where it comes to India have never presented difficulties though politically there may have been conflicts. This is because the culture of India was never politically conceived. What we see today as the predominant role of politics in contemporary life is something alien to India's ancient tradition based on something more abiding than political parties and alliances which only seek power through aggression and appeal to the animal in man.

It is therefore fitting that this publication, being the first of the kind, will pave the way for something that will make India's scholars the bridge-builders in the true sense of India's unity and integrity.

It seems appropriate to quote Rabindranath Tagore's famous poem from 'Gitanjali'. He evoked the proper attitude and inspiration needed for a people's liberation. He said :

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,

Where knowledge is free,

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments  
by narrow domestic walls,

Where words come out from the depth of truth,

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards  
perfection

Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-  
widening thought and action,

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my  
country awake!”

I wish to state that this publication has been made possible only due to the ready and willing support of the Governing Council of the International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras. The Hon. Education Minister, Mr. C. Pon-naiyan as Chairman of the Governing Council, has graciously sanctioned Rs. 10,000/- to enable the publication of these collected papers in one volume.

Finally, our thanks are also due to the Hon. Finance Minister Mr. V.R. Nedunchezhiyan, who has been constantly encouraging the activities of this Institute.

December 4, 1987

Dr. A.N. Perumal

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Calcutta University, besides being one of the oldest Universities of India, is also the first to introduce vernacular studies even during the British regime. Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, a great visionary, humanist and pioneer in the field of education, and one of the Vice-Chancellors of Calcutta University, fought for the introduction of the study of Indian languages in the Calcutta University curriculum. His emphasis on the language studies was to promote national integration. As a result, a Post-Graduate student in Bengali, for example, had to study the History of Literature and Language of any one of the South Indian languages like Tamil, Telugu or Malayalam for 200 marks (2 papers). This arrangement lasted upto 1941, but was given up in the new curriculum after the World War.

The study of Tamil in Post-Graduate and higher research level was introduced, thanks to the initiation of the Tamil Nadu Govt. and U.G.C.'s assistance, creating the Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathi Chair in Tamil. Organisations like the Bharathi Tamil Sangam of Calcutta, which have been playing the role of Cultural Ambassadors of Tamil Nadu have continuously been striving to persuade both the Governments for such a facility for higher studies in Tamil.

The Tamil Section for Post-Graduate and Research was formally inaugurated on 5th March, 1979, under Modern Indian Languages of the Calcutta University, which also includes the Bengali Department. As part of Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the Modern Indian Languages Department, a Tamil-Bengali Symposium was planned, which is finally taking a shape now.

The Tamil Department has been overwhelmed by the rich material that has been brought to light by the very valuable and original contributions of the participants, in the fields of literature, religion and social movements. The organisers' request to the scholars for original contributions on comparative basis have been very warmly responded.

To top it, The International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras, which mooted the idea of a joint venture of this type years ago, bags all the credit for making this symposium a fruitful effort, by publishing the research papers in the form of a book. The Tamil Department of Calcutta University is very grateful for



this gesture of warm collaboration, which would take the achievements of this symposium to scholars in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere. It is indeed a great occasion for the young Tamil Department to host this joint venture, which is significantly held in the Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad of Calcutta, which promotes the cause of all the Indian Languages.

The symposium committee is indebted to Dr. Santosh Kumar Bhattacharya, the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, for his kind co-operation at every step and feels honoured by the foreword he has given to the symposium volume.

Our heartfelt thanks are due to the eminent scholars of Tamil Nadu and Bengal, each an authority in his own field, who have kindly contributed to this symposium.

We wish to thank Dr. C. Balasubramanian, Professor and Head of the Tamil Department of the Madras University, Dr. T.B. Siddhalingaiah, Prof. & Head of the Saiva Siddhanta Department of Madurai Kamaraj University and the first Professor of the Tamil Department, Calcutta University and Dr. A.N. Perumal, Director, International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras - the joint sponsor of the symposium for their contributions on Tamil literature.

Our colleagues and eminent academicians of the Bengali Department, Prof. Dr. Asit Kumar Bandyopadhyay - Former Head of the Bengali Department, and Dr. Subhas Bannerji, Secretary, Calcutta University College of Arts and Commerce deserve our warmest thanks for their papers on certain aspect of Modern Bengali Literature.

As for the other participants who have dealt with the various areas of Tamil Bengali collaboration - the central theme of the seminar, Prof. Dr. Ranganayaki Mahapatra's paper summarizes the various aspects that link Tamil Nadu and Bengal and hopes to arouse, the interest in the studies of the East India's relationship with the South.

Sri T. N. Senapathi, the veteran Tamil scholar and translator of Bengali works, gives a touching account of the Tamil Bengali collaboration and brings to light, for the first time perhaps, Sri Rabindranath Tagore's verse which he presented personally to Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer, in his house at Madras.

Sri P. S. Mani of Madras, eminent researcher and writer, who has already made himself a name by his studies of the Ramakrishna Movement in Tamil Nadu gives an authentic account of the part played by Tamil Nadu in welcoming and strengthening every political and social movement born in Bengal that was shaping the modern India.

Professor Sankari Prasad Bose of the Bengali Department, Calcutta University, who won the prestigious award for his life history of Vivekananda has kindly permitted us to make use of certain portions from his book which shows the bond between Sri Vivekananda and his devoted disciple Sri Alasinga Perumal.

Sri M. Ramaswami of Calcutta, journalist gives a refreshing account of Sri Subramanya Bharathi and Sri Rabindranath Tagore. As one who is well versed in both Tamil and Bengali, his comparison of the two Mahakavis is most absorbing.

Sri. S. Krishnamurthi of Calcutta an established writer and translator of modern Bengali works and also winner of the Rabindra Puraskar of the West Bengal Government for his book on Nazrul and Bharati, introduces Nazrul, the rebel poet of Bengal to the Tamil world in his paper.

Sri. M. Srinivasan, former President of Bharathi Tamil Sangam, Calcutta, explores the close association of Bharathi and Sri. Aurobindo, the two great poets, patriots and philosophers of India.

Miss. Sukla Chakrabarty, Research Assistant of the Tamil Department, Calcutta University, brings out the deep involvement Sri. Aurobindo had with Tamil language and literature, an area not much publicized.

We are most fortunate again to register the participation of Sri Sri Yati Maharaj, General Secretary of the Gaudiya Mutts in India, an eminent scholar, who explores the links Lord Sri Chaitanya of Bengal had with Tamil Nadu.

Dr. Pranava Ranjan Ghosh, of the Bengali Department, presents a paper on Sri Chaitanya, which very well explains the hold Sri Chaitanya has on the Indian people.

The symposium committee expresses its warmest gratitude to all these dedicated scholars for helping this symposium to achieve its aims, of striving towards a closer understanding of the mutual interest and co-operation that has always existed between the different peoples of our country for centuries which deserves all publicity and acknowledgements.

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# NOVEL AND SHORT STORIES IN TAMIL LANGUAGE OF POST INDEPENDENT PERIOD

C. BALASUBRAMANIAN,

## SALUTATION :

Respected President of the meet, Esteemed members of the Diamond Jubilee Committee of the Bengali Department, and Brothers and Sisters of Calcutta! At the outset, I offer my warmest kotoes to all the scholars of Academic Adamantine Lustre with idea density of Bengal on this solemon occasion. I feel honoured to be in the midst of the bridge builders of Indian Culture and nurture.

**About Bengal:** It will not be an eulogy when I say, that the state of West Bengal is an artesian well from where the fountains and geysers of Philosophy, art, literature and science sprouted. I shall be selling Refrigerators to Eskimoes if I dilate upon the long distance and intimate popularity of Rabindranath Tagore, Aurabindo, S.N. Bose and Sarath Chandrar who outlived Time by their individual genini.

Very few know that Tagore turned to painting in his old age. The doodles and smudges with which he began, the rich rough Chiaroscuro of inky lines, took on figural shapes that appeared in

time to be the residue of an exalted life, viewed as if from beyond the grave. There is some resemblance to symbolism in Tagore's naive clairvoyance as an artist. The country will ever remain grateful to Swami Vivekananda for his definition of Education according to Indian conditions. "His Attic is attic". His preceptor, Ramakrishna Paramahamsar is quoted profusely even by the commonfolk of the country. Every utterance of him has a semantic significance and syntactic addition to the cursory language.

**About Tamilnadu:** W. Bengal and Tamilnadu may be called the Juno's swans, in fostering art and science with balance. We feel proud of Dr. Sarva Palli Radhakrishnan, who explained Indian Philosophy in chaste English to the West. We have produced great Mathematicians like Ramanujam, physicists like C.V. Raman and Chandrasekhar. Dr. P. Thirugnanasambandam, is living with us. Aurabindo came to Pondicherry, a Union territory near Tamilnadu, and propagated his ways and views of life. We feel proud of Kalki, (the Sir Waltair Scott of Tamil) Anna, Moo. Va. and Jayakanthan for their communication and message to the society.

**About novels :** We are on the threshold of the 21st century which is apprehended to be the Age of tension and torture. The authors of the twentieth century, by direct and oblique writing have anticipated such a trend in their portrayals. The fear of death is not given priority and preference but the fear of criticism and the fear of painful living alone stand supreme in the dramatic dances of their powerful pens. I am not going to discuss the definition of novels at length as that would itself be a "Gone with a wind" or a "War and Peace". But I cherish the pocket theatre definition very much. We are free from the unwanted advertisements and the super imposed eatables by the vendors and hawkers of the auditorium. Our two eye balls will enjoy the alphabetical allegory of the novel without the interfering radicals of the masses and their unburnt carbon monoxide.

I have my own reasons to choose the novels and short stories of the Post-Independent days. The Pre Independent ones, strug-



gled very much between Poetry and Prose. They consumed sufficient time to get themselves metamorphosed into the form of novel. More over they reconstructed the past history of India and certain obsolete conventions and conglomerates. Much water has flown on them thanks to the journalists and standard critics. They have the tangential touch of the mean sea level of discussions, seminars and conventions.

I would like to classify the novels and short stories of the Post Independent period into three categories. They are Pleocene, Pleistocene and Holocene periods. I have derived these names from the geological time scale. The nineteenth century novels may be said to belong to the eocene period. Those which were written between 1901 and 1925 belong to Oligocene and those upto Independence belong to Miocene. I leave it to the researchers to verify my apparent classification.

### **The Novels of Pleocene (1947 to 1954)**

Kalki, the great journalist, critic and novelist breathed his last in 1954. Hence as a mark of respect to the great personality, the pleocene novels may be given the nomenclature of the era of Kalki. The most important authors of this period are Kalki, Narana Doraikkannan, Akilan and others. They form one group, like the Halogen family of the periodic table, in giving vivid descriptions about the freedom struggle with individual differences. Kalki's "Sound of sea waves", Narana Doraikkannan's "scar of sacrifice" and Akilan's "Waves of the heart" are worthy of mention. Some of them attempted historical fiction with anachronisms here and there. Kovi. Manisekharan is a typical artist of this type. Though his style is pedantic, his approach is lovable. "Anger of fire", "Daughter of the Emperor Chola", "The bangle of the Peacock" are novels of literary lure.

**Novels of Pleistocene:** The novels which peeped their heads between 1954 and 1974 may be christened as the pleistocene novels or novels of the era of Dr. Moo.Va. There was a great mass movement in the field of novel. Dr. Moo. Va. had a land slide victory over others by his innovative approach. He boldly began to write

on social themes. Though his treatise "Toddy or Epic" was published in 1947, he became popular and reputed only in 1956. He was more or less the anaesthesia of the common public. Many young turks of the period thwarted Engineering and Medical seats and preferred to study Tamil Honours Course under the stewardship of this great moral strain at Pachaiyappa's College, Madras. He rose to the level of Vice Chancellor of University from a clerk by his earnestness and sincerity. He was not only a free lance writer but a linguist, reader, critic, professor, speaker and a great conversationalist. He may be called the Advocate General for the emancipation of Women through his novels. He engineered not only Tamilnadu but the whole of South India by his humanistic approach for two decades continuously. Therefore I dare say that this particular period may be renamed as the era of Moo. Va. He has written thirteen novels which are bundles of good characters. Some of them do not have story value. The architechtonique is not sound. The venue of the most of the novels is a suburb of Madras. With all these incongruities and inconsistencies, we admire him for his frankness, style and originality. His characters are more "Humane than divine". I shall give a bird's eye view of his novel "Piece of Charcol" The hero of the novel, Mohan, is a great artist of Bengal. He is treated on a par with the nihilist Buddha and the Greek Philosopher Socrates. To him the open street is the canvass and a piece of charcoal is the brush. He engages the machine like pedestrians for sometime and educates them through his straight lines and parallel lines. The high thinking and plain living principle of Wordsworth is seen in him. His portrayals have no legs like him, But it is not a handicap for appreciation and astonishment. The character is a good subject for psycho Analysis. He never develops any complex within himself by losing his legs in an accident. His attachment towards Nirmala is commendable. The techniques of 'foreshadowing' and 'flashback' are well adopted by the author. "Hut", "Villainy", "Thorn in the mind", "The tendar eye" are the names of some of his novels. In this context I would like to tell you that Dr. Moo. Va. is the mentor of my Academic life.

I shall make a mention of the other novelists and their monumental alabastors. Akilandam shortly called Akilan for short, is a native of Pudukkottai district. He started his career as an

R.M.S. Sorter of letters and later sorted out the republicans of letters. A typical Gandhian, by nature often propagates the same in many of his novels. He is the pioneer in bringing out the penumbra side of human nature. In one of his Radio interviews he said, that he is writing on behalf of those who were cheated and thrown into dustbins by the so called sophisticated and civilised people of the day. "The Lamp of the Idol", is a great obsession to so many. It has become more or less a status symbol to discuss in detail about the treatment of the story. It has a high specific gravity of Galena. (Mineral of Lead). The close chain characterisation of women characters with one Man is properly interwoven. The man-woman relationship is treated gently without any loss to the Tamil Culture. Most of his women characters appear alike in surface but they differ in conveying message. They may be called the 'cis' and 'trans' isomers! This great man is conferred with the greatest honour of Gnana Peet Award for his magnum opus "The Coy woman of the Canvass". He is living with us and continues to write.

"The dance of beauty", "The love sleeps", "The magnetic thorn", and "Midsummer" are some of the novels by K. Rajavelu. He is an old student of Moo. Va. He wants to impress upon us the fact that there is only lust among most people under the garb of love. He tells us that love without sacrifice has no meaning.

"The music of the mind" by Chidambara Subramanian speaks about a Maestro of Music and his crests and thoughts in his life. He does not want to compromise with mediocrity at any stage. Ka, Naa. Subramanian is a critic as well as a writer. He criticises the rolling stone type of personalities who trumpet their own glory of wide travel with vanity bags before the innocuous people in his treatise "Single Day".

M. V. Venkataraman has contributed many treasures to us. He has been the Editor of a monthly, "Bee" for sometime. He has improved upon, one of the insignificant characters of Mahabharatha, the daughter of "Yayathi", in his novel "Ever Virgin". The merits and defects of Polyandry are enumerated with logic in

this prose epic and the author advocates one man - one woman relationship.

Many writers have histrionic talents to communicate something to the society. But they do not want to commit themselves. They are very much afraid of people's reactions. So they have gone to museums and art galleries of Tamil History and have a smooth sail in the field of writing. They present the history in a readable form of novel and entertain the people with archaeological descriptions and paleontological preservations. I will call such novels as Feature novels in which the authors remain as commentators or narrators. But there is absolute crystalline form of a novel in such archives. Vikraman's "Heroine of Nandhipuram", Jagasirpian's "Handsome youth of Alawai(Madurai), Sandilyan's "The Queen of Greece" and other pieces belong to this category.

The other novelists of this period are, Radhamanalan, Saa. Vi., P. M. Kannan, Somu, Indira Parthasarathy, R. S, Nalla Perumal. R. Shanmugasundaram, Raghunathan, and Deepam Naa, Parthasarathy. Radhamanalan's "Golden statue" is a good literary piece. T. K. Srinivasan's "Goat and the Ox" is a good satire. Saa. Vi. is an adept in tracing the development of love among the juveniles. "The Palm Leaf Like Plantain" is a good example which speaks one such character.

Before I pass on to the next period, I must make a special reference about Deepam Naa. Parthasarathy. He started his career as a Tamil Teacher in a private school at Madurai and then turned to the art of quilling. Later he became a full blown novelist. His "precious and prestigious flower of Mountain", and "Golden hand cuff" are written with midastouch. He takes us mentally to the mountainous regions of Kodaikanal Hills where Madame Montessori the great Educationist lived for a pretty long time. It is a great centre of attraction for tourists also. The cream of Tamil culture and literature is well protected and projected in his "conches of sinisteral coiling". People with strong academic foundation have become his fans.

Manian's writings are read with great enthusiasm by middle class people. He earned a name by his Travelogues. They may

be called novel of places and people. Apart from travelogues he has attempted fiction also. "The parrot that waited for the fruition of the cotton" by him received much acclamation of the reading population. "If you want me to sing" and the "Beart, the Musical Instrument" are said to be his masterpieces.

Among the women writers, Lakshmi, Anuthama, Rajam Krishnan, Soodamani, Vasumathi Ramaswamy, Saroja Ramamoorthy, shine like original planets. "Please permit me to pass on to the Holocene period of Novel Development. i.e. from 1974 to the present day. I call this period as Jayakanthan's period for the simple reason that he eclipsed his fellow writers by his immortal novel. "Some Personalities in Certain Situations". This appeared as a link-story in a Tamil Weekly. It gained momentum only after it took the shape of a book. It is a "Himalayan Oroqeny" in the field of novel. Many experts say that this is the measuring rod or the streak plate or touchstone to assess the standard of a novel by other writers. The heroine, "Ganga" remains green in the minds of those who read her mind psychologically and sociologically. She is introduced by the author as a goose but later elevates her to the stature of a swan. Physiological motherhood is not a virtue in the work-a-day-world. She should be able to bring up her offspring properly according to the trends of the society, in the absence of her husband. Most of the mothers remain strict addicts to outdated and outmoded customs and manners without any consciousness of their environment. At the same time, the term "Modernity" should not be misconstrued by teen agers. Ganga, loses her purity of body but not mind in her college days, because of her credulous tendency which is a lacuna in her nature. She is not quite aware that she is a separate entity after her puberty. No amount of formal education has any impact on her. She inadvertently confesses to her mother, who is highly immatured, about the loss of her virginity. The moping owls and the hungry wolves living within the arena are able to conclude from the radiogenic voice of the mother that Ganga is polluted. They have their own infirmities, cleavages and conchoidal fractures in their life. But it is a good topic for their gossip on a concentric pattern. Ganga is in the position of Mary Mc. Delene and the neighbours in the position of sinners. Jayakanthan appeals to the invisible audience of his

novel to excuse the replicas of Ganga in real life who are trapped under the conspiracy of circumstances. The Electra complex, that is repulsion towards mother is depicted with clarity and brevity. The author wants us to live according to conscience. Public opinion should only be a buffer and not an original solution. If I go on expatiating the greatness of this human document, it would be a panegyric. This is not the only novel which he has quilled. "An actress witnesses drama", and "Rush to Paris" are some of his geodes. T. Janakiraman, K. Rajendran, S.A.P. Annamalai and others have the same artistic traits of Jayakanthan with different valencies.

I shall just mention Dr. Barwatha Regina Papa's article read out at Trichy, during the Second Indian National Comparative Literature Association Congress in January 1985. The researcher compared Jayakanthan with D. H. Lawrence for the parallelism. I quote from the pertinent portions of the essayist "As Lawrence creates a new aristocracy, Jayakanthan entrusts the leadership to his 'New Brahmins' who are not to be identified with traditional Caste Brahmins who have lost their Brahminic dharma. Jayakanthan's concept of new Brahmin is upanishadic in nature" is the observation of the essayist.

"The flower and the dry leaf" by T. Selvaraj is a good melodrama. Nallaperumal's "Struggles" is noted for its treatment of the techniques of "Registering consciousness of Maugham, and stream of consciousness of Virginia Woolfe". We are reminded of George Orwell's Animal Farm for the the subtle humour and compressed satire. Though the defects of communism are pointed out here and there, the author does not plead for capitalism anywhere. Hardian pessimism is also interwoven, Asokamitrans 'Water' is the first symbolic novel in Tamil. The story is not narrated but it happens. In the language of Hendry James, it is a 'scene and drama'. The unknown trees which grant shadows, the thwarted taxi by the driver, the anonymous young man and the couple which continuously drains water are symbols of significance.

Sujatha gives new impetus to diction. He is an author of Existentialism, He has given a decent farewell to meandering expressions. There is an apparent loss of predicate in his simple sentences at the surface level. But it appears in the deep structure. He

seems to be an active member of the Neo Freudian School. The misanthropes, born criminals, destitutes and perverts dominate. There is no factual error in his science fictions. We are given to understand that 'free society' may be permitted to exist simultaneously at the advent of science and technology.

**Novels in Celluloid:** Moo. Va.'s "Parental mind", Akilan's "the lamp of the idol", Kalaigñar Karunanidhi's "Treasure" Kothamangalam Subbu's "The Classical dancer Mohanambal", Kalki's "The track of the hallucinated deer", Anna's Rangoon Radha", Manian's "Heart, the instrument of the classical music". "The murder at Karunguil Kundram" by T.T. Samy, Jayakanthan's "Some personalities at some situations" and others have been translated into celluloid and some of them were box office hit. These celluloids serve as good appetiser and motivator for novel reading.

However good and excellent the form of novel be, it is losing its charm, because of the mushroom growth of tape recorders and Video cassettes. I would like to recall to your minds a humorous observation which appeared in Readers' Digest about the transistors few years back. "The introduction of Transistors have not made man more foolish; but stupidity has become louder". Even the best products in the novel industry do not sell in the markets. People do not have leisure and patience to go through the novels and derive pleasure. The weeklies, monthlies and by-monthlies play gimmicks, in making the public read novels by offering them prizes and publications of names. But still the reception is not encouraging. The Audio-visual aids transgress not only the classroom but the field of communication also. They not only supplement the armchair reading but supplant the modern forms of literature also.

**About short stories:** Short story is one of the imported literary forms from the West to the East. But the people of Tamil Language use it as a petrified wood of Thiruvakkarai, keeping the form as a fixed constituent and the content a fugitive one. It is very easy to count the sands of Kaveri, than to count the short story writers. Love, Sacrifice, Senility, Widowhood, Desertion, Womanhood, Promise, Conscience, Corruption, Bullying, Nagging, Teasing, Superstitions, Blackmail, Exploitation and Excommunication are some of the themes dealt with by the authors. The true sense of democracy is

felt in reading short stories. The Amalgamation of foreign form and Indian content is well appreciated by stalwarts. Apart from the classical and Traditional subject matters, the story tellers introduce new avenues in themes. Psychological problems such as Kleptomania, Pyromania, Enuresis, Somnambulism, Amnesia, Schizophrenia, Sadism, Masochism and Transvestism are well interpreted by a few writers. Sociological themes such as anti-dowry, Untouchability, Unemployment, Intercaste marriage, Widow remarriage, Rent house, Burglary and allied topics are often thought of. Among the living characters, Lawyers, Doctors, Nurses, Teachers temple priests, Money lender, Vendor, Hawker, politician and Penniless man are given shock treatment.

In my view, the pleocene period of short story may be called the era of Anna, our former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. He is earmarked for his objective correlatives. His ascension Loyalty to social Reformation gives him the courage and faith to write afresh. **"I knocked at the door step of her heart; but she opened the window of smile only"** is the beginning of a short story by him. The power of eemic transmission is very high, and there is second to none for his idiolect. "Red plantain", "Two generations", "The job is no more", "The cynic", "A handful of ashes", 'Hell within Heaven' and "The tiger's nail" are some of the chrysolites of Anna. "His entry into the political arena is an irreparable loss to the creative world" said Kalki, the mammoth writer of the day who conferred the title "Bernad Shaw of the South", on him. Anna's altruism, empathy and humanistic tendency can be well understood if we closely read them with rapt attention.

Mouni, Pichamoorthy, T. Janakiraman, Sundara Ramaswami, Thamaraimanalan, Kalki, L. S. Ramamirtham are some of the dinosaurs which encroached the land of short story. The loud-speaker's jarring sound, the vindictive look of a young fellow towards a spinster. The barking sound of the palace dog, the style of a high-heeled shoe woman get a granite polish of Mouni and baffle the reader. "The ever-bright lamp", "The Mental drawing", The beginning in the end", "The Universal music" are some of the stories by Mouni. Na. Pichamoorthy is called the father of "formless poetry". His story "Adorning the head with



flower" touches our heart. A widowed mother adorns the head of her pet daughter with fragrant flowers. The child in her turn requests her mother to have flowers on her head. The mother's tension and tremors are well explained by Pichamoorthy in this story. "The doll of festival" touches Kleptomania. The sex perversions of perishable hydrocarbons with complex configurations are brought to lime light by T. Janakiraman. The aroma of Tanjore dialect is an added plus point to the stories. "The blisters of rice and dust", "Red ricksahw", "The tower light" and "Then came Mother" are some of the poemogranite pearls of him. Sundara Ramaswami's "On the banks of the west" is an anthology of short stories with a tinge of satire. The paper weights of the society join together and wage a crusade against the daughter of the owner of a concern. From this, the author wants us to know that even the dust in motion has a good impact on the environment, keeping the Newton's laws of motion in mind. The drought conditions of 1955-59 are photographed with precision under the Caption Tricity.

Vindhan is a good dehydrating agent of corruption and cultural pollution. All his stories serve as phenolphthalein and methyl orange to indicate the land slide in human character and conviction. He may be compared to Jonathan Swift for his caricatures of human attitudes and attitudes. Raghunathan, C. S. Chellagopa, Janani, K. Alagirisami and others belong to this era. All their stories are "Insitu fossils" of their social and political environment.

The pleistocene period of short stories may be called the era of **Amphibians**. The latter survive both in the marine as well as in land conditions. In the same way the writers who attempt novel and short stories may be called the "Amphibians", Jayakanthan, Moo. Va., Naa. Parthasarathy, Akilan, Jagasirpian, Kovi-Manisekaran, R.K. Rangarajan and others are good samples of amphibians.

Let us probe into the stories of Jayakanthan. "Frustration" is the title of a story. The hero has become a runner up in the game of love. He develops a phobia against the women-folk. To relieve himself from the pain of solitude, he joins army. He has

to undergo so many trials. The reminiscence of his fancy does not fade out from his memory. "At night" is a story about a bitch who sells her body for the sake of her belly. The fellow who tipped, a small coin, for her amorality, slipped away suddenly. She thought that it is a half-a-rupee coin. But it was only a copper coin bearing the value of  $1/32$  of the half a rupee coin. The author wants us to sympathise with this poor woman for her inability to acquire the skill of the professionalist. "Lullaby" is another story which deals with a teen age girl who attained the status of a house-wife at surface level but weeping within. We generate an ocean of tears from the pond of eyes when we come to know that she has to lull the new born babe of her old aged husband at the first-night. We are forced to compare Jayakanthan with Dostoevsky for his basic question of the existence of the Almighty. A lady teacher somehow developed apathy towards marriage in her early years. At the age of thirty seven, she gets convinced of the intrinsic meaning of the institution and marries her own educand. We appreciate the realistic ending of the story. This angle of deviation is nearly portrayed without any padding in his story "Purgatory". I want to tell more about this artistic philosopher, but I am afraid it would be citation in a felicitation function. He is definitely a clarion call to the drowsy writers of his day. He exposed and exhumed the New moon activities of the so called elite and sophisticated without any witness. He acts more as the chairman of an Enquiry commission than as an Investigating Police Official. K. V. Jaganathan's "Mittaiwala" "Pearly Flower" are popular among the children and child like people. He is the Editor of a monthly called "Kalaimagal (The spinister of Arts) Some award winners of novels and short stories had their maiden attempt of creative writing in this periodical.

Among the women writers, Lakshmi, Rajam Krishnan, Seedamani, Vasumathi Ramaswamy, Saroja Ramamoorthy, Krishna, Vimala Ramani, Komagal and others one to be borne in mind. The story entitled "Mirage" by Komagal has wide acknowledgement from various sections of the people. It is free from counter productivity. The author without fear or favour tells us that pure love is a rare commodity in real life. Since a women falls a prey to temptations, right from the day of Eve, she should not be blamed for her infirmity, whispers the author. She indirectly and

midly condemns malechauvinism for throwing the lady love to the level of concupine. At the same time she bids us adieu for bigamy also. She clearly explains the theory that 'man gets love in order to have sex; but woman gives love in order to have protection !

Problems regarding family are projected by K. Jayalakshmi and Krithiga. M. S. Kamala and others have transcreated many stories from other Dravidian languages into Tamil. We come across only microscopic minority of women who appreciate and admire man's courage, principle, philosophy and predicaments. The moral wreck attitude about man should be hemmed out from their memory.

**Holocene period :** There is tremendous growth of Science and Technology in the ultra modern times. There is more scope for writing. Journalism attained the status of an industry. The Educational Institutions release Magazines, souveneirs, and supplements. So many of them die of child mortality. Some of them are washed away as winter's weeds. But a few swim across the river like a fish. Sujatha, Sivasankari, Indumathi, Vaasanthi, Pushpa Thangadurai, Pratheepa Rajagopalan, Rajendrakumar, Randor Guy, Punithan and others are dealing with mental aberrations and abortions vividly. Their eyes are as powerful as micro tele lens, but they click only the Eagle's catch of a chic, the random movements of the pavlovian dog in the maze, and the hysterical laughter of the criminals. At times, we are not able to follow the story. They are like problems in Mathematics. Too much of knowledge explosion ! Peculiar names to different kinds of clouds.

Sujatha, an expert in computer science stands supreme in writing stories. He has the magnetic power of attracting all people to read his stories. He has left it to the option of the reader to have his or her own generative sentences by leaving dotted lines. His style is a good topic for research in stylistics by linguists. Dr. M. Ramalingam (Ezhil Mudhalvan) the professor of Bharathidasan University, Tiruchy, calls such drops as the "metaphor of unconformity" in his book, "Vistas in Tamil Prose". This treatise

won him Sahitya Academic award. Hijacking of a plane, adoption of an Indian child by Americans, the whims and fancies of the pressmen, the forensic science investigations, the true stories of strange murders, the customs and manners of the tribals are given new dimensions by Sujatha. Almost all the stories are "Field study" one. Divorce, Infidelity, Castration, Illegal intimacy, Disco dances and gogo rhythm carry the readers to the A/c room, open air auditorium and bar. The concealment and camouflage of the mafias, the concealed threat of legal battle, are all unknown to the Tamil populations so far.

We cannot afford to forget "Sky lark" the sophisticated call-girl of Punithan. Pradeepa Rajagopalan precipitates the atrocious activities of some of the womanising bosses. "She, the window and the distant moon" is an anthology of short stories which serves as the parameter of cultural pollution and genocide. "Sacrificial fire is not for physical warmth" is a story about those who encash their social service for personal gains. The dichotomy of materialism and spiritualism is given priority.

This is the age of electronic instruments. We have mini transistors, TVs and buses. So we have mini Skirts and stories also. I read a mini story recently in a journal. "It is six O' clock in the evening. The solitary bird becomes nervous with the reserved tickets in the fourth floor", "Has he met with an accident?" No phone call either from the police station or from any Nursing Home. "Is he abducted by any glamour girl? No! He is not that much handsome. Is he caught by any of his nearest relatives! It can't be ...He is thwarted by all of them. Has he taken to over time?... Now I understand he might have gone to the central Station to take delivery of his wife ... Poor fellow runs after the worn out creature ... He is not bold ... We must think of a change or a substitute for him ... He keeps us in tentions" ... Love becomes a cup of tea to her. She take things very coolly. Unless we give a Shawian introduction, we cannot digest the whole idea of the author.

I shall give you another mini story which as a message.

"The signature tune of the opera in the radio made him nervous. He forget to place the razor with the blade in the box.

He rinsed his head with two burettefuls of water and rushed to the work spot illclad. "Oh ! our two year old Gulnaar, would have touched the razor and be in a pool of blood. The acrimonious irreconcilable wife would be abusing us. No casual leave as we have exhausted it completely ! At the stroke of five, he engaged an Auto and went home in lightining speed. He saw the child welcoming him at the door. The wife was also in her casual mood doing her domestic routine. In his overwhaelming joy, he threw the child up like a ball.....There was a huge cry. She was hit by the swinging ceiling fan and there was mammalian blood... In the same auto he rushed to a nearby hospital". Of course I made it a story after reading a news item from a newspaper.

I want to tell you one thing. The advancement of Science and Technology can never stand in the way of artistic growth because the three of them have their genesis only from man. Knowledge is one. There is no scientific knowledge or artistic knowledge. It is hightime to start the Department of "Arts and Science" in the Universities.

The systems approach may be introduced with team spirit in interdisciplinary subjects. Since man is one, his literature, language and science should also be one. His duty is to sublimate his emotions under normal circumstances. The novels and short stories will lend a helping hand to him. Thank you !

### ஆங்கிலம் ஆக்கப்பட்ட தமிழ்ப் புதினம் மற்றும் சிறுகதைப் பெயர்கள்

அலை ஓசை	... Sound of the sea waves
நெஞ்சின் அலைகள்	... Waves of the heart
அக்கினிக் கோபம்	... Anger of the fire
செம்பியன் செல்வி	... Daughter of the Emperor Chola
பீலிவளை	... The bangle of the Peacock
தியாகத் தழும்பு	... Scar of the sacrifice
கள்ளோ காவியமோ	... Toddy or Epic
கரித்துண்டு	... Piece of charcoal
மண்குடிசை	... Hut

கயமை	... Villainy
நெஞ்சில் ஒரு முள்	... Thorn in the mind
மலர் விழி	... Tender eye
பாவை விளக்கு	... The lamb of the idol
சித்திரப் பாவை	... Coy woman of the canvass
அழகு ஆடுகிறது	... The Dance of beauty
காதல் தூங்குகிறது	... The love sleeps
காந்த முள்	... The magnetic thorn
இளவேணில்	... Midsummer
இதய நாதம்	... Music of the mind
ஒரு நாள்	... Single Day
நித்ய கன்னி	... Ever virgin
நந்திபுரத்து நாயகி	... Heroine of Nandhipuram
ஆலவாய் அழகன்	... The handsome youth of Alawai
யவனராணி	... Foreign Queen
பொற்சிலை	... Golden statue
ஆடும் மாடும்	... Goat and the Ox
விசிறி வாழை	... Palm leaf like plantain
குறிஞ்சி மலர்	... Precious and prestigious flower of the Mountain
பொன் விலங்கு	... Golden hand cuff
இலவு காத்த கிளி	... The parrot that waited for the fruition of the cotton
என்னைப்பாடச் சொன்னால்	... If you want me to sing
இதய வீணை	... Heart, the Musical Instrument
சில நேரங்களில் சில	... Some personalities in certain situations
மணிதர்கள்	
ஒரு நடிகை நாடகம்	
பார்க்கிறாள்	... An actress witnesses drama
பாரிசுக்கு போ	... Rush to Paris
மலரும் சருகும்	... Flower and the dry leaf
போராட்டங்கள்	... Struggles
தண்ணீர்	... Water
பெற்ற மனம்	... Parantal mind
புதையல்	... Treasure
தில்லானா மோகனாம்பாள்	... The classical dancer Mohanambal
பொய்மான் காடு	... The track of the hallucinated deer
செவ்வாழை	... Red plantain
இரு பரம்பரைகள்	... Two generations

வேலை போச்சு	... The job is no more
சிடுமுஞ்சு	... The cynic
பிடி சாம்பல்	... A handful of ashes
புலி நகம்	... Tiger's nail
அழியாச் சுடர்	... The ever bright lamp
மனக்கோலம்	... The mental drawing
சாவில் பிறந்த சிருஷ்டி	... The beginning in the end
பிரபஞ்சகானம்	... The Universal music
பூச்குட்டல்	... Adorning the head with flower
அவலும், உமியும்	... The blisters of rice and dust
சிகப்பு ரிக்ஷா	... Red Rickshaw
கோபுர விளக்கு	... The tower light
அம்மா வந்தாள்	... Then came Mother
அக்கரைச்சீமை	... On the banks of the west
திரிபுரம்	... Tricity
விரக்தி	... Frustration
இரவில்	... At night
திரிசங்கு சொர்க்கம்	... Purgatory
மிட்டாய்க்காரன்	... Mittaiwala
பவளமல்லிகை	... Pearly flower
கானல் நீர்	... Mirage
விடுப்புகனி	... Metaphoric unconformity
புதிய உரை நடை	... Vistas in Tamil prose
அவளும், ஜன்னலும்	...
தூரத்து நிலவும்	... She, the window and distant moon
வேள்வித் தீ குளிர்	... Sacrificial fire is not for
காய்வதற்கல்ல	physical warmits.

# **NATIONALISM IN BENGALI AND TAMIL LITERATURES**

**Mrs. BIJOYA DAS,**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nationalism is that debt a man discharges towards his country for his right to exist and to live on her soil. The idea of patriotism has not been new to us. All our ancient literary works such as the Upanishad, The Ramayana, The Mahabharata teach us to love our mother and our motherland. The Puranas extoll the greatness of the "Bharatavarsha". We had not been lacking in the spirit of patriotism but it was latent in us when the British traders came to open trade pacts with us and slowly took us and our country into their hands to rule. We were awakened from our slumber only when their unspeakably cruel atrocities penetrated our consciousness. It took us more than 300 years and a colossal sacrifice of human lives to tear the blinkers of colonialism from our eyes. How far were our poets, dramatists and writers were responsible for this awakening is an extremely interesting venture for any student of literature.

## **REASONS FOR THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA**

The unemployment and the humiliations faced by the educated Indians, the sense of racial superiority entertained by the British



officials, the Jury Act of 1821, whereby no Hindu nor a Muslim could put any Christian upon trial, the knowledge of the outcome of the national movements in such far-off countries as America, France, Italy, etc., the improvement in communications, and the evergrowing desire for knowledge, and the press freedom were all the manifold causes for the Indian National Movement. According to Lala Lajpat Rai, "The methods of English Government in India, their educational system, their press, their laws, their courts, their railways, their telegraphs, post offices had as much to do as the native love of country."

Bengal, was leading in the ideas of nationalism. Gokhale correctly predicted, "What Bengal thinks today, the rest of India thinks tomorrow." The pre-eminence of Bengal in her progressive ideas of political independence had many causes. It was in Bengal that the first seeds of the Indian National Movement were sown, when the British traders bought the three villages of Bengal, Sutanuti, Govindapur and Kalikshetra and it was in Bengal, at Plassey, that the first war of Independence was fought between Siraj-id-daula and Robert Clive in 1757 and it was since then, the rule of colonialism started.

The English education began earlier in Bengal and spread more rapidly and the growth of Bengali literature helped to spread the nationalistic ideas which received greater support from the newspapers and periodicals. The fiery speeches of Swami Vivekananda and his teachings had a greater impact—he was called the prophet of nationalism and the Rousseau of India—and inflamed the burning patriotism in the minds of the Bengali Youths. The preachings of social reformers like Ram Mohan Rai, De Rozio, Peary Chand Mitra, Akshor "Kumar Datta to inculcate liberty in every sphere of life contributed their mite while the writings of men like Sisir Kumar Ghosh, Dinabandhu Mitra, ushered in the rapport between the educated and the uneducated people of Bengal. Societies like the Arya Samaj also helped in setting ablaze the fire of Nationalism.

Yet, three Major incidents between 1899 and 1905 triggered off the conflict between the colonials and the colonialists :

- (a) The Calcutta Municipal Bill, 1899, which affected the principle of local self-Government.
- (b) The Universities Bill, 1904, which led to strict control of colleges and Universities by the British, (by Lord Curson).
- (c) The partition of Bengal - the Carlyle Circular of 1905, which bifurcated the whole mass of Bangalis.

Political movements around the world to cite for India's right of independence. Navin Chandra Sen wrote "The Bottle of palasi" to incite the Bengalis about the fearless heroism of Siraj-ud-daula. Bharati wrote poems on Mazini, Shivaji and about the movements in Belgium and Russia. He was the first Tamil poet to have protested against the bifurcation of Bengal.

"We were born as the possessors  
 Of a glorious heritage,  
 In the land of Bharat,  
 Which, like the heavenly Wishing Tree,  
 Gives all that one asks for.  
 O Divinity !  
 Who appeared before us  
 To emphatically affirm the moral dictum  
 That it is most improper  
 For such people  
 To expect or to receive  
 gift of any kind  
 From others' hands  
 O Bengal !  
 Long may you live and flourish !  
 Long live Bengal !

—(Bharati : Angame Talarvu)

The poets who admired Gandhi for his great principles of Ahimsa, Satyagraha and peaceful co-existence, wrote poems extolling his firm stand on the side of Truth. Bhāratī wrote the "Mahatma Gandhi Quintet" Thiru. Vi. Ka. wrote "The Kannan

of Kaliyug" portraying Gandhi as Lord Krishna who has come to save the people of Bharata. Namakkal Kavijnar wrote one of the most beautiful poems which was very popular at that time.

"No weapons ! No bloodshed !  
 War is coming ! War is coming !  
 Hear the truthful words of Gandhi  
 Message of peace, Hear the conch below !"

—(Namakkal Kavijnar ; Katti inri)

Raya Chokkalingam is another poet who worshipped Gandhi and wrote poems on Gandhi. Aca lambika wrote the "Gandhi Puranam."

It was the partition of Bengal, which was very much instrumental in bringing about the unity of Bengal and the other states. For, immediately after the announcement of the partition scheme, the Maharaja of Kasim Bazaar, Sri Maninda Chandra Nandi, inaugurated the movement for the boycott of foreign goods as a measure of retaliation, which came to be known as the "Swadeshi Movement". Protest meetings were held in all the cities and villages all over India. Students were very active in implementing the boycott. On the very day of partition, 16th October, 1905, under the leadership of Rabindranath Tagore and Ramandra Sunder Tribedi, the "Raksha Bandhan" ceremony was observed, to unite the people of Bengal irrespective of caste, colour or creed. The national song of the undivided Bengal was sung by Tagore, to celebrate the occasion.

"The land of Bengal, the Waters of Bengal,  
 The air of Bengal, the fruits of Bengal,  
 May the become pure, Oh, Great Lord !"

One fact that must be borne in mind is that though the freedom movement had its roots in Bengal, it was not tainted with the gaudy strains of provincialism nor political favouritism. It was also not confined within the narrow boundaries of Bengal only. Though the people of Bengal had to bear the greater brunt of colonization and suffered a heavy loss, it was creative and conducive in the development of the freedom struggle all over

India as a result of which the literature on Nationalism grew to a great volume. The National Movement in Tamilnadu boasts of such great heroes as Ramaiah, Marudu brothers, Kattabomman, Tesingurajan, Tippu Sultan etc. Being exposed to the sea on three sides, Tamil country had had to be ever vigilant to prevent aggression by the foreign forces. The portugese and the Dutch forces had been successfully driven out during the 18th century. The brave rulers of Palayankottai, Madurai, Ramanatapuram, Tirunelveli etc. were vigorously opposing the endeavours of the British to collect taxes. The Marudu brothers did exceptional service in training the people to rise against the British army, but were killed by the British with the help of a few Indian traitors. So was Pulittevan, Kattabomman's great heroic deeds were sung with great enthusiasm by the patriots of Tamilnadu. His was the first direct war with the British during 1798-99. He was killed along with his brothers Sivattaiahkumaraswami and Umaian after causing great havoc to the British. Colonel Welsh and Caldwell have praised his heroic deeds with admiration. His grave is a holy place for the Hindus even today. Tippu Sultan, the lion of Karnataka and Veluttampi of Travancore were other kings who fought to prevent colonialism in their kingdoms. In response to the colonial atrocities in Tamilnadu, there were sporadic protests and revolutions in Velur, and in Madurai, but Nawab Salar Jung of Hyderabad took severe measures to stem the revolutions, relanding the progress of the movement.

## NATIONAL LITERATURE IN BENGALI AND TAMIL

All over India, while many patriots took an active part in the Swadeshi Movement, the poets and writers wielded their mighty pens to write and record in various languages an avalanche of songs, poems, essays etc., condemning the British colonialization in India. The press imported to India to educate the illiterate masses was the main media through which the spirit of nationalism was fostered and nourished.

### POETRY

Poetry was one of the genres which found an immediate response in the minds of the literate and the illiterate alike. The

poems and the songs set to music roused the masses to near-frenzy and thus could achieve more than the other genres could. Thus poems came to be written in plenty. These poems contained such ideal themes as (a) the love for the country, (b) love of freedom (c) love for one's mother tongue, (d) eradication of the existing social injustices through education of the masses (e) emancipation of women (f) the importance of Gandhian ideals such as Ahimsa and Satyagraha etc.

## LOVE FOR THE COUNTRY

Most of the patriotic songs and poems in Bengali and Tamil (other languages too) extoll the greatness of the Bharatavarsha, her glorious cultural and historical heritages and her rich wealth and superb beauty of her mountains, rivers and vast natural wealth, her many languages and dialects and her historic importance in the history of the world.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya was the first poet to have won great fame in this technique. His "Vande Mataram" became the marching song for the militant revolutionaries and was translated into all the Indian languages. Bharati was so enamoured of this song that he translated it twice into Tamil. "The slogan "Vande Mataram" has been used many times in his songs as the first line or the refrain indicating the poet's fondness for it. Other poets who have used the same technique are Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Atul Pfrasad Sen, Satyendranath Datta, Rajanikanta Sen etc.

"Nohwere wouldst thou find such a country  
 However much thou searchest,  
 She is the empress among the nations,  
 My Motherland, she is my motherland !"

(D. L. Roy)

Tamil poets like Bharati, Namakkal Kavrjnar, Suddhananda Bharati, Sa. Du. Su. Yogyiar etc. wrote poems in Tamil following the same technique.

“We were born as the possessor’s  
Of a glorious heritage,  
In the land of Bharat,  
Which, like the heavenly Wishing tree,  
Gives all that one asks for !

(Bharati: Angama talarveydiya)

Love for the country took shape in the concept of “Bharata-mata” the symbol of a unique mother for the multi-lingual children of India. It was most effective as the bond of integration of the people of many languages thus ushering in the slogan “Unity among diversity” and the idea “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (The whole world is one family). At the same time it also gave room for diversification of many regional mothers for the regional languages, giving birth to the concept of regionalism, which has become a powerful weapon in the hands of the selfish politicians.

Iswar Gupta, the first Bengali poet to use this idea in his poems to unite all the Bengali-speaking persons, sings,

“Treat thy neighbour as thy brother,  
With boundless affection in thy eyes”

Later poets like Bankim, Rangala Bandhyopadhyay, Rajmohan Basu, Tagore, and D.L. Roy followed in his footsteps.

“Such affection for the mother and the brother,  
Where will one find”

(D. L. Roy: Eman Deshti...)”)

To rejuvenate the love for freedom and home rule, passionate dedication was a very necessary quality. So was the sense of duty. This idea was conveyed by poets like Atul Prasad Sen, Sarala Devi, Bharati, Bharathidasan etc.

“Be steadfast in thy conduct,  
Be a leader in thy duty,  
Thou, with thy proud look,  
No fear shall confront you.”

—(Atul Prasad Sen)

“Hail to Hindusthan !

My words, bearers of glories past,  
Sing today of Hindusthan !  
My words, madden this huge throng,  
Sing today of Hindusthan !  
Sing to that glorious name  
Full of fame, valour and grandeur.  
Sing with one voice, one tongue,  
Hail to Hindusthan !

—(Sarala Devi)

“Sunk in misfortune,

Burning in agony,  
May our countrymen sing  
The joyful words:  
Vande Mataram, Jaya Jaya Vande Mataram  
Stand we united,  
In victory or in death  
Lustily shall we sing:  
Vande Mataram, Jaya Jaya Vande Mataram”

—(Bharati)

Some poets like Navin Chandra Sen, Satyandranath Datta, Bharati, Thiru V. Kalyana Sundaram etc., tried the ruse of a simple and genuine appeal.

“Oh, Goddess, are there such people on this glorious earth,  
Whose souls do not cry  
When they abandon this country of birth ?”

—(Navin Chandra Sen)

“Those that set their brave hearts on liberty,  
Will they take aught else thereafter ?  
Thirsting nectar of the gods,  
Would they think of toddy ?”

—(Bharati : Liberty)

Of these appeals, the debt to the mother who fed and clothes her children through thick and thin was the most effective.

“Mother dear, plenty have I eaten,  
Plenty have I taken from you,  
But, what have I given you  
In return in this life ?”

—(Togore ; Jatiya Sangit)

"Assembled are we all here,  
At the call of our Mother dear;  
Born together, living strangers—like,  
How long can brothers live separate?"

"Heart overflows while new hope grips,  
Seeing brothers uniting with brothers "

—(Tagore : Milechi Aaj Mayer Dake)

Bharati sings to the Indian fraternity, hailing a New India.

"One family are we all  
Children of one dear mother,  
All are equal, all alike  
No high and no low among us.  
Of equal weight and equal price  
Each one of us is a king !"

—(Bharati—Bharata Samudayam)

The cruel British atrocities on the Bharatamata while her millions of children slept was a very popular idea on which a great many number of poems were written,

"Thy palanquin broken, lying on the floor,  
Shouldst thou, the son of India, still sleep?"

—(Iswar Gupta)

"Gone thy glory, vanquished thy fame,  
Bent is thy head, steeped in shame;  
Erase our pain, amongst the society of humans !"

—(Tagore—Dèsha Desha Nandita kori)

The pitiable condition of the oppressed Indians and the great need for unity to sacrifice for the liberation of the oppressed was an idea associated with the Bharata Mata concept. A strong note of fearlessness and spirit of heroism also is the strong feature of these poems.

"I shall not fear, brother, I shall not fear.

"Fear not, fear not, there shall be victory,

This door shall open"

—(Tagore : Jatiya Sangit)



"No fears, no fears, no fears for ever,  
Even if all the world fights against me,  
No fears, no fears, no fears for ever.

—(Bharati : Achchamillai)

"My birth was in this country,  
God, May I die here !"

—(D.L. Roy : Eman Deshti)

"This is the land  
Which endowed us with sweet life,  
And gave us birth,  
And reated us well,  
And showered much grace upon us.

.....

Shouldn't I shout in adoration

'I bow to thee, Mother'.

'I bow to thee, Mother' "

—(Bharati : Adoration)

Education of the people had the core idea of exposing the social injustices and blind traditions prevalent in the country. Unless they were free from the bondages from within, they could never liberate themselves from the bondage of foreign rule. The poets in Bengali and Tamil pointed out the meaningless quarrel about the sanctity of brahminism and casteism. They envisaged an Indian confluence consisting of people of all the caste and creed, without any barriers among them.

"Come Arya, Come thee, Non-Arya,  
Come Ye, Hindu and Muslim;  
Come, come, Thou, too, English,  
Come, come, Thee Chritian !"

—(Tagore : Desha Desha Nandita)

"Come, Brahmin, hold the hands of all  
Purify the mind first;  
Come, thou, down-trodden,  
Purify the water by thy touch, Ye all,  
Today, at this conjunction of the men  
The great sea of Indians."

—(Tagore : He Mor Chitta)

"No more shall we call the Brahmin Lord :  
No more shall we call the white man master."

—(Bharati)

"Freedom, Freedom, Freedom !"

To the pariahs, to the Tiyas, to the Pulayas,  
Freedom.

To the paravas, to the Kuravas, to the Maravas,  
Freedom !"

—(Bharati : Freedom)

An enchanting picture of a "Free-India" was painted with words in glowing colours by Tagore and Bharati, who had the farsight to visualise a free India in the near future.

To all the poets, political freedom was synonymous with economic and social freedom. Along with it, emancipation of women was an immediate need as women had also a role to play. The poets insisted that women must be given equal opportunity. Great women like Sister Nivedita, Sarojini Naidu, Sarala Devi, Swarnakumari Devi, were the spokeswomen for women's freedom in the fullest sense. Bharati, in his admiration for Sister Nivedita, dedicated two volumes of his patriotic songs to her. Till his death, he fought for women's liberty from the bondages of traditionalism and blind faith.

"We've found our own souls, our own souls.

The touch of books is no more sin;

They are gone that doomed us to ignorance.

The funny men that in prison homes

Sought to imprison women's soul

Are gone, are gone "

—(Bharati : Kummiyadi)

"Come ye, the flames of fire,

Light the lamps, in misery and joy,

Bring us power, Bring us brightness,

Bring us peace, Bring contentment.

Bring us the ever-good soft love"

—(Tagore ; Anushtanic)

Poets like Rangalal Bandhyopadhyay used the stories of myths to drive home his ideas. He wrote "Vrittra Samhar," the story of

the killing of the demon "Vriitra" by Indra, comparing the suffering of the people of India to that of the Devas in the Indraloka. Maichael Madhusudan Datt wrote "The Meghnath Vadh", the killing of Indrajit by Lakshmana, a story of the confrontation of the oppressed with the oppressor. Bharati has used the same technique in his "Panchali Sabadam," the oath of Draupadi. Other poets have used the various historical events, past V. V. Chidambaram Pillai, an active participant in the struggle for freedom by floating a shipline of his own and spent 40 years of life in jail, had written his autobiography in verse describing the British atrocities perpetrated on him. Suddhananda Bharati wrote "The Bharata Shakti Mahakavyam" which fetched him the coveted "Rajarajan" prize of one lakh rupees. S. D. Sundaram condemned in his poem the communal manace in Bengal in 1946. Other Tamil poets worth mentioning are Sankaraling Kavirayar, V. Nataraja Pillai, P. Velusamy Kavirayar for their contribution in poetry on patriotism. At the same time, Bengali poets like Kamini Roy, Jatindranath Sengupta, Nazrul Islam, Satyendranath Datta, Rajanikanta Sen etc., wrote poems to contribute towards the wealth of national literature.

## LOVE FOR THE MOTHER TONGUE

Love for the country had the associated vein of the love for the mother tongue and it was also an essential medium through which the common man could be reached. The spontaneous adoration for the language enabled a poet to express his love for the country and his region more easily. In the pre-Bankim era Nidhu Babu was the first poet to have mentioned the importance of the mother tongue.

"Various countries have many languages. Oh, then,  
Can the heart be ever happy in any other tongue ?  
What use the water of lake or pond or rivers,  
Chataki's thirst abates only by the drops of rain ? "

Bankim was the first writer to infuse and insist on the use of Bengali. Iswar Gupta praised the use of Bengali in the "Tatwabodhini Patrika" in 1870, but Rajmohan Basu said, "Our Bengali is a very fine tongue, but need men of genius to polish it up". Poets like

Madhusudhan preferred English to Bengali first and then switched over to Bengali. Foreigners like Lord Cameron and Lord Bethune insisted on the regular use of mother tongue in education. Bhudev wrote "Religion is the father, but language is the mother for man." Tagore wrote extensively advocating the use of Bengali as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges (Sadhana-1892). Prabhat Kumar Mukherji sang "My greatest wealth on, Oh My beloved Bengali". Atul Prasad sang "Ah, mori Bangla Bhasha". Tagore wrote "May the Bengali language be blessed". D.L. Roy eulogised the great convenience a poet enjoyed when he could sing in Bengali — "Pran Bhare samasware Matri Bhasahy chalo gai — (Come, let us sing together in our mother tongue) ".

Bharati is considered to be the father of the present era in Tamil for his infusion of new life into it, for Tamil had regained its vigour and spontaneity only after him. He extolls the great heritage of the Tamilians in almost all his poems, like, "Tamil Nadu", "Tamil-tai", "Centamil Nadu", "Tamil", "Tamil Moli Valttu", "Tamil-a-chadi", "Valia Centamil" etc. He invites the Tamilians to learn other languages and translate into Tamil from them to enrich the literary wealth of the Tamils, at the same not forgetting the greatness of Tamil. "You learn the tongues of the world, But your own, Will you neglect ? ". Namakkal Kavignar wrote extensively on the sweetness and the greatness of Tamil in his three volumes of poems, "Tamilan Idayam" (The heart of the Tamilian), "Tamil-t-ten" (The nectar of Tamil), and "Cankoli" (The blowing of the Conch-shell). Bharatidasan warns the Tamilians to beware of the problems of Tamil in a multi-lingual nation and elevates its status. Tesikavinayagam Pillai, Kaviyarasan, Mudiayarasan, Kannadasan, Kottamangalam Subbu are some of the modern poets who have sung in the language of the common man in a flowing style to identify themselves with the labourers, mill-workers, coolies etc., thus bringing natural spontaneity to Tamil.

The love for the language in the pre-independence era was a very useful weapon in that it united the masses with the scholars to work together to win freedom. After independence, the same love for the mother tongue took a serious turn to improve its standard

and elevate its status. Unfortunately, it has recently become more a menace than a blessing as it fosters regionalism and thus dissociation from other language speaking regions. Thus it is ironic that the same instrument which worked well for the integration of the country has become the instrument of destruction of the main purpose of the freedom struggle.

## DRAMAS

Poetry and drama have been the two main means of communication between the writer and the people since three thousand years. While poetry has been the domain of the literate and the aristocratic classes, drama has been the main audio-visual medium of communication of the masses. Keeping this fact in mind, the writers of the pre-independence era wrote dramas to arouse the people from their lethargic dependence on the British.

The first drama in Bengali before independence was written in 1860 by Dinabandhu Mitra. This drama, "Nil Darpan", 48 based on the atrocities perpetrated on the indigo cultivators by the British, had become famous for its influence on the people of Bengal.

The song, "Where is the glorious land of Bengal, my country of birth", had wrought in a new breath of humanism in the lethargic minds of the Bengalis. The second drama, *Bharatamata*, by Kiran Chandra Bannerji, brought tears in the eyes of the whole audience when they viewed the Bharatamata standing weeping, her children sleeping without caring for her and the Bangalakshmi taking leave of the Bharatmata lamenting her condition.

Upendranath Das wrote two dramas, "Sarat-Sarojini" and "Surendra-Vinodini", which were effective in rousing the patriotic feelings in the viewers. Manomohan Bose wrote "Harischandra", a symbolical irony on colonialism, deriding India's dependence on Britain even for needle, thread and matches. He laments "people are not free, even to light their lamps, to eat and to lie down". Jyotirindranath Tagore's four dramas, "Puru Vikram", "Asrumati", "Sarojini", and "Swapnamayi" were well-acted and popular plays. Surendranath Majumdar's "Hamir" and Rajkrishna Roy's "Bharat Santwana" were more for the literates.

**Bharat Santwana** is a drama of dialogue between **Brahma** and **Bharatamata**, where **Bharatamata** expresses her desire to see the Goddess of freedom at least once but **Brahma** informs her that she is lamenting about the pathetic condition of India and is ashamed of meeting the **Bharatamata**.

**Girish Ghosh**, **Amritalal Basu** and **Dwijendralal Roy** were the three successful dramatists of the era of national movement. **Girish Ghosh** wrote "**Satnam**", "**Siraj-ud-daula**", "**Mir Kasim**" and "**Chatrapati Shivaji**". He mentions in the preface of "**Siraj-ud-daula**" that he had read all the available texts in English from the Asiatic Society Library. This is perhaps the first time a dramatist had done full research on his theme hence his drama is considered to be historically authentic; **Lokamanya Tilak** requested **Girish Ghosh** personally to enact the drama for his sake when he came to Calcutta. Since the **Swadeshi Movement** had gained momentum, these dramas and their messages had a greater impact on the audience. **Amritalal Basu** wrote "**Navajivan**" and "**Sabash Bengali**". The latter one describes the effect of the land of Bengal on even foreigners who, while committing atrocities on the Bengalis, admired their spirit of dedication and patriotism. **Dwijendralal Roy** wrote "**Pratap Sinha**", "**Durgadas**", "**The fall of Mewar**", which were not ideal dramas, but were the sources of inspiration for the public. **Kshirod Prasad** "**Vidyavinod** was one of the best dramatists of the era. His "**Pratapaditya**" and "**Palasir Prayaschitta**" were the best portraits of the atrocities of the British and the Indian National Movement, containing the message of national unity. **Amarendranath Datta's** "**The Partition of Bengal**" and **Kumudnath Chattopadhyaya's** "**The Sacrifice of the Partition of Bengal**" were the other two dramas written during this period, but they failed to make an impact.

## TAMIL DRAMAS

Drama, the representative of the mimetic arts, as a genre was existing in the Tamil literature even during the age of **Tolkappiar**, as he has expounded the grammar for the dramatic art. As none of the ancient dramas in Tamil is available and as the language of the dramas was mostly set in chaste Tamil, it did not find favour with the literate **pulavars** except in the form of the musical dramas

called "Kuravanchi" and "Kirttanai Natakam". The dramatic companies from Maharashtra induced in the people of Tamilnadu the interest in the rejuvenation of dramas during the 19th Century. Dramas on patriotic feelings are not many in Tamil literature. The first nationalistic drama was written by K. Gopalachar in 1894. It was named "Sri Arya Sabha". It was greatly welcomed as it contained a good mixture of irony and advice for the Tamil audience. Though the dramatist pays tribute to queen Victoria, indicating the mentality of the Tamil people at that time, he poses adroitly such daring questions in the words of his characters as the right of the European magistrates to condemn the Swadeshis while the same right is denied to the Swadeshis and the lack of self respect and the sense of responsibility in the Tamilians while they are being cheated of their basic right. The dramatist has used a copious admixture of English words and sentences with Tamil words to poke fun at the Tamilian's tendency to depend upon the English language to express his thoughts. Some of the best dramas during the first two decades of the 20th century were written by Sata-vadanam T. P. Krishnaswamy Pavalar. They were "The National Flag", "The Victory of Khadi", "Pati Bhakti", "The Bombay Mail", "The Governor's Cup", "The adoration of Kadi" etc., though the last three dramas were based on social injustices and the people's responsibility to eradicate them. By far "The Victory of Khadi" was the most popular as it indicated a means of redemption for a young-girl-gone-astray to devote her whole life for the freedom of her country. It was also enacted in London and won the applause of the audience. "The National Flag" is based on the revolt at Nagpur about the use of the Indian National flag, which exposed the hatred the people had for the British rule.

Venkalattur Swaminatha Sharma's "Banapurattu Veeran" was also a very popular drama during the 1920s, as it was based on the life of Robert Bruce, the Scottish Hero of patriotism. Later with modifications in the story as "Deshabhakti" it was enacted with greated success by T. K. S. Brothers. The hanging of the hero Valisan had as much greater appeal of patriotism and public adoration as that of Kshudiram in Bengal. The drama, apart from its patriotic message, has other messages of liberty for women, equality of job-opportunities for women, social justice irrespective

of colour, creed and sex, technological independence etc. S. D. Sundaram's "Kaviyin Kanavu" is the symbolical drama of Indian war of independence. Later dramatists like Annadurai, Karunanidhi, wrote on themes of socialism and communism.

## NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES—BENGALI

Nationalism has not influenced the publication of short stories and novels as in the field of poetry and drama. The publishers and editors of newspapers were not interested in bringing them out as it would have involved the closing of the papers. Yet a few stories had been published during the Swadeshi Movement era in a few newspapers. Prabhatkumar Mukhopadhyaya had three of his short stories based on patriotism, "Ukiler Buddhi", "Khalas" and "Hate Hate Phal" published in the magazine "Prabasi"; Surendranath Majumdar had written one or two stories about nationalism. Induprakash, Bandhyopadhyaya wrote a book of short stories on patriotism called "Saptaparani". Ramendrasundar Tribedi, the famous essayist, wrote the short story "Bangalakshmir Vratkota" in the newspaper "Banga Darshan". Gangacharan Nag also wrote a novel titled "Rakhi-Kankan" but only the first part was published. Narayan Chandra Bhattacharya wrote "Nababidhan", a novel on the reformation of the British rule and the public awareness of the need. It is one of the best-written novels of that time. It portrays the lives of the lazy and the lethargic nature of the Bengal people.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote three novels titled "Gora", "Ghare Baire", and "Char Adhyay". "Gora" was published in the magazine "Prabasi." Gora is more based on the conflict of human nature and patriotism than on the national movement as such. In his "Ghare-Baire", Tagore has exposed the pseudo-patriots and their selfish purpose. "Char Adhyay" deals with the conflict between love and the self-negating idealism of a revolutionary. Kazi Nasrul Islam wrote "Thilimili" "Aleya" etc., touching patriotism. They were not enacted.

Tamil literature also can not boast of a sumptuous wealth in the fields of short stories and novels, though Tamil language and Tamil literature seem to have grown and developed out of the



forces of nationalism and revolutionism. Since V. V. S. Iyer was the first short-story writer in the twenties of this century, not many short stories based on patriotism can be found before his era in Tamil literature. V.V.S. Iyer wrote the first patriotic story in Tamil titled "Mangayarkkarasi" based on the French heroine, Joan of Arc. Kalki is the first Tamil writer and novelist who wrote a good variety of short stories in Tamil based on the sacrifices of the patriots. "The Execution" is a short story based the mental anguish of a judge who gave a wrong judgement based on false witnesses produced by the British police. "Bhavani, B.A., B.L.," is a story of utter sacrifice on the idealistic convictions and patriotic beliefs. "Kanayazhiyin Kanavu" is the story of the constructive influence of a signet ring upon the village youth to lead them towards village re-development programme to benefit the Indian villagers. "The guest of police" and the "Flower palanguin" are two short stories which expose the atrocities committed by even the petty officers of the British police. "The Roaring Sea" is a short story based on the life of V. Vu. Chidambaram Pillai and the revenge of the revolutionaries upon the British officials responsible for the imprisonment of V.V. Pillai. "Incognito" is a short story on the pitiable condition of a revolutionary who visits in disguise to console his old parents and his young wife.

C.S. Chellappan's "The Prayer" is a short story of great patriotism, based on the endless sacrifices the patriots are called upon to offer. Netaji Subhas Bose has always been a symbol of patriotism and heroism and hence the theme of many short stories. Kalki's "The Life Eternal" and Akilan's "The Offering" are based on the Indian National Army put together by S.C. Bose. Pudumaip-pittan has also written a few short stories on patriotism. "The Reformed Nandan" is based on the theme of unveiling the hypocrisy of the pseudo-patriotis, who merely preach but never practise their own ideas on the eradication of untouchability. Rajaji's "Mukundan" is also based on the horrors of casteism in South India. B.S. Ramaiah's "The Initiation" is a short story based on the sacrifice a young school girl makes to Gandhiji. Narana Duraikkannan's "The Giant Ravana" describes the colossal power of the illiterate public when roused.

Only a handful of novels on patriotic themes have been written in Tamil. The first to have received public acclaim is "Kandan, the patriot" written by K. S. Venkataramani in 1932. Though being the first novel, it is full of idealistic attitudes of the foreign-returned Tamilians, who decide to devote their whole lives in the service of the people of Tarangampadi instead of running after the prestigious government jobs. The dialogues and discussions of the hero, Rangan and the heroine, Rajeswari are full of youthful enthusiasm and immature idealism, yet bearing the seeds of practicable service towards the country, and integral effort. The novel is representative of the heroic and patriotic emotions of the youth of Tamilnadu. "Thiagabhoomi" is a very popular novel of Kalki, which was also filmed in the 1950s. Though the theme is not new, the treatment is new for it portrays the still-existing-caste problem and its repercussions on an innocent young brahmin girl, who even after being married to an able and educated young man, loses all hopes of marital bliss for the simple reason that her father, a brahmin, gave shelter to the Harijan refugees during the storm as the only way out, she educates herself and becomes a famous patriot, which offers her once again, the right to live a full mental life. Kalki, as the champion of education and emancipation for women has portrayed the transformation of an illiterate village girl into a dedicated patriot and social reformer. The writer uses the field of patriotism only in the later part of the novel, to portray the transformation of his heroine. His 'Alayosai' is fully based on the communal strife in North India before independence.

"Penn" by Akilan is a novel based on the myopic desire of the educated Indians to win the coveted jobs in the British government in India. Revolutionary and modern concepts of the social life of the Tamilians have been introduced by the writer.

K. Rajavelu, a patriot and a writer, records his experiences in the prison during the later part of the Indian national movement. His other novel, "The dormant Love" is a specimen of pure love and patriotism.

## SPEECHES AND ESSAYS

During the Swadeshi movement more speeches were made than essays were written for the simple reason the speeches were

easier and more spontaneous to make and achieved quicker responses. Where the atmosphere is more conducive for passionate outbursts and sentimental orations, there is little chance for concentrated compositions and the writers and speakers who had to keep their audience in mind. While the patriotic speakers aroused the spirit of nationalism by their emotion-filled-speeches in the minds of the literate and the illiterate alike, the non-participating essayists wrote down their thought-provoking and constructive ideas on paper for the literate. The aims of the speakers and the essayists were the same as those of the poets and the dramatists, namely, awakening the dormant patriotic feelings and the self-respect of the Indians, portraying the whole country as one mother to imbibe the spirit of universal brotherhood, kindling the desire to offer one's life for the freedom struggle and describing the great heritage of the country.

Swami Vivekananda's inspiring speeches at Chicago were a source of inspiration for the young nationalists, though Swamiji himself was no active participant. His soul-stirring speeches put the image of India on the high pedestal of Goddess Shakti. He himself was the symbol of courage. Strength and self-confidence.

"They (the British) have their heels on our necks, they have sucked the last drop of our blood for their own pleasures, they have starved in the villages and provinces".

"Throw aside your scriptures in the Ganges and teach the people first the way to procure food and clothing"

Bhudev Mukherjee wrote in Bengali in the Education Gazette in 1868 the perils of colonialism trying to arouse the love for the country in the minds of his people. Bankim's essays were greatly received for his genuine concern for the Bengali people, for his historical knowledge, which is a crucial weapon in any freedom struggle, for his strong and powerful language and for the delicate fusion of history and politics. He protested against Mecauley's sarcastic comments on the nature of the Bengalis-that they were weak, cowardly and female-like-and wrote a befitting reply in his "Banga Darsan" lamenting at the loss of self-respect by the

Bengali people in not retaliating to these comments. Akshay Chandra Sarkar was the first writer to use the language spoken by common man to reach every corner of Bengal. His magazine "Sadharani", "Arya Darsan" and "Jnanankur" followed the same style to attract the people's mind towards the political situation. Rajani Kanta Gupta was the first writer to write the history of the revolt of 1857 in Bengali. His books of essays "Aryakirti", "Bharatkahini" and "Viramahima" describe the causes for the Indian war of Independence. One of the best speakers of 1870s was Parivrajaka Krishnananda whose speeches are considered the gems of nationalism. Other speakers who were successful in their speeches were Brahma Bandhav Upadhyaya, Panchkodi Bandhyopadhyaya who wrote two essays on the execution of Kshudiram and another called "The Flute of Kanai", which was considered to be soul-touching by the readers.

Rabindranath Tagore has written seven books of essays on nationalism. They are 'Atmasakti', 'Bharatavarsha', 'Swadesh', 'Samaj', 'Siksha', 'Raja-praja', and 'Samuha' containing more than 75 essays. Jyotirindranath Tagore wrote his book titled 'Prabandha-Manjari' in 1888. Sakharam Deoskar, a Marathi writer, wrote in Bengali four books of essays titled 'Deshar Kota', 'Shivaji', 'Shivajir Diksha' and 'Is the Bengali-Hindu heading towards destruction?'. He was one of the best historians. Shibanath Shastri, a dedicated patriot, founder of 'Bharata Sabha' and 'The Indian Association', wrote very enlightening essays such as "Nabayuger Naba Prasna", "Samajic Shaktir Ghat Prati-ghat", "Jatiya Uddipana O Jatiya Sahitya" etc. Debiprasanna Raichaoudhry wrote many books of essays which were popular; "Sopan", "Prasad", "Santwana", "Dyuti", "Dipti" etc.

Aurobindo was a fine speaker and an essayist. He explained the meaning of freedom as "Political freedom is the life breath of a nation" and he emphasized the doctrine of passive resistance as an effective weapon in the struggle against foreign rule. He also explained "boycott" as "the refusal of co-operation in the industrial exploitation of the country, in education, in government, in judicial administration, in the details of official intercourse". He wrote several articles entitled "New Lamps for the Old" in "The Induprakash". Kazi Nazrul Islam's essays are contained in his

book "Rudramangal". He also wrote articles against the British rule and about the need for social justice the poor farmers of Bengal in his paper "Dhumaketu". In his speech at Bangiya Muslim Sahitya Samiti Silver Jubilee celebrations reflects on the immediate need for unity among Muslims and the Hindus.

Bipin Chandra Pal was one of the most popular speakers during the Swadeshi movement. He was an expert on political situations, sociology and metaphysics and a dedicated patriot. He was one of the best essayists in Bengali. He was the editor of Banga Darsan after Tagore and published most of his essays in the "Banga Darsan". Some of his best essays are contained in 'Raja O Praja', "Bangachchede Banger Avastha", "Nation or Jati", "Shivaji Utsav", "Shivaji Utsav O Bhavani Murti", "Pradeshic Samiti", "Rajabhakti", "Kongresi Kota", "Adhunik Sikshar Adarsa O Jabardastir Kokshiksha", "Bharater Bhavishyat" etc. Other popular writers were Dinendranath Tagore, Akshay Kumar Maitreya, Vijaya Chandra Majumdar, Jnanendralal Roy, Sarat Chandra Choudhury, Ramsunder Tribedi etc.

Mention must be made of the passionate speeches delivered by Surendranath Bannerji, which influenced the Swadeshi movement in Tamilnadu through such famous patriots as Nilakanta Brahmachari etc. His oratory excellence was appreciated by even the British officials. The joint oratory expertise of Surendranath Bannerji and Salem S. Vijayaraghavachari was instrumental in bringing to the notice of the intelligentsia of the country the great loss of the rights of a citizen in passing the Conspiracy Bill of 1913.

Tamilnadu can boast of such elite speakers as C. Vijayaraghavachari, V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, C. Subramaniya Bharati, Subramanya Shiva, S. Srinivasa Iyengar, S. Satyamurthy, C. Rajagopalachari, E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker, Kamaraja Nadar, Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu, V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, Editor Sadanand, Srinivasa Shastri etc.

Bharati, Shiva and pillai were considered the Trimurti of Tamilnadu. Bharati was the Bipin Chandra Pal of Tamilnadu. He was inspired by the speeches of Tilak, Lajpat Raj, Bipinchan

dra Pal and Sri Arabindo. Bharati's essays on freedom and independence, emancipation of women and the Harijan, dedication for the country are all inspirations for the Tamilians even today. Out of his great admiration for Bharati, Kanaka Subburatnam, his disciple, changed his name to Bharatidasan. Bharati's essays are collected together in 'Bharati Darisanam' and "Ilakkiya Manimalai"

Chidambaram Pillai was the first patriot to have started the "Quit India" movement in Tamilnadu. His speeches had so inflamed the people of Tirunelveli that the British tried to arrest him under any pretext. It is by the combined speeches of Pillai and Subramaniya Shiva that the struggle for freedom progressed rapidly in south India. What Bharati had dreamed had been executed by these two doyen expert speakers.

Salem Vijayaraghavachari was considered one of the best speakers by Lord Norton, the British public prosecutor. He was called the "Lion of South India". By his power of argument, he exposed the misrule of the British Government and asked for restitution of the rights of the Indian citizens. He was responsible for many of the reformatations in such varied fields as Indian press, Industries, Jail Administration, Indian Railways, Health and Medicine etc. He was the Indian consultant for any amendment of any act of Indian law. The Constitution of India and the fundamental rights of the citizen of India are all formed by him, It was he who explained to the literate intelligentsia of the country the merits and the demerits of the Non-co operation Movement. It was this 80 years old gentleman who, with tears in his eyes begged the people of India to win the independence by unity and not by diversity. Srinivasa Iyengar was another great speaker like Vijayaraghavachari, who had established his place in the Indian History of freedom movement.

V. V. Subramaniya Iyer was an active revolutionary and the editor of "Desabhaktan." He had translated Savarkar's "Indian War of Independence-1857" into English and published them in Dublin and sent them to India. His bit notices inviting the people

of India to Join the freedom Struggle were very much responsible for the great increase in the number of delegates for the national movement. He wrote articles on Rani Lakshmibai, Garibaldi, in Bharati's magazine, "India". V. V. S. Iyer also was the co-editor of the children's magazine "Bala Bharati". He was the first Tamilian writer to have done comparative study of Kamban and Milton. He had earned the praise from the People "To read V. V. S. Iyer, To hear Pillai and to sing with Bharati was a triple-fold pleasure".

Satyamurti and Rajaji were popular speakers and could sway the audience with their arguments. They both were active members of the Congress. So were Dr. Varadarajulu and C. Kamaraja Nadar. Varadarajulu was called the Tilak of Tamil Nadu and Kamaraj was called the Idealist in the Congress. Tamilians still remember Kamaraj's fiery speeches famous for its lucidity and rationality.

## CONTRIBUTION OF THE MAGAZINES

The great service done by the newspapers and magazines in spreading the spirit of patriotism all over the country inspite of massive obstructions cannot be estimated fully. Since the press Act of India came into force in 1857, the rage and the hatred of the British government for the vernacular and English magazines and Newspapers of India which where the instruments of the development of freedom Struggle, can very well be understood. While the Indian press fought the British government on the one side, on the otherside it contributed its great mite in awakening the spirit of patriotism in the soul of the Indian people.

In Bengal, "Banga Darsan" was the first vernacular monthly magazine which was edited first by Bankim Babu. Later Tagore, B. C. pal, Vijaychandra Majumdar etc., served as its editors "Bharati" was started by Dwijendranath Tagore, and Jyotirindranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarala Debi, Arabinda Ghosh, Shivanath Shastri, Amritlal Basu, Swarnakumari etc., served as its editors. "Pravasi" was started in Allahabad by Ramnanda Chattopadhyay and Rabindranath Tagore, Dhirendranath Choudhury, Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Satyendranath Datta

etc., enriched the magazine by their articles. "Bhandar" had Tagore as its editor and Chittaranjan Dass contributed some of his essays to it but it stopped publications soon. "Navya Bharat" was ably edited by Debeprasanna Racyhouthury and his son and writers like Syed Ismail Hossein Siraji, Nagendra Choudhury, Vidhubhusan Datta, Binoy Kumar Sarkar contributed their writings to it. There were other magazines such as "Sahitya", "Suprabhat", "Vasudha", "Swadeshi" "Manasi" etc., but they stopped publishing soon.

In Tamilnadu "Swadesamitran" was started by G. Subramaniya Iyer, the editor of "The Hindu". From a weekly magazine it became a daily after 2 years. Bharati served as the assistant editor in it. Later Bharati served in "India" as its editor in Puducheri, but his name was not mentioned. "India" was the first magazine to introduce the political cartoons. "India" was not allowed inside the Indian territory hence died soon. Soon the owners of "India" started a new paper "Vijaya", and Bharati was its editor, but it stopped publishing. Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu started "The Prapanchamitran" a weekly magazine and "The Tamilnadu" a daily newspaper. Both ran for a long time. "Desabhaktan" was enriched by V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar's articles and poems. The magazine stood for non-communalistic ideals. V. Ramaswamy Iyengar wrote enlightening articles in his Newspapers "Swatantran" and "Swarajya" with his distinguished style. He started another magazine "Manikkodi" but it died soon after offering some of the best essays of that time. T. S. Chokkalingam started the paper "Gandhi", which created fear in the British by its frank debate on the British "Careless Government". Apart from "New India" which was edited by Annie Besant, "Gandhi" was the only other magazine to have been harassed by the British Government. Sadanadu, who started the "Free Press" and distributed the news on the national front, started "The Dinamanl". Other elite papers of that era were "Kalki", "The Sundantira-c-chanku", "Ananda Vikatan", "Lokopakari", "Desabandhu", etc., Which continued to serve the country with their regular editions some of them like "Kalki",



“Ananda Vikatau”, “Dinamani” etc. are still continuing in their service to the nation.

## MODERN LITERATURE

The national leaders and the Indian people had a definite goal to achieve before the pre-independence era but once the euphoria born of the newly-won independence evaporated, disillusionment regarding the mismanagement and the malpractices prevalent in the Indian Government set in. Though the opposition parties had a hand in it, the people who had dreamed of an Utopian situation were completely disenchanted. The people also thought that they had worked enough and had earned their right to enjoy life without working for it. The wider span of education and the comparative knowledge of the development of the other democratic nations brought discontentment while the gradual acceptance of the socialistic and Marxist ideas by the people helped the labour class to ascend to power thus stressing the importance and the distinct contribution by the labour class to the agricultural, economical and the technical developments in the country. The literature of the post-independent era records the social and the political realism of the poets and the people. The still-unsolved-problems of the poor working class even many years after independence are the main themes of modern poems, and other genres.

The national literature of the post-independence era deals with such themes as national integration and universal brotherhood emancipation of people belonging to the backward classes, corruption and malpractices in the country, the continuing conflict between traditional values and mechanization, influence of Marxist ideas etc.

The adage, “National Integration”, came into being as regionalism a by-product of the Indian war of independence, started flourishing in dangerous proportions as to want autonomy for each language based state. The selfish and the opportunist politicians belonging to the opposition parties tried to capitalize by inflaming on the languagemania of the short-sighted people of their states. It is ironic that while eminent scholars and poets

sponsored the concept of universal brotherhood and national integration, other disruptive forces tried to demolish the very solemn idea of unity among diversity. Forces of integration and disintegration seemed to thrive on the same masses, vying with each other to have the upper hand.

Poets like Satyendranath Datta proclaimed :

"There is one race in the world ;  
That is called the human race:  
Brought up on the lap of the earth,  
With sun and moon as friends."

(The Castes)

"Fishermen and fishmongers,  
Boatsmen and warriors,  
Ironsmiths and blacksmiths,  
Cobblers and potters,  
Weavers and farmers,  
Gardeners and gate-keepers,  
All are equal, all are good."

(The Castes)

Kaviyarasan decries casteism existing everywhere with government support while great speeches are made with sophisticated intention of eradicating it completely.

"All thy streets loudly proclaim  
The existence of various castes.  
Each caste proudly boasting  
A fraternity in its name.  
Caste still exists everywhere,  
In schools and in offices,  
Gaining hold during elections,  
Bringing gain to electioneers only.  
Hast thou got rid of casteism ?  
Does it still lurk in thy hearts ?  
Does it still lurk in thy homes ?"

(Kaviyappavai : Mudiyyarasan)

Great politicians have recognised and appreciated the huge contribution of the people belonging to the lower and the backward classes, and have insisted on the improvement of their

appalling situation continuing even 40 years after independence. Despite the "Garibi Hatao" slogans and plans to eradicate poverty, there still exists a wider gap between the living standards of the rich and the very poor of India.

"Without the farmers, now I know,  
There can be no progress for us.  
They are the soul of the nation"

(Emancipation : Jatindra Nath Sengupta)

Bharatidasan paints the glaring poverty of the farmers.

"No house for them to live in ;  
No schooling for their kids ;  
No freedom from illness and want ;  
Daily miseries galore,  
How can this nation ever progress ?"

(Isaiyamudu — Bharathidasan)

Mudiyarasan goes a step further to paint the poverty of the people.

"Hut full of holes,  
Lives there a small boy,  
Not a single morsel of food,  
Not even a piece of rag,  
To hide his naked shame.

(Kaviyappavai — Tamilar Valvu)

Half-naked Gandhi, the father of the nation, must be turning in his grave.

Subhas Mukhopadhyay glimpses hope for the down-trodden in the near future in his poem "Phool Phota" (The bloom) and Sukanta Bhattacharya hopes for emancipation of the poor in his "Suchana", (The Indication). Mangalacharan Chattopadhyay conceives the pain a mother feels for her quarrelling sons in "Janani Jantrana" (The Anguish of a mother).

Satire is generally the main form for generally exposing the folly or the disreputable act of an individual or a set of people. It

is ideal for criticising the negligence of the government in abolishing corruption and the malpractices which exist as incurable diseases in the country sapping the lifeblood of the country.

“You left in our hands  
A great bown of nectar.  
Now we have in our hands  
A great beggar’s bowl.  
Who are the great magicians  
Who made this transformation ?”  
(Greetings from a Streetsinger to the  
Father of the Nation : M. Mahta)

“AND when will those  
Remaining day-decoits  
Sapping us  
Will seek asylum ?” (Asylum : Mira)

The idiotic party-hopping by the M.L.As. which was banned recently has been target of many poets and writers.

“The M.L.A, in our town  
Has the speed of lightning !  
In the span of seven months,  
He has hopped eight parties.  
Not a great feat for him.  
Were there seventy parties,  
He would have won  
The record for party-hopping’.” (M.L.A. : Mira)

While A. Valliappa advises that children should be taught to respect their country from their birth to instill a spirit of patriotism in their young hearts, Samar Sen laments the loss rest for life in our youths and their addiction to Hashish to search for their identity.

“Sad and tired of life,  
Their dual personality tormenting,  
Lost in anxiety and confusion,  
Youth searches for Hashish.”

(The National Calamity : Samar Sen)

The novels and the short stories of the post independence era deal with the sociological problems with a view to social reformation and rehabilitation of the downtrodden and the outcasts such as the prostitutes. Some of the still existing problems such as the terrible dowry system, the problems of intercaste marriage and poverty, the farce of elections, the problems of labour unions and the impact of mechanization on the rural people etc have been the themes of the modern Bengali and Tamil novels and short stories.

Caste has been the main curse of the Indians though in the modern era, it has more or less been wiped out, in other parts of the country, it still exists in the southern parts to a great extent. Hence the inter-caste marriages pose certain sociological problems. Sarat Chandra Chatterji has dealt with it extensively in his novels and short stories such as "The Daughter of a Brahmin" and in "Mahesh". R. Venkataraman has tried to solve it in his "Anaiya Vilakku" (The unextinguished Lamp). Rehabilitation of the people belonging to the backward classes and the prostitutes has been another popular theme immediately after independence. "Alli" by M. Varadarajan, "Adum Madum" (The cattle) by Vindan, "Aler Pipasa" (The thirst for light) and "Uttar Phalguni" are the novels in Tamil and Bengali dealing with this theme. The disillusionment of the people is based on the farce of elections held since independence for only the politicians have benefitted out of them and poverty is yet to be eradicated. The mask of the pseudo politician is exposed in "Kayamai" (Cheating), by M. Varadarajan "Ponmalar" (The golden flower) by Akilan and "Nenjakkanaal" (The fire of the soul) by N. Parthasarathy in Tamil while Tarashankar deals with it in his "Ganadevata" (The god of the people) and "Pancha Gram" (The five villages) in Bengali. Sunil Gangopadhyay has dealt with it in his "Nilu Hazra Hatya Kanda" (The secret of the murder of Nilu Hazra).

The poverty of the people in the villages and their non-conformity to mechanization and technological progress in the country is the theme of such novels in Tamil as "Kallum Mannum" (The Rock and the earthy) by K. Ratnam, "Verum Iviudum" (The Roots) by K. Subramaniam "Kurihjit Ten"

(The Honey of the Mountains) by Rajam Krishnan while in Bengali Sirshendu Mukherji deals with it in his "Ascharya Pradip" (The Magic Lamp), "Cricket" and in "Kagajer Bau" (The Paper-wife). Buddha Dev Guha deals with it in his "Kojagar" (The full Moon of the Sixth Month) and in his short stories "Indur" (The Rats) and "Tata". The village serenity and simplicity is portrayed in Tamil "Malarum Carugum" (The Flower and the Dead Leaf) by T. Selvaraj and in Bengali "Ganadevata" by Tarashankar Bandhyopadhyaya. The influence and the importance of the labour unions on the people of the village is brought out by "Shankar" in his "Marubhumi" and by Samaresh Basu in his "Tin Purush" (The three generations). In Tamil, Rajam Krishnan describes how the trade unions help the poor people of the village in her novels "Cetril Manidargal" (The people of the land) and in "Alaivaik Karayinile" (On the Shores).

A few writers have tried to point out the advantages and the disadvantages of the joint family system as well as the domestic problems in the modern times. Many women writers in Tamil and in Bengali have approached it from the point of view of a woman. Writers like "Lakshmi", Rajam Krishnan, R. Cudamani Ashapurna Devi, Maitreyi Devi have been in the fore in these two decades, as Bengali novels like "Pratam Pratiruti" (The first promise) by Ashapurna Devi and "Na Hanyate" (The indestructible) by Maitreyi Devi have won these women writers world-wide fame. Rajam Krishnan is famous for her continuous battle for the emancipation of women in her novels "Bharata Kumarigal" "Kurinjit Ten" etc. One fact that can be construed from these literary works is that each writer has pointed out a specific problem but none has pointed out a distinct solution for the same.

There have been many essays on the modern political situation. Cho has won fame through his continuous genuine criticism of the Central and the Regional governments for their short-sighted policies. The influence of Marxism during the seventies and the eighties of this century is unestimable. Writers like Manik Bandhyopadhyay and Sukanta Bhattacharya have influenced the people of Bengal by their literary works. Marxism, as a concept of idealistic political science, has been acceptable to most of the rationalists and radicals but its influence has not found root so easily in

all the parts of India. In the south, the D.M.K. has been more powerful than Marxism, yet Marxist ideas have found roots there.

Nationalistic literature in Bengali and in Tamil has been written and is still being written, using various techniques to increase the wealth of Indian literature. The firm dedication, which was the life blood of the Swadeshi Movement, is latent now as there is no immediate threat to the nation from inside as well as from outside. This love for the country will, if necessary, spurt out from the fountain head of our ancient cultural and historical heritage which is our very own.

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# FOLK TRADITION IN MODERN BENGALI LITERATURE

Subhas Chandra Bandyopadhyay

In the realm of our vast modern Bengali literature a good number of influence are stretching here and there. Many critics have highlighted the influence of ancient Sanskrit literature on the one hand and on the other the impact of Western literature on the growth of this Bengali literature. These scholars have divided this influence into two groups, viz., (i) The Influence of Sanskrit, (ii) The Western Influence. Many research based books have already been written to point out these two influences and still are being written in recent times. But another influence of vital importance that has also given the inspiration to the development of our literature has missed the notice of the research workers and scholars that is our folk tradition and influence of folklore. In every country there are two streams of literature, - one is written and another unwritten. Any culture has also two facts, — one classical another verbal or popular or traditional. These two features of literature and culture are not different, rather interrelated with one another but so long it has not been noticed. Rabindranath has opined in his treatise 'Loksahitya' — 'the root of the tree remains deep in the soil and its upper part remains stretched towards the sky, so also the lower part of literature remains covered under the soil of the country to a great extent ..... in this way there is always an interrelated link between lower and upper part of literature. There can not be any comparison between lower roots upper branches, flowers and fruits; yet their similarities

root and link can not be lost sight of to the truth-seekers' (page-58). Having taken the above remark of Rabindranath as probable I have tried to show in my research work that modern Bengali literature is not the product of Western literature and our literature has not grown only imitating the form and content of Sanskrit literature, and there is also a strong inspiration of folk tradition behind it. Our Bengali literature has proved the fact that many elements of folk literature and folk culture (form and content) have contributed to its growth and thus it has become a literature of the Bengalees and Bengal in the true sense of the term.

The awakening of thought of the Bengalees and the great revolution in Bengali literature of the Nineteenth century have been known as 'Renaissance' or 'New Awakening' to modern doctrine of socialism. The Historians opine, 'The medieval period of India saw its end on 23rd June, 1757 and on and from this date, the new era began.'

(History of Bengal : Sir Jadunath Sarker, second volume). The rule of Mughal Emperors had firm base in Bengal towards the end of the 16th century. The undenyng influence of Mughal Emperors had clutched the feudal power of Parthan rule and controlled it fully by rule and exploitation and gradually new urban life was ushered in to fill in the gap of ancient life. The feudals who were the torch-bearers of medieval Bengali culture were weakened in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The people who got the right in place of old Zaminders, were least concerned with education and culture. In the later period these people were the chief patrons of 'Kabigan' 'Akhras' etc., etc., of culture of lower taste. Rabindranath says, 'The songs of the Kabiwalas is the interim gap between the ancient and modern Bengali literature'. So, Rabindranath has imagined it as the unexpected wind of the short durable twilight sky and he has also said that the main object of Kabiwalas was to create a temporary excitement rather than literary aesthetic creation (Loksahitya-page : 52).

Then there began an unprecedented change within half a century in the social and political life of Bengal, under the rule and exploitation of Clive, Hastings, Cornwallis and Wellesly.

The medieval age took its departure from the life and culture of the Bengalees. The dynamic vivacity of Europe first knocked to aur bolted door. The meaning of this modernism was individualism, humanism, thirst for learning, yearning for freedom from superstition, scientific intellectualism, socialism, naturalism and longing for women's emancipation. This change in the thinking and literature made the Bengalees and Bengali literature modern and Iswar Gupta was the the exponent of this modernism.

Dr. Sukumar Sen, the writer of repute of the history of Bengali literature says: "Iswar Gupta (1812-1859) bridged the gulf between the ancient and modern era of Bengali literature. Inspite of being a follower of old tradition he drew practical living pictures, inspired with national spirits, created poignant humour and satire. One of the chief traits of his poetic genius was to admit simultaneously the influence of the old and the new. Although there are marks of modernism in Iswar Gupta's creation yet evidence of folk or popular life plays no less important role in it. In the words of Bankim Chandra, 'Iswar Gupta is a post of what is already in existence. He is the poet of this Bengali society. He is the poet of the society of Calcutta. He is the poet of Bengal's rural life'".

This is to be admitted that there is folklore influence in every sphere of our modern Bengali literature, although it is influenced by both the Sanskrit and Western literature. In the words of critic Mohitlal, the strong influence of the West, education and training; taste, hope and faith-completely won over him. But in his innermost self his Bengalee feeling had a cry under the pressure of Western influence.....having lost everything, lōsing humanity, he feels still within his soul the self sacrifice of women's love and affection; and as this feeling has not died out he is not completely ruined. That feeling kept the Bengali sentiment of the poet of Meghnad Badh unshattered ...The holy halo of Bengalee's house-hold life, the affection of his mother in his heart and the wonderful memory of his mother's religion protected him from being irreligious. In this way the inner self had a great stirring by the strike of the out storm, This commotion was needed, for this the true self of the

Bengalee was awakened. So Madhusudhan did not lack in any arrangement to build up a modern epic; viz., in rhyme scheme and diction of Homer and Milton, the imagination of Dante, Virgil and above all the living inspiration of Western Literature, more so he had even the talent of individualising the poetic tune of the West. In the words of the critic; the poet, real poet as he was, what he composed in the form of epic, he only composed the lyrical epic of Bengali life. So, undoubtedly Madhusudhan the precursor of modernism was within himself a true Bengalee. And his Meghnad Badh, Brojangana, and his sonnets bore this evidence. In the later period starting through Rabindranath to our modern age the current of an indigenous folk tradition has been flowing, and innumerable popular elements have been collected.

A similar trend is noticed in the field of Bengali drama. The first evidence of dramatic form of 'Krishnalila' is seen in Joydev's 'Gitagobindam' and Baru Chandidas's 'Sri Krishna Kirtan'. It can be said undoubtedly that from the songs and dialogues of these poems the inspiration of future 'Jatragan' came. The evidence of folk song and dance is clear in 'Jhumur' relating to Krishnalila and 'Dhamali'. Even in the future modern drama, the excess of song-tradition and song-blended acting has been followed. The predominant influence of songs which is evident right from the modern playwright Girish Chandra to Manomohan Bose was the result of the influence of 'Srikrishna Kirtan', 'Bengali Krishna Jatra' and ancient Jatra.

Besides this, in the trend of our modern drama there is the influence of popular 'Natyagiti' Jhumur, Panchali, Kabigan, Tarja, Jatra and different types of folk drama, viz., Alkap, Bolan, Gambhira etc. In the opinion of Dr. Sukumar Sen, when Manmohan started writing dramas, naturally he was influenced by his predecessors' 'jatra, panchali etc. In fact the dramas of Manomohan were the blend of 'old Natgiti' and the modern pattern of Sanskrit-English oriented drama. This pattern brought about a new direction in the realm of Bengali drama. In the mythological drama of Manomohan the affection and devotion of old jatra and panchali were seen in a new bottle. This trend has been given a flowery and consummate form by Girish Chandra in

his drama. There is no denying the fact that the popular folk traditions of modern drama of Bengali are the Jatra, Panchali, Kabigan, Tarja, Jhumur and Sri Krishna Kirtan. The modern trend of dramas which had its start from the middle part of nineteenth century can be roughly called 'Gitavinoy' (song-drama). According to the direction of a historian of dramatic literature it is as follows: 'It did not appear only following the foot-step of ancient Krishnajatra, nor was it the inevitable culmination of new pattern of jatra, rather it appeared on the foundation of ancient jatra and new pattern of jatra being formed after the ideal of English oriented Bengali dramas....It was inter-related with indigenous, old and new pattern of jatra as such it could satisfy the appreciation-trend of our countrymen on the one hand and on the other it could also satisfy those who were inclined to follow the new trend of appreciation for the demand of the new age'. If we discuss the form of modern drama, it will be seen that it has taken songs and 'Chara' from the jatra, some dialogues from Panchali and Kabigan and some characters and style of language from Western drama. So, the big dramatic trend of modern drama was the result of the combination of the influence of Sanskrit, Western and popular "Natyagiti". Besides this, there are also the abundance of influence of proverb and folk rhyme, etc. The tendency to use proverb and folk rhyme in Bharat Chandra, Ram Prosad and Rameshwar in their writings was extended to the nineteenth century over. But in modern Bengali literature this tendency to use proverb and folk rhyme abundantly was seen from second decade to the fourth decade. The varieties of living appreciative (Humorous) literature which was started from Bhabani Charan, Hutom, Tekchand and extended upto Dashu Roy, Iswar Gupta and Dinabandhu were abundantly flavoured with proverbs and popular folk rhymes. These were highly appreciated by the readers and the public.

In the background of our modern Bengali prose fiction there are the traditions of fairy tales, legendary tales, folk tales, fables, etc. In the opinion of a noted critic of fiction: 'In our popular story and fairy tales these are the wonderful presage of future fiction. In fact, in ancient literature it is the fairy tale with all its improbability that has approached nearer to fiction. At least in two aspects its similarity can be clearly felt with fiction. Firstly,

its chief attraction is its plot. like the fiction, it is a pure, unmixed story.....Secondly, although there is supernaturalism to a great extent, although there is the magical shadow in its air, yet a deep observation will reveal that the writer having shown the earthly and social behaviour of man has put in it his own criticism. So, the motive of the writer behind the fiction as well as the fairy tale is more or less the same'. Besides this, the sense of realism in the creation of natural surroundings and characterisation of the Bengali ballads, has influenced the fiction of future age. Many elements of popular faith, ballads, lyric rhymes, riddles proverbs, popular festival, etc., can be found in the structure of our modern Bengali fiction. In the background of Bankim Chandra's romance there is the tradition of popular fairy tales. There are abundance of proverbs, ballads and riddles in Piarichand Mitra and Kali Prasanna Sinha and also there are abundant evidences of popular folk tradition in many modern writers like Saratchandra, Tarasankar, Bibhuti Bhusan and Manik Bandyopadhyay.

# **SUBRAMANIA BHARATHI AND KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

**S. KRISHNAMOORTHY**

Of the two poets Subramania Bharathi and Kazi Nazrul Islam, Bharathi is the senior chronologically. He wrote during the first two decades of this century. Nazrul commenced writing towards the close of the second decade and was active during the next two.

Bharathi was well-acquainted with the literary genius of Rabindranath Tagore who was then at the height of his glory. Bharathi has translated some stories of Rabindranath and has paid him handsome tributes on various occasions.

On the other hand Nazrul had no knowledge of his Tamil counterpart. This is unfortunate, for Nazrul would have greatly appreciated Bharathi's fiery patriotism, love for the common man, championship of the weak and the down-trodden, religious tolerance and, above all, his love of life.

There was quite a lot in common in the internal circumstances of life of the two poets. They were both born in poor, ordinary families. Of course, Nazrul's family was much poorer than Bharathi's. Nazrul had to struggle in dire poverty ever since

birth. He was nick-named 'Dukhu Mian' (The unhappy one) perhaps in recognition of this fact. At the age of eight he lost his father and had to take over the family burden. He had to serve at the mosque, tend the holy grave, teach at school and also officiate as a priest to eke out a meagre livelihood. He had to work as a domestic servant and then serve in a teashop for free food and a monthly salary of one rupee. His studies were frequently interrupted thanks to grinding poverty and to his own restless spirit.

Bharathi had a more or less uninterrupted schooling. Even though he lost his father when he was sixteen, he was able to complete his matriculation with the help of relatives.

Bharathi had to live in poverty throughout his life. He never earned much. In contrast Nazrul earned quite a lot for a few years when he was at the apex of his creative powers. No Bengali writer other than Rabindranath and Sarat Chandra perhaps earned as much as Nazrul those days. He was at one time affluent enough to employ a Nepali Watchman. He even had a car for some time. But he was careless with money and generous to a fault. He was simple, kind and too trusting. People, specially his so-called friends, exploited his kindness and cheated him of his money. His publishers who fattened on his writings took undue advantage of his poverty and simplicity. As a result Nazrul had to spend most of his life in dire want. He was obliged to sell of the copyright of his works for paltry sums. He was dragged to the court for debt and had to shut himself up at his residence for fear of creditors.

Another thing common to both Bharathi and Nazrul is their short working life; Bharathi died in his thirty ninth year. Nazrul remained in full control of his senses only for forty three years. Yet their literary output was phenomenal.

Both Bharathi and Nazrul took up writing as their career at a time when it was foolhardy to think of making a living by writing alone. Both commended their working life with journalism. Bharathi first worked in "Swadesamitran", then took charge of "India" and then "Bala Bharatha", an English weekly. For some



time he published 'Vijaya' — Daily, 'Suryodayam' — weekly and 'Karmayogi' - Monthly.

Nazrul contributed to 'Muslim Bharat' and many other magazines. He then became Joint Editor of 'Nabajug', Daily. Then he published 'Dhumketu' Biweekly and then successively the weeklies Langal and 'Ganabani'.

Journalistic experience stood the two poets in good stead. It developed their personality, sharpened their writing ability and widened their outlook. In the course of their work they came in daily contact with world events. They translated the world news from English into their mother tongue and wrote editorials and other articles on the events happening around them. This knowledge and experience enriched the contents of their literary works.

The most significant change brought about by the two poets was in the language, style and content of poetry. Before the advent of Bharathi literary Tamil was the hand maid of pandits and beyond the comprehension of the average man. The theme of poetry was confined to the praise of local deities or of royal or aristocratic patrons. It was Bharathi who released the language from the strangle hold of pandits and made it simple enough to be understood and appreciated by the common man. And he took for his themes the burning problems of the life around him such as the enslaved condition of the country, social and economic inequality and the inferior status of women in Indian Society. He wrote in a simple language on subjects which were of immediate relevance to the common people. Many of his poems could also be sung. They became popular and inspired the people for the first time, of the beauty, power and sweetness of their language. In short Bharathi democratized the Tamil language and Tamil poetry.

The same can be said of Nazrul also. He started writing at a time when Rabindranath was at the Zenith of his glory. Rabindranath's poetry was receiving critical acclaim all over the world but it was too serious and too philosophical for the average man. Nazrul wrote poems on the issues of the day such as freedom,

equality, religious tolerance and upliftment of women and in a language familiar to the common man. Many of his poems were sung by himself then at and political meetings and workers' colonies, thus inspiring and educating the masses. His choice of words of every day-use angered the purists who accused him of writing trash in the name of Poetry. But their attack did not deter Nazrul who replied to them :

“Big words, and big thoughts  
Do not accur to me, alas, my friend ;  
I am in great pain !  
Well, those of you who are happy,  
You may write immortal poetry.”

Both the poets were revolutionaries. Nazrul is called the ‘Bidrohi Kabi’ (The Reble Poet). It was Bharathi who coined the Tamil word “Puratchi” to signify revolution. It is interesting to note that in Tamil the term “Revolutionary Poet” is applied to Bharathidasan, a literary disciple of Bharathi.

Both the poets suffered for their revolutionary beliefs and writings. Nazrul was condemned to one year rigorous imprisonment and had to suffer much in jail. He even went on hunger-strike for thirty nine days to protest against the harsh inhuman treatment meted out to the political prisoners. He was sentenced to prison again but was spared the punishment because of the Gandhi-Irwin act. I He was harassed by spies all his life. His best and popular books were proscribed and forfeited. Thus he was deprived of his livelihood. But all this persecution did not break his spirit.

Bharathi too fell into the bad books of the alien rulers and had to take shelter in Pondicherry to avoid imprisonment. There he continued to be harassed by government spies. His writings were proscribed and the magazines edited or publised by him were refused entry in the then British India. But Bharathi remained undaunted.

Both the poets took active part in the political and social movements of their time. Bharathi attended the Baranasi Congress (1905) and the Surat Congress (1907). Nazrul attended the

Calcutta Congress (1920). He was one of the founders of the Labour Swaraj Group of the Indian National Congress in 1925 and became the producer of the Group's mouthpiece 'Langal' weekly. In 1926 this group came out of the Congress and formed itself into "The Bengal Peasants and Workers Party". Nazrul became the producer of the Party's organ 'Ganabani' which replaced 'Langal'. He worked in close contact with Deshbanu Chittaranjan Das and Subhas Chandra Bose both of whom were his heroes. He participated with them in the Tarakeswar Satyagraha against the tyrannous and immoral activities of the 'mahant'. The success of this movement was in no small measure due to the fiery song he sang on that occasion.

Both poets had similar political views. Bharathi belonged to the 'extremist' school and considered that Gangadhar Tilak as his political guru. Needless to say where the sympathies of the 'Bidrohi Kabi' lay. Nazrul did not believe that independence can be achieved by spinning and non-violence. The hero of his novel 'Mrityukshudha' says, "from yarn we may get cloth, not independence for the country." Nazrul's songs were very popular with the freedom-fighters of the day. It is significant to note that even though these fighters were divided into different camps, each camp looked upon Nazrul as its own bard. This is an index of Nazrul's influence over the freedom movement of his time.

Despite their leaning towards extremism both these poets were great admirers of Mahatma Gandhi and this admiration found expression, in song. Bharathi wrote 'Mahatma Gandhi Panchakam', a poem of five stanzas in praise of Gandhiji as one who was born to liberate his enslaved and down-trodden countrymen.

Nazrul, though no believer in the efficacy of the Charkha as a weapon in the battle for freedom, nevertheless sang the 'Song of the Charkha', out of his reverence for Gandhiji. In this song he describes the music of the spinning wheel as the welcome song for the chariot of freedom. He says that the Charkha spins the thread of Hindu-Muslim unity. When the disrobed Bharat prayed to be saved from disgrace the Charkha came to her rescue with its gift of cloth. The Charkha was verily the Sudarshan Chakra

which punished the tyrant who dared to disrobe the `Bharat-Draupadi.

Nazrul's admiration for Gandhiji finds expression in 'Pagal Pathik' (The Mad Wayfarer) :

“Who's this mad wayfarer)  
That comes running to his mother in chains?  
With him come his brothers thirty crores,  
Singing songs that laugh at Death.  
Who's this that has come forward  
To break the fetters of this enslaved land?  
Who's this that climbs up the alter of bondage  
And blows the conch of liberty ?”

Nazrul wrote 'Banglai Mahatma' (Mahatma in Bengal) to commemorate Gandhiji's visit to Bengal :

“Who comes there now  
Along the hated path  
Breaking the doors of Kamsa's prison ?  
Siva dances on the bunal gound  
And lo, flowers blossom at his every step”

Both Bharathi and Nazrul were, first and foremost, bards of Freedom. 'Bidrohi', the poem which catapulted Nazrul into fame is an impassioned outpouring of the spirit of Freedom :

“Say, hero —  
Say — 'I hold my head high !  
At sight of me  
The Himalay bows down his head in shame!...”

In this poem the poet compares himself to the heroes of history and the holiest of both the Hindu and the Muslim tradition. He projects himself as the destroyer of tyranny and exploitation and as the harbinger of the dawn of brotherhood, equality and liberty. Revolutionary thought, yearning for freedom and the feeling of universal brotherhood expressed in powerful words and in a grand style have justly earned for this poem an unique place in world literature.

The proud fearlessness of 'Bidrohi' was anticipated by Bharathi in his songs :

"We fear not, we fear not,  
Though the whole world against us turn,  
We fear not, we fear not !

.....  
Though the skies over our heads do fall,  
We fear not, we fear not !"

"Blow the trumpets, blow, blow !  
We've driven out the demon of Fear ;  
And of the snake named Falsehood  
We have drunk the blood:.....

Bankim Chandra's vision of India as the Mother had an irresistible appeal for Bharathi. He rendered two Tamil translations of 'Bande Mataram' and also composed many songs in a similar vein. In the poem 'Bharatha Matha' he narrates the ancient glories of this land as the exploits of Bharatha Matha. He visualises her as one with thirty crore faces but one life, one who speaks eighteen languages but has one thought.

One genre of Indian poetry consists of 'Jagarani' songs or 'Bodhan' songs which are sung to awaken the deity from slumber in the early morning. Bharathi looked upon India as the divine mother and composed a 'bodhan' song in which he asks her :

"Willst thou sleep, mother,  
When your children call?

.....  
Can a mother ignore  
Her children's lisp ?"

In the poem 'Yearning for liberty' he asks :

"Would a mother brush aside  
Her children that seek protection ?....."

Nazrul personifies the motherland as goddess Durga. She is as near to him as a mother to her child. He does not hesitate to

chide her when he feels that she has not done justice to her god-head. In the poem 'Anandamoyeer Agamane' (the poem for which he was sent to jail) he asks her :

"How long wilt thou remain concealed  
Inside an image of clay?

.....

Verily merciless art thou :

.....

Countless are the goats and buffaloes thou hast swallowed  
And still is not they hunger satisfied ? "

Echoing the similar sentiment of Bharathi, Nazrul asks Mother India :

"How canst thou remain indifferent, mother,  
when they children, thirty crores, call thee ? "

Both Bharathi and Nazrul freely draw on the characters and incidents of history and mythology to illustrate the contemporary situation. Shivaji's inspiring exhortation to his solidiers finds eloquent expression in Bharathi's poetry. In this 'Panchal Sabatham' (Panchali's vow) Bharathi narrates the story of the outrage attempted on Draupadi and her vow to avenge the disgrace caused to her. Here Draupadi personifies Mother India subjected to untold misery by the alien conqueror. Though the spirited vow of Panchali Bharathi obliquely conveys the message that Mother India too would avenge all the injustice done to her.

A similar sentiment is expressed in Nazrul's poem 'Dushasaner Raktapan' (Drinking the blood of Dushasana). Dushasana represents the tyrant, the exploiter of our motherland. The 'Song of the Charkha' also contains an allusion to the outrage on Draupadi. There are plenty of historical and mythological allusions in Nazrul's poems, especially those in which he attacks exploitation, injustice and inequality. In one poem Nazrul declares that Rudra has woken up among the so-called lower classes who are indispensable to society but are nevertheless persecuted, by it. In another poem he calls on Rudra to come

down heavily on the exploiters of woman in the same way as he once avenged the insult to Parvathi during Dakshayagna.

Bharathi was greatly pained by the laziness, cowardice, superstition and ignorance of his countrymen. His heart bled to see their plight. He was particularly hard on false patriots whom he compares to those.

“Who at heart thirst for toddy  
While chanting aloud the name of siva”.

His impatience with the moderate leaders finds satirical expression in ‘Ascetic Gokhale’s song’.

Similar sentiments find an echo in Nazrul’s writings. In his poem ‘Bidrohir Bani’ he describes the false patriots thus

“They mouth the slogan of liberty  
But their thought is always of money alone ;

.....

To become a leader is all they want ;  
Liberty is just an idle talk.”

In his poem ‘Amar Kaifiyat’ (My explanation) he addresses the false patriots thus :

“Half-leader already you’ve become ;  
When’ll you become full-leader  
If you let slip this chance ?  
When you start speaking,  
Keep chilli — powder ready  
To produce tears to order !  
And don’t forget  
To utilise this opportunity  
For getting your house repaired !”

For both the poets freedom did not mean just political freedom. It meant freedom in all spheres of human life, freedom from all forms of exploitation and injustice. Barāhthi sings of

the equality of all people without considerations of caste, creed, language, sex and wealth :

"We're all one family, one race ;  
We're all Indians.  
We're all of equal right, equal value ;  
We're all kings of this nation.

In his famous song 'Viduthalay' Bharathi Sings :

"Freedom, freedom, freedom !  
To the paraiahs, to the thiyas, to the pulayas, freedom !  
To the paravas, to the puravas, to the maravas, freedom !  
.....  
There's none among us poor or slave —  
Degraded men there are none in India".

Himself a brahmin, Bharathi displays the courage of his convictions when he sings :

"Gone are the days  
When the brahmin was called 'Iyer',  
And the white man was called 'Durai',  
Gone are the days  
When the receivers were saluted,  
When we served those who cheated us.

('Iyer' and 'Durai' are terms of respect meaning 'master'.)

As already mentioned Nazrul was among the first protagonists of the working class movement in the country. In an article he says, "My brave man, raise your head and declare 'We are all free, we are all Kings !' " In his poem 'Samya' (Equality) he describes thus his ideal society :

"There's no king or subject here ;  
None there is poor or rich ;  
None can here enjoy milk and butter  
While others do not get even broken rice".

In the poem 'Fariad' (Complaint) he tells God :



**"The world you created  
Belongs to all"**

In the poem 'Raja-Praja' he says :

**"I have a simple question ;  
We are all children of this earth ;  
Then why is one king and another his subject ? "**

His 'Shramik majur' (Labourer) is a manifesto of the oppressed classes :

**"We were ignorant  
And the learned ones cheated us.  
But now we know our power  
And will suffer oppression no longer ?  
These our hands constructed the palaces ;  
The same hands can bring them down ! "**

Nazrul wrote songs in praise of the labourer, the peasant and the fisherman and exhorted them to demand their just rights from society.

Bharathi declares with revolutionary spirit :

**"If a single individual is forced to starve,  
We will destroy the world !"**

Nazrul sings with equal ferour :

**"Those who snatch and devour  
The food of thirty crores —  
Let their destruction be written  
In letters of my blood ! "**

One of the worst injustices of the present day society is the exploitation of woman by man. Both Bharathi and Nazrul believed that freedom and equality are but hollow words as long as women are treated as slaves. In his song 'Viduthalai' Bharathi declares :

**"We will burn down the ignorance  
Which looks own on woman."**

He coined the term 'Pudumaippen' (The new woman) to signify his ideal of the woman who is equally adept in running the household and in administering the country. In his 'Kummi on Woman's freedom' he condemns the prevailing double standards of morality, the pernicious custom of dowry and denial of equal rights to women.

Nazrul admired and worshipped the woman. He has praised her beauty, love, affection and power in many of his writings. He attacked the system of purdah and advocated equal rights for women. The mother in the woman inspired him with respect. In his poem 'Nari' (Woman) he rebukes those who dismiss the woman as a form of 'maya' (illusion) :

"Woman, thou that art ever pure -  
Who calls thee maya ?

.....  
Verily art thou the embodiment  
Of the beauty of the Supreme lord :  
Men are but clods of earth  
Where woman are not respected.

.....  
That land cannot be free  
Where woman is in bondage ! "

The two poets were not mere nationalites and patriots. They were internationalist and humanists. Bharathi's sympathies extended to the Indian labourers who were being worked to death in the sugar plantations of Java and to the oppressed people of all races and of all countries. He was among the first to welcome the Russian Revolution and called it a manifestation of Goddess Parasakti. He paid tribute to the heroic Belgium on its unequal fight with a powerful enemy. He wrote a poem describing Mazzini's vow of service to his country.

Nazrul was well-informed about contemporary international events. While in army camp at Sorachi, under the very nose of the authorities, he celebrated the success of the Russian Revolution. In Spite of all the vigilance of the camp he was able to get information about the activities of the patriots. In his story 'Byathar dan', written in 1918, the two main male characters are shown as going from Baluchistan to caucous to join the 'Red Army'. When

the story was published in a magazine in 1920, the editor changed the name of 'Liberation Army' to avoid the unpleasant notice of the British rulers. Nazrul has written poems in praise of the freedom fighters of China, Egypt, Turkey and Ireland. His song on 'Kamal Pasha' was very popular among the youth of his time.

Respect for all religions is a common characteristic of both the poets. Bharathi stressed again and again in his writings that whatever religion we may follow we are all brothers. He wrote poems in praise of Jesus Christ and the Prophet Mohamed.

Nazrul was born a muslim. At a very young age he became well versed in the Muslim religious tradition and scriptures. His love for music led him to join itinerant troupes which staged historical and mythological plays. This association helped him to acquire intimate knowledge of Hindu mythology and tradition. Later he married a Hindu girl. Thus he became a true inheritor of the composite culture of the Indian nation. His writings are replete with allusions to Hindu mythology. He wrote songs in praise of Hindu divinities and visualised the country as Goddess Durga. In 'Bidrohi' he likens the Rebel to Nataraja, Siva's Trishul, Parasurama's axe, Balarama's plough etc. Nazrul also composed songs in praise of Muslim religious leaders and Muslim festivals. He wrote the life of the prophet and translated parts of Koran into Bengali. He believed in and worked for Hindu-Muslim unity all his life. In one poem he says :

"Hindu-Muslim, we are brothers -  
Two flowers from the same stem-  
And Bharat is our motherland"

In another song he sings :

"Hindu and Muslim are brothers,  
Pupils of Bharat's two eyes."

He likens the occasional Hindu-Muslim quarrels to the quarrels among the children of a mother for a place on their mother's lap and hopes that the Hindu-Muslim quarrels also would reach a sweet conclusion as the children's quarrels.

Nazrul was strongly against rabid communalism whether preached by Hindus or Muslims. He condemned such extremism in poems as well as in hard-hitting articles in magazines and newspapers and made communalists a butt of his ridicule. In one of his articles he humorously points out that the fanatics fight over 'Bhagwan' and 'Allah' but when they sustain injury they involuntarily cry 'Mother' and not 'Bhagwan' or 'Allah'. In his poem Jater Bajjati' (wicked communalism) he asks :

"The cheats gamble in the name of caste ;  
Will just a touch destroy your caste ? Is it so flimsy ?  
The hukka water and the vessel of rice,  
Do you think that caste in these resides?  
You fool ? It is this idea  
That has broken this nation into a hundred pieces !"

It is a measure of Nazrul's impartiality that the rabid Hindus abused him as a 'mleccha' and resented his use of Hindu mythology while the Muslim fanatics called him a 'Kafir' for the same reason.

Both the poets loved children and cherished them as the future leaders of the nation. They wanted children to grow up fearless, full of compassion for all forms of life and prepared to undergo any sacrifice for the sake of the motherland. Bharathi wrote the 'New Athichudi', a compendium of maxims for the child and wrote 'Pappa Pattu' (Song of the Baby) describing the qualities to be cultivated by the child.

Nazrul's contribution to children's literature is comparatively greater. He did not confine himself to sermons for the children. He was very popular with the children as a story teller. He wrote songs for them and also a play. In this comic songs he gives humorous expression to the child's view of life. Here is a boy's complaint :

"To live in this world is such a misery !  
The sun comes up before the night is over !  
Not enough time to sleep, what a bother !  
'It's late' say the elders and wake me up !

Why do they get up so early ?  
Do they suffer from sleeplessness ?”

Another boy prays to Mother Durga :

“I do not ask much, holy Mother !  
Ten thousand rupees a month, that's enough !  
.....  
And let me have a good night's sleep  
Free from the bother of bugs and mosquitoes ;  
And during the day the flies are so annoying.  
.....  
I am tired of walking, always walking ;  
Give me a car that won't drink petrol !  
.....  
I too can fight, am I not your son ?  
The asuras I can throw down with my belly !  
But one thing, Mother !  
Should I go to war and make my mother cry ?”

Musical quality is the common quality of the poetry of both the poets. Many of their poems are also songs. Bharathi set many of his poems to music and sang them himself. But Bharathi is essentially a poet and not a musician or music composer.

But it is different with Nazrul. He was a musician first and then only blossomed into a poet. In early life he became famous as a singer of Rabindranath's songs. Later on he started composing songs and setting them to music. He also taught music. Many famous singers of Bengal of the last generation were his students.

Much of Nazrul's life was spent in grinding poverty and domestic misery. But such was his genius for music that in spite of all these difficulties he has composed not less than three thousand songs of different categories—classical, love, devotional, patriotic, humorotic, humorous, children's songs, ga-zels, folk-songs, dance dramas and even Hindi songs.

As a music composer Nazrul has some 'firsts' to his credit. He was the first to compose gazals (one type of Persian love-poetry) in Bengali. He was the first to compose Islamic devotional poetry. He was again the first to compose martial music in Bengali. His song 'Chal, Chal, Chal' is the official marching song of Bangladesh.

Devotional music constituted a sizable portion of the writings of both the poets. Bharathi was influenced by the devotional compositions of the Alwars, the Tamil vaishnavite poet-saints. The Alwars contemplated the Lord in different roles, as their master, preceptor, mother, father, child and above all, as their lover. They conceived of themselves as a lady in love. The anguish of separation, the excitement of expectation and the ecstasy of union have all been beautifully expressed in Alwar's songs. Bharathi followed in the footsteps of Alwars and sang the praises of 'Kannan' (The Tamil term for 'Krishna') in his different roles. But Bharathi went one step further than the Alwars. He conceived of himself as the lover and Krishna as his lady-love. He called his beloved 'Kannamma' and addressed to her some of his best love songs :

"Thou art the leaping light, my dear,  
And I, the eye roving free ;  
Thou art the gleaming wine, my dear,  
And I, the drunken bee ;

.....

Thou art heavenly rain, my dear,  
— And I, the dancing peacock's glee ;  
Thou art sweet honey, my dear  
And I, the cup filled with thee."

Bharathi also takes the liberty of treating the Lord as his servant. He says of this servant :

"This cowherd boy, from somewhere afar,  
Has come to me, as my merit's reward !  
What have I done to deserve this treasure ?  
Since the time he came to me  
Relieved I am of all care and worry."

In his poem 'Nandalala' Bharathi describes how he sees and experiences Krishna in every worldly phenomenon :

"In the feather of the crow, Nandalala,  
Thy dusky beauty I see.  
The very trees that meet my eyes, Nandalala,  
Thy verdant splendour bear.  
Every sound reaching me, Nandalala,  
Is a hymn in praise of thee  
My finger dipped in fire, Nandalala,  
Lo, feels the thrill of thy touch."

If Bharathi drew inspiration from Alwars, Nazrul derived it from the great Baishnab poets of Bengal who were the followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He sang innumerable songs in praise of Krishna. These songs are so steeped in the Baishnab tradition that they may well be mistaken for the outpourings of the Baishnab poets themselves. The sublimation of sensuous love into Godly love, a characteristic of Baishnab poetry, finds expression in Nazrul's devotional songs also. Nazrul's Radha sings :

"Lo hear, my friend, the flute beckons !  
I've no mind to attend to household work...  
My sister-in-law on one side, the call from Jamuna  
on the other,  
And modesty's admonitions —  
I know not what to do and can only weep..."

In a song reminiscent of Bharathi's 'Nandalala' Nazrul sings :

"Shyam, you are dark; so have you  
Decked out this earth in verdant splendour,  
The limitless skies are dazzling azure  
Because they repect your body blue.  
In trees and creepers, seas and rivers,  
I see only your dusky colours.  
In pain and grief, or rainy days;  
Your cloud-colour lights up my eyes..."

Like the Baishnab poets, Nazrul imagines himself as Yasoda and sings of Krishna the eternal child.

It is interesting to note that the Baishnab literary tradition so influenced Nazrul that he employed it in his Islamic devotional music to describe the prophet's life and to sing his glories. Nazrul's description of the Prophet tending the sheep is just a variation of Krishna tending the cows :

"Young Navi goes grazing the sheep,  
His ringlets held in a piece of silk, blue of hue.  
The earth is thrilled to the touch of his ruddy feet,  
His beauty floods the desert sounds;  
Looking at him the lambs forget to graze;  
Lo, behold,  
The dust of the sheep-pen on the Lord of the World..."

The following song on the sweetness of the Prophet's name is just a transposition of a similar Baishnab sentiment :

"The more I chant Mohamed's name  
The more sweet it tastes.  
Who had ever thought  
So much honey in a name is wrought ?  
The bee of my mind ever singing roams  
In search restless of the honeyed name.  
Hunger and thirst have I forgot,  
The taste of the name is all my thought..."

Another school of devotion that deeply influenced both Bharathi and Nazrul is the Sakthi cult. Bharathi looked upon Parasakthi as the ultimate Godhead and the source of all life, love, beauty and power. He burst into a paeon of praise of Parasakthi :

"Our Mother is a spirit wild,  
A spirit mad and stark ;  
Her lover, he hugs the searing flame  
And dances in the dark.



Waves of melody heave and eddy  
 In the fairy-sea of song;  
 The leaps and laves in the spin of the waves  
 And rides their crest along,  
 .....

In the War of Wars she springs as the might  
 In the bend of Partha's bow ;  
 She leaps to kill and slakes her will  
 With the blood of the cloven foe."

For Bharathi, Parasakthi is the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer. She is all compassion for her children and is terrible to the evil-doers.

Nazrul was also influenced by the Sakthi cult of Bengal. He surrendered himself completely to Goddess Kali, his mothers. Even the miseries suffered by him are gifts from her, they are but steps towards his selfrealisation.

"You've made a shambles of my life, mother,  
 But see, I am now part of you !  
 .....

Under the guise of giving me pain  
 You manifest yourself, beyond compare !"

"Come, come, my dacoit-mother,  
 Rob me of what all I have !  
 Snatch from me my kith and kin.....  
 And what I have earned of name and fame.....  
 When you have done with me, then I,  
 Freed at last from illusion's yoke,  
 Shall dance away in gay abandon  
 And clap my hands calling to you."

"Java flower, what penance have you done  
 To deserve a place at my mother's feet?  
 Tell me the secret of your feat  
 So that I too may realise my life's ambition."

To Nazrul Kali was not merely an all powerful, awe-inspiring force. She was also dear to him as his own child. He speaks to as a doting mother to her child :

“Come, Come to me dancing,  
 My dear, dark girl;  
 Hold my hand and take me along  
 To show me your doll's house.  
 You are so tiny, my dear child;  
 How did you become so vast and wild?”

In a beautiful song Nazrul speaks to her in her twin role of mother and child simultaneously :

“Mother, will you remain my mother  
 Or become my child?  
 Shall I sit on your lap  
 Or will you sit on mine?”

In some of his songs Nazrul brings about a synthesis of the Baishnab and Sakthi cults :

“Sealed on Mother Kali's lap  
 Krishna's name I chant;  
 My mother, as the Guru, teaches me  
 To realise my deity Radhashyam”.  
 “Charming Gopal is my mother dear

.....  
 She's half-male, half-woman;  
 One half of her is Kali, the other half Krishna;  
 Her one half is robed in golden silk,  
 The very directions clothe the rest”.

Both Bharathi and Nazrul were romantics and hedonists. They were admirers of Shelley; Bharathi even called himself ‘Shelley-dasan’. They both believed in enjoying the pleasures of life.

Bharathi says in a poem :

"Sweet is this world and sweet its space;  
Sweet are the wind, the water and the fire;  
And sweet is the earth.

.....

Man is good and woman is sweet,  
The child is sweet.  
Life is good and sweet is death."

In another song he exclaims in gratitude :

"What a myriad pleasures have you bestowed,  
Oh God, Oh God ! ....."

In many of his songs Nazrul glorifies the beauty of nature, of the trees, the flowers and the birds, the sweetness of love and the pleasures of life. He makes fun of those who condemn life's pleasures as sin or dismiss them as illusion.

However it is to be noted that in later life both Bharathi and Nazrul turned more and more inward. Bharathi's later writings were philosophical and meditative. An yearning for spiritual release became the keynote of his poems. His soul wanted to become free of bondage and fly about untrammelled like a sparrow.

Nazrul too passed the latter part of his active life in quest of self realisation. He practically withdrew from public life and devoted all his energies to the practice of Yoga.

This study may be rounded off with a brief reference to the prose writings of the two poets. Since both of them were closely associated with newspapers and magazines, they dealt with a wide variety of subjects in their articles. Politics, Economics, religion, education, music, art, social problems all was grist to their mill. And to Bharathi should go a lion's share of the credit for making Tamil prose an effective vehicle for conveying modern thought.

But the two poets differed in their approach to issues. Bharathi's approach was generally rational while Nazrul's was more emotional.

To sum up, the people of Tamil Nadu and Bengal are blessed indeed that there lived among them two great souls Bharathi and Nazrul, whom they shall ever remember with gratitude.....

# **SRI CAITANYA, THE INCARNATION OF BHAKTI**

**Pranab Ranjan Ghosh**

One of the greatest sons of India was Sri Caitanya. Five hundred years have passed after his short life-time of less than fifty years. As time is passing, he comes nearer to our heart and he is still a living personality to our nation.

Born in the Western part of Bengal, at Nabadwip, once the illustrious centre of learning in the region, he inherited the cult of Bhakti from his forefathers who originally came from Sylhet, East Bengal. Descendants of his kith and kin are still living in the same area. After growing up, Caitanya once visited this place of his forefathers and was much adored by the people there.

From Sylhet and other parts of East Bengal later came many associates of Caitanya, but one who may be called the forerunner of vaishnava movement, came much earlier. Although this elderly saint was in age equal to Caitanya's grand father, and one of his early teachers, this Advaitacharya, became one of Caitanya's early devotees.

Nityananda, the brother-like companion of Sri Caitanya, was also an elderly wandering Saint, who became his associate sinche met Caitanya. Haridas, another elderly sadhaka, although a muslim, was a devout worship of Krishna and became another follower of Caitanya.

Under the leadership of Advaitacharya, a nucleus of Vaishnav devotees was already formed even before the advent of Caitanya. But this nucleus became a great organism because of the combined effort of the above mentioned four. Sri Caitanya, although the youngest, became the centre of the whole Vaishnava movement.

We must remember, that before all of them it was the Sannyasin Madhabendra Puri, who started this Vaishnava Bhakti cult, particularly in Bengal and Orissa. Both Advaita and Nityananda met him and were greatly influenced by him. Although Caitanya not meet him in person, he realised his ideal, through his own Guru Iswar Puri, a disciple of Madhabendra. In Caitanya, the ideal of Vaishnava Bhakti bloomed into a lotus of thousand petals and made Navadwip, throbbing with the Vaishnava thought current.

In spite of opposition from vested interests, including the then rulers, the Vaishnava movement rose to overwhelm the whole of Bengal and Orissa. Although an ideal house holder in the first part of life, with a successful career as student and teacher, Caitanya (formerly Viswambhar of Nimai) felt that his life was not meant for ordinary pursuits of life. Realising God (Krishna) he felt that he must show the people of the world the way of having Bhakti, following the ideas of Gopis in Vrindaban (as in Bhagabata). He became initiated in Sannyasa by Keshab Bharati and became Sri Krishna Caitanya, in short "Caitanya". By his own example of life he brought peace and harmony in the social and political turmoil of Eastern India and religious regeneration to the great extent of whole India.

Throughout North India at that time there were various types of Bhakti movements. Poets and devotees were filling the air with their beautiful compositions and various Kirtans. Caitanya to deepen his Bhakti-Sadhana went to South India, a citadel of Indian Philosophy in various aspects. He brought two great works on Bhakti from the South — 'Krishna Karnam-rita' (By Vilwamangala) and 'Brahma Samhita'. Although more akin to Ramanuja and Madhva, the Jnana aspect of Sankara

(in his own way a great Bhakta) was not unnoticed by him. But because of his natural inclination, the south, comparatively free from Muslim domination, with its beautiful temples, tirthas and bhaktas inspired him deeply. After his Paribrajaka life in the South and later in the North, he chose to remain at Puri, Orissa. Lord Jagannath became his centre of life. Puri is a confluence of Southern and Northern culture.

None except Swami Vivekananda could take this key-role in North and South Indian solidarity. Himself a great Bhakta inwardly, he was primarily a follower of Sankara, from the Advaita point of view. Still he thought Caitanya as the incarnation of love for God, if there was any one in this earth. Of Course, this attitude was derived from his own Guru Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who was one of the ardent followers of Caitanya in our age, yet an Advaitin in his heart of hearts. Sri Ramakrishna added to the ideal of 'Seva' (service) with Caitanya's ideal of Daya (Compassion) - Vivekananda moulded vedanta Philosophy in a practical way of living every day life in all strata of society. We may recount that Buddha was another great influence on Vivekanda in this regard.

As India was once flooded with Vaishnava movement, at present we find the Occident being showered with the thoughts and ideals of Indian Vaishnava cult (particularly following Sri Caitanya). It is but natural that the followers of Christ can appreciate and follow Caitanya's love for God and his compassion for humanity.

It also seems that in India to day and even in future, Caitanyaism has a tremendous possibility of influence and that includes the world at large. Worried about constant turmoil and strife and the threat of total annihilation, this symbol of non-violence, great moral strength and love for God surely consoles the suffering human soul with a wonderful touch of eternity.

From Caitanya's personality the people of Bengal and India as a whole have derived that sense of unity of race, culture

and creed which makes a nation a viable reality. His direct vision of God is another proof of India's genius for realisation of the Eternal Truth. Numerous poets and artists have flourished under his influence. A supreme singer himself, he created a new type of Song-system namely Kirtana, which is the best example of Bengali music. People found a religion of immediate grasp and clustered round it and their whole mode of life changed. His life inspired many a poet to write his biography in Sanskrit, Bengali and Oriya-thus showing the inner divinity of man, Himself a poet, he had the qualities of both the epic and the lyric in his great personality.

Born in a full-moon evening, he represented the fulness of human possibility.



# BENGALI AND TAMIL

T. N. SENAPATHI

From days of Yore Tamizhagam or Tamil Nadu and Bengal had close contact with each other. The town of Tamluk situated on the shores of the Bay of Bengal has been a prominent port for the past many centuries. Merchant Vessels laden with spices like cardamom, pepper and clove from the Chera region and those with valuables like pearl etc., from the Pandya kingdom of the south passed through Tamluk during their voyages to Brahma Desa (BURMA), Kamboja (Campodia), Yava Dveepa (Java) and China. There is a sort of affinity in the names 'Tamizhagam' and 'Tamluk' and we can infer from this, that the traders of Tamil Nadu and Bengal had mutual maritime relationship.

During the eighth, ninth and the tenth centuries of the Christian era and even later, there was a revival of the Bhakti movement in the south. One of our Chozha kings, Rajaraja the great, who constructed the famous temple of Brihadeeswara in Thanjavur, specially invited Lakuteesa Pandita, from Bengal well-versed in Saiva Agama, to perform the Kumbhabhisheka or the consecration of that holy shrine. This is a historical fact based on the Tamil inscriptions of those days. Even as far back as the first and the second centuries of the Christian era. we learn that Himaya Varamban, as his very name implies and Chenguttuvan, Chera kings both, had gone on expeditions to the Himalayas via Bengal. This has been mentioned in our ancient Tamil literature or classics.

There is a close similarity of expression especially in the 'Tiruppavai' hymns of Andal and that of the 'Padavali's of Vidyapati, Chandidas and the later vaishnava poet-devotees of Greater Bengal. It is also probable that the saint Jayadeva as well as the other devotees of Sri Krishna were influenced by the doctrine of Visishtadvaita or Qualified Monism propounded by the greatest among Srivaishnava Acharyas or Teachers, namely Sri Ramanuja, who was born in Sriperumbudur, situated in the south. This is evident from the fact that one of his disciples, Ramananda who went on a pilgrimage to the north via Utkala or modern Orissa had also been to Bengal to spread the divine message of Krishna Prema.

It is said that Sri Krishna Chaitanya (whom all of us revere as Gouranga Mahaprabhu) during his visit to the holy places of the south, had stayed at Srirangam and learnt the Tamil language, as he was keen on reading the Nalayira Divya Prabandham (The Four thousand divine songs) of the Azhwars or Vaishnavite (mystic) devotees, in the original itself. One day, while he was giving a discourse on the Bhagavad-Gita in Bengali and Sanskrit, all those assembled in the presence of the presiding deity Sri Ranganatha, were hearing it with rapt attention. One of the servants employed in the temple was standing at a distance near a pillar in the sacred hall or Mandapam. Tears flowed from his eyes, as he watched the vast concourse. Mahaprabhu observed this and beckoned him to come near and kindly enquired as to why he was shedding tears. The servant replied with all humility, his voice choking with emotion, "Sire, although you are discoursing in languages unknown to me and the meaning of which is beyond my comprehension, I see before me the Divine Scene, that of Sri Krishna consoling Arjuna, who is in a despondent mood. I simply felt thrilled and overjoyed. That perhaps was the cause of my shedding tears; nothing more." Mahaprabhu then stood up and hugged that humble man to his bosom and said, "Sir, you are really a fortunate man, as you have understood the real significance, that is, the essence of Krishna Bhakti."

During the second half of the last century our Poet-Laureate Rabindranath delved deep into the Vaishnava Padavalsi

of Bengal. It is interesting to know that he himself wrote a poetical work of the name 'Bhanusimher Padavali' (Bhanusimha's verses), in imitation of the older poet-devotees, that too in his seventeenth year and published it with the following note: "I have a copy of this work from an old cudjon-leaf manuscript of the same name." The literary critics of those days too believed this to be true, to be astounded later when they got to know the fact about its authorship. As the ecstatic hymns sung by Andal in the 'Tiruppaveu', imagining herself to be a young cowherdess of Gokula and Brindavana, are similar in theme to that of Tagore's, his 'Padavali' is sure to be enjoyed by the Tamil public as well: "Sajani sajani Radhika lo Mridula gamana shyama ave mridula gana gahiya milana giti gao re...gantho joothi, gantho jati, gantho bakula malika" meaning "O my friend Radhika, the Dark one (shyama) is coming slowly, singing softly; sing those our love tryts song; make different kinds of flower garlands' reminds us of Andal's dream in which she feels overjoyed to behold Krishna holding her hands and making her his divine consort (Madhavan Madhusudhanan en kaippidikkak...Kanakanden...Tozhi)

Tagore was awarded the much-coveted Nobel Prize for his 'Gitanjali', which as he himself admits was influenced by the ideas in the Vaishnavite literature of the middle ages. Thus it may be said that after the propagation of Qualified Monism by Sri Ramanuja, there was a revival of the Bhakti movement and that the Bengali Padavalis represent the renascent approach in devotional poetry.

May I add that there is also a similarity of ideas in both 'Devaram' that is, the collection of hymns sung by the three Saivite Saints or Nayanmars and Tagore's devotional songs, as is evident from the following poems. Let us take for instance the 'Devaram' hymns commencing with the words 'Talaye Nee', Vanangai (O my head, bow those before the Almighty Lord), 'Kadalagik kasindu kanneer malgi' (with eyes full of tears, and in deep love with Him); and then let us sing along with Tagore, 'Amar Matha nata kare dao he tomar charana dhoolar tale; Sakala Ahankara Amar Dubao chokher

jale (Let my head bow at the dust of thine holy feet; let all my ego be drowned in the flood of my tears.)

Does not the expression used by Tirugnana Sambandhar, the child prodigy, namely 'En Ullam kavar kalvan' (the one who has solen my heart) remind us of Tagore's 'Maner Manusha'? This vouchsafes to the fact that yeons ago this saivite saint of Tamil Nadu, had realized the oneness of the supreme in every being including himself. Tirumoolar was one of the oldest among the Tamil ascetics. In one of his hymns in the 'Tirumantiram' namely '1Pada madak koil Bhagavarkku Onru eeyil, 2nadamadu akkoil nambarkku angu aha, 3Nadamadu akkoil nambarkku angu eeyil, 4Pada madak hoil Bhagavarkku adu ame' he chides those who make offerings to the deity of a temple (with big towers and flag-staff in front), and adds that God will really be pleased if these were offered to the poor and the needy, Tagore also is against blind worship of God; in his poem in 'Gitanjali' (Bhajan Poojan Sadhan aradhana samasta thak pade, Ruddha dware debalayer kone keno Achchis Ore) he says, "O man, what will be gained by chanting and telling of beads in the corner of a temple. They are of no avail, if you are not able to see the presence of the Almighty in the tiller of the soil as well as in the worker breaking stones to make a pathway for all of us and that too in the hot sun."

Here is another poem of Tagore commencing with the words 'Chitta jethai bhaya soonya, jethai sira uchcha' meaning 'where the mind is without fear, where the head is held high'.—Now take the hymn sung by Tirunavukkarasar or vageesar, the savite saint namely 'Nam Arkkum Kudi allom namanai anjom, narakattil idarppadom, emappom pini ariyom, panivom allom etc., meaning, 'We are not the subjects of anybody in his earth; we are neither afraid of Yama, the Lord of Death nor will we suffer in hell; we are firm in our resolve. As such we feel no pain (Even if we are tortured) we will not bow before anybody; we are only duty-bound to the merciful Almighty Lord. 'Don't we feel elated by the fact that even as far back as in the seventh century of the Christian era, there were such enlightened souls in Tamil Nadu.

Tagore who was a follower of the Formless Supreme Being, did feel His presence in even a blade of grass, in a flower and in all beings as we see it in the poem commencing with the words 'Antar mama bikasita kar antaratar he', meaning, 'Let my inner self bloom (like that of a flower), O Thou supreme one residing in me'. This was the spiritual revelation which he refers to as 'maner manusha' or "the person in one's mind".

In one of the hymns of Tayumanavar, the Tamil poet saint who lived two countries back, we find the same feeling of oneness with the supreme Being, which was experienced by Tagore himself: "Pannen Unakkana poosai oru vadivile, bhavittu irainja ange parkkinra malaroodu neeye irutti ena appanimalarai nannen alamal iru kaidan kuvikka enin, nee en ulam nirkka yan Unaik kumbidumbodu araikkumbidum adalal poojai seidal muraiyo, meaning, "I don't want to worship thee in any form. How can I offer the newly bloomed flower still wet with (morning) dew as I see thee in it? Is it proper for me to do pooja when I realize that thou art within me, and as such if I make obisance it is also made partly to my (poor) self? 'Dekhi dekhī tomay sab leeve' (I see thee in all beings), 'Dekhi dekhī tomay kusume kasume' (I see thee in each and every flower) are the words we can quote from Tagore, which confirm the fact that in spite of the difference in the passage of time great men think alike.

As far back as in 1914, we find only Mahesa Kumara Sarms who was the first among the Tamilar or Tamilians to come forward to translate Bankim Chandra's 'Ananda Mutt' into Tamil, directly from the Bengali Original. The famous 'Vande Mataram' national song which finds a prominent place in that novel has been immortalized by the magic touch of our great poet Bharati. The stanza commencing with the words 'Subjamal suphalam malayaja seetalam, sasya syamalam mataram Vande' in Bengali and the one done by Bharati 'Iniya neerpperukkinai inkani valattinai, thani naru malayat thankal sirappinai, painnirap-pazhanam paraviya vadivinai vazhiya annai' — inspire the same intense patriotic fervour in all of us, Indians.

Thus we find that the upsurge of nationalism from Bengal which flooded Tamil Nadu soon after, was really

due this mellifluous Tamil rendering of Bharati. Bharati has also translated Tagore's short stories into Tamil, faithfully adhering to the original, with the assistance of the late revered Sri Sri Acharya, an elderly Tamil gentleman, who was proficient in Bengali also. Of course, some others have translated Ramesh Chandra Dutta's novels such as 'The slave girl of Agra' and 'The lake of palms' from English to Tamil. But the rendering of Tagore's works began in right earnest only after 1934. Srimati S. Ranganayaki (who passed away recently), translated 'Jogajog' (Yogayog or Kumudini) into Tamil from a Hindi version. This was gone through by my brother the Late T. N. Kumaraswami, at the request of that lady herself. It was thoroughly revised by him with the help of the original in Bengali.

Then we two brothers, began to translate Tagore's as well as Saratchandra's works directly from the original<sup>5</sup>, and thus have earned the goodwill of our Tamil brethren: 'Mana Bhangam' (Giribala or Manabhanjan), 'Kallin vetkai' (Hungry stones or Kshudhita Pashan), ('Vetri' (Jay Parajay or Victory), 'Post master', 'Karum Kadirum' (Megha O Roudra or the cloud and sunshine), 'Moovar' (Tin sangi or the three companions) are some of the short story collections; 'Jappan Yattirai' (Japan Yatri) and Jave Yattirai (Java Yatri) are some of the travelogues; 'Nalu Adhyayam (Char Adhyay or the four chapters), 'Chaturangam', 'Puyal' (Nowka dubi or the wreck), 'Poontottam' (Malancha or the garden house), 'Lavanya' (Sesher kabita or the last poem), 'Iru Sahodarigal' (Dui Bon or the two sisters) are some of the novels; 'Malini' and 'Post Office' are some of the plays, all Tagore's being our offerings to Tamil Annai (Tamil Mother). Between 1936 and 1986, the period in which I was in the editorial staff of the 'Kalaimagal' and the 'Manjari', we have brought out the Tamil versions (some of them condensed version) of the novels and short stories of Bankim, Saratchandra, Bibhutibhooshan Banerji, Subodh Basu, Tarasankar Banerji, Bonphul and other Bengali authors, through those literary magazines. During the Centenary year of Tagore (in 1961) we translated two parts of Tagore's essays (Bumper volumes), several short stories and 101 poems and also the 'Bala sahitva' or children's literature.

of the revered poet, under the auspices of the Sahitya Akademy, Delhi.

Even at this old age of seventy-four I am enthused by the feeling that I am able to fulfil the assignments given by that esteemed organization. Another important literary venture I have just undertaken is the translation of 'The Kural' into Bengali, along with the condensed commentaries of Parimelazhagar and others. I admit that this is a difficult task, but I shall try my utmost to do this within a few months provided my Bengali friends give me sufficient encouragement in this endeavour.

I have something more interesting to tell you, that is, about the meeting of the two grand old men of literature, namely our Tamil savant the Late Revered Doctor U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar and Gurudev Tagore, noble souls in unison. Tagore was then staying in Madras (roughly between 1922 and 1930). Dr. U.V.S. had already known about Tagore and his 'Gitanjali' through the Late Sri T. S. Ramaswami (who was the city father or Municipal Councillor at that time) and was very much moved by that devotional work, divine in every sense. The learned doctor of Tamil had gone to Tirukkazhugukkunram, a place of pilgrimage near Madras, to offer worship at the shrine of Vedagirisai, the presiding deity there. On hearing of Tagore's arrival in Madras, the venerable Doctor returned at once. It is probable that he had sent an invitation to Tagore (who was closely acquainted with the Late Sri T.S.R.), through his son the Late Sri Kalyanasundarmier. As Sri T.S.R. had already informed Tagore about the Mahamahopadhyaya's part in editing old Tamil classics, Tagore was very glad to meet the Tamil savant at his residence in Triplicane (along with T.S.R.) and made obeisance to him. The doctor too, who was six years elder to Tagore, responded in a like manner with his blessings. Tagore was pleasantly surprized to find such a vast collection of old palm-leaf manuscripts in the doctor's library as he himself was interested in the search of rare Bengali manuscripts<sup>6</sup>

Only a few years back I knew about the fact that Tagore had written a poem on our Tamil savant. It was with the late

Sri T.S.R., whom I met while he was bed-ridden. He wanted the poem in an old paper (gone yellow since the twenties of this century) to be copied by me at once, which I did. He then put the original in this table drawer. That was my last meeting with him.

Here is the Bengali version of that poem, which I copied from the one in the late Sri T.S.R.'s possession then :

Adi Juger andhare talapatre chilo  
 Dravida Deser puratana keerti!  
 Sei mahat sahitya nidhi he desikottama,  
 Tomar dvara na ki bahir hail?  
 Se kaler Agastyer mata Ese tomar make  
 simhasane rekha dile na ki tumi, sasammane?  
 Ar pancha mahakavyer majhe chintamani, noopuragatha  
 Manimekhala ityadi samsodhana kare, tahar  
 Pada jugala samarpkana karile na ki tumi?  
 sange sange sanghakala sahityake  
 Jyotsnay phutita nitya mallikar mata sobhita karite.  
 naki tumi?  
 Toma kari pranam !

[The literary fame of the Dravida land was kept (somewhere) in palm-leaf, in the darkness of a by gone age. O most respected sire, was it not the who hast brought it into the open and made thine mother sit on the throne with all honour, like Agastya of Yore? And was it not thee who hast edited the Chintamani, the Balled of the Anklets, the Manimekhalai and other works amongst the five big classics along with the (ancient) Sangham anthologics and offered them like eternal jasmine flowers blooming in moonlight?]

May I conclude this article with the following lines? Tamil Nadu was really the fortunate one among all the states of India in arranging a fitting send-off to the revered son of Bengal, Swami Vivekananda who left for Chicago via the U.S.A., to participate in the World Parliament of Religions, held there during the nineties of the last century. This one instance is enough to prove the amity and mutual respect



that prevails among us both - the Tamils and the Bengalis-  
of which I am verily proud of.

Jai Hind !

## FOOT NOTES

1. படமாடக் கோயில் பகவற்கொன்றியில்
2. நடமாடு அக்கோயில் தம்பர்க்கு அங்காகா
3. நடமாடு அக்கோயில் தம்பர்க்கு அங்கீயில்
4. படமாடக் கோயில் பகவர்க்கு அது ஆமே.
5. Vide 'The Ananda Vikatan' and 'Kalaimagal' volumes of 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941 and those of 'Kalki' during the same period.
6. Vide article on this meeting by the Late Sri Kalyana-sundaram Aiyar in the old volumes of 'Kumari Malar' as well as the reprint of the same in 1984-1985. As such there is not even an iota of doubt about the authenticity of this meeting, as I aver.

# **A SHORT NOTE ON THE TOUR OF SRI CHAITANYA MAHAPRABHU IN THE SOUTH**

**H. H. Swami B. P. Yati Maharaj**

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's love and spiritual consolation streamed from His heart, penetrating and unifying all who came into contact with Him. The divine and loving influence of His nature, the inherent goodness which is so greatly endowed Him to His numerous followers, His mystical sensitiveness, His devout imagination, but above all, the devotional ecstasy impressed all with whom He came in contact with and which acted as a soothing remedy to rampant atheism. He advised His followers thus: "Recite the Name of Krishna, say Krishna, be devoted to Krishna, sing the Name of Krishna, whether in sleep or awake, day and night, think of Krishna and recite Krishna".

He had visited several places, converted many to His faith by His remarkable quality of saintliness and godliness. Notable amongst them were Vasudeva Sarvabhauma, a noted Mayavadin scholar of the day, Rai Ramananda. Governor of Rajahmundry under the King Pratap Rudradeva of Orissa. He is accredited with having turned the vilest of criminals like Jagai and Madhai towards His faith. His wide travels

made Him well-known to all the people and thus the message of Lord Krishna was carried to all parts of the country.

After coming to Puri, Sri Chaitanya wanted to tour the South all alone and to many of His followers it was a painful separation and they insisted on His permitting them to accompany. Sri Chaitanya was affectionately adamant but at last agreed to take a Brahmana, Krishna dasa, to look after Him.

Nityananda, Gopinatha Acharya and other devotees accompanied Him upto the place called Alalnatha, where Sri Chaitanya held a Kirtana performance at the temple of Alalnatha. He then journeyed preaching the doctrine of Bhakti to all the people who thronged in large numbers to have a darshan of Him and hear Him. After passing through Berhampur, Itchapur, Kinedi, Palconda and other places, He reached Kurmachalam, a place about 17 miles from Srikakulam. Sri Chaitanya visited the famous temple of Kurmadeva—the tortoise incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The temple authorities welcomed Sri Chaitanya Who charmed them by His ecstatic love of God, His songs and dances. A devout vaidic Brahmana Kurma invited Him to his house and his entire family were so much overwhelmed with joy that they turned Vaishnavas. Sri Chaitanya appointed him as the Acharya of Vaishnavism for the district and said “Always recite the Name of Krishna, stay at home. Teach the doctrine of Krishna to whomsoever you happen to meet. At My bidding be a spiritual preceptor and save the land. The waves of the world will never affect you, you may see Me again”. Sri Chaitanya performed a miracle in curing a leper named Vasudeva by His embrace and repeated His instructions to recite the Name of Krishna.

Then continuing His tour through Visakhapatnam and Ganjam, He reached Joyada Nrisimha, now known as Narsimhachalam, 5 miles to North East of Vizag. Then passing through Sabaran, Kasimkota, Yellamanchili, Tuni, Aurin p ody, Rajanagaram, He entered Rajahmundry and after crossing River Godavari on the western bank, He met Rai Ramananda, the Governor, and reminded of the request of Sarvabhauma

to visit the reputed Vaishnava Governor, Chaitanya was eager to meet him. Noticing Him Rai Ramananda paid his first respects and obeisance, whereupon Chaitanya inquired of him and embraced him, to the astonishment of the attendants. Rai Ramananda said to Chaitanya "Saviour of the fallen, such is the nature of great that they unselfishly visit the house of others in order to bring deliverance. Thou art the very God that hast come to deliver me". Sri Chaitanya held amazing discussions with Rai Ramananda on Krishna lore for many days. The Governor was so much pleased and moved into ecstasies of discussion that he left the high office only to become the close associate of Lord Chaitanya. This place is now sanctified as the Ramananda Gaudiya Math, Kovvur.

Leaving the place, He passed through Masulipatnam district crossing River Krishna near Vijayawada and visited the famous temple of Pana Narasimha on the Mangalagiri Hill, which is about 7 miles from Vijayawada. Thence He went to Mallikarjuna Srisailem which is about 70 miles from kurnool. Chaitanya visited the Siva Temple and converted all of them to Vaishnavism. Reaching Ahobilam. He visited the Narasimha Temple. Turning towards South, Chaitanya passed through Cuddapah district and reached Siddhavat, on the River Pennar. He visited the Rama-Sita Temple and then the temple of Trivikrama at Trimat. Passing through Venkatagiri, Tirupati and Tirumala, He reached Kalahasti, where He saw the Vayulinga Siva. Then through Nagari, He reached Kanchipuram in Chingleput district. Here He answered many sakta sects and converted them to His faith. He is said to have sung a hymn before Lord Varadaraja at Little Kañchi. Passing through Tirukalikunram Pakshithirtham, He reached Vriddhachalam in South Arcot district and offered worship to Varaha-Vishnu. Here He was fiercely challenged by the formidable leaders of Naiyayikas, Mimamsakas, Mayavadins, Sankhyas, Patanjalas, and by scholars of sruti, puranas and Agamas, Undaunted Sri Chaitanya ultimately established convincingly Vaishnavism. On His way, a Buddhist Priest also accepted the Name of Krishna. Reaching Chidambaram, He beheld the famous Siva Temple and later proceeded to Shiyali, Vedavana

Vedaranyam, Gosamaja, Karaikal, Nagapattinam, Kumbakonam, Papanasam and Srirangam, where He spent His Chaturmasya, at the request of Venkata Bhatta and His two brothers, Tirumalla and Prabodananda Saraswati author of Chaitanya Chandramrita in their house. Historic Srirangam from time immemorial is the headquarters of Sri-Vaishnavism and Chaitanya held discussions on the aspects of Krishna and Narayana. The devotees were all enthralled. It may be mentioned here that Venkata Bhatta was the father of famous Gopala Bhatta, one of the six famous Gaudiya Vaishnavite masters, who greatly contributed to the literary elucidation of Sri Chaitanya's teachings. Krishnadasa Kaviraja writes about the remarkable success of Chaitanya at Srirangam as "From all quarters flocked hundreds of thousands of people and as they beheld the Lord Chaitanya, they chanted Krishna's Name and no other. All became devotees of Krishna to the astonishment of all men".

Chaitanya then proceeded towards Rishabha Parvata Palni where He met Paramananda Puri, a disciple of Madhava Puri, who was there observing his Chaturmasya. Then Chaitanya proceeded to Srisailam Sholavandan, Kamakoshitiyur and Madurai. It is quite noteworthy to note that Sri Chaitanya was greeted at all places by one and all with great veneration and Bhakti.

Having taken His bath in River Vaigai Kritamala He came to Durvasana Darbasayana via Ramanathapuram. He worshipped Parasurama on the Mahendra Hill before He reached Rameswaram and Dhanushkodi — Sethubanda. Taking His holy bath at Dhanushkodi, He came to Rameswaram to worship at the Siva temple. Returning He visited Tilakanchi, after crossing River Tambaraparani, Alwar Tirunagari and at Srivaikuntham worshipped at the Vishnu temple. He then reached Cape Camorin after visiting Agastya Malai, Panagada, Shertalai, and Gajendra Moksha. At Agastya Malai He recited the hymns to the traditional sage Agastya, and saw the image of Rama-Sita at Panagada and Shertalai.

On return, He visited Tamal Kartika, Vetapani, Amlitala, and crossing River Tiruvettar Payasvini, He worshipped at the temple of Adi Kesava in Trivendrum district reciting a long prayer and held a Kirtan. At this place, He acquired a copy of the famous Brahma Samhita 5th Chapter to His wonder and great amazement. At Trivandrum He worshipped Ananta Padmanabha and Janardana Vishnu. Thence He passed through Malavar, where a gang of gypsies teased Chaitanya's companion, Krishnadasa, who was then delivered by Chaitanya. He then proceeded to Matsyatirtha Mehe and Sringeri Mysore district which is one of the famous Maths found by Sankaracharya, on the banks of River Tungabhadra. At Udipi, the headquarters of Madhva Sampradaya, He saw Balakrishna sanctified by Madhvacharya and was engaged in a scriptural disputation with the head of the Madhva Sect. From Udipi, He proceeded to Phalgu Tirtha, Tritakupa, Surpanaka Tirtha, Gokarna, Dvaipayana and Apsaratirtha. Thence He went to Kollhapur which is bounded by Satara and Belgaum, and visited temples of Lakshmi, Ganesha, Parvati and reached Pandaripur where He worshipped Vithala Deva. Here He met Sri Ranga Puri, a disciple of Sri Madha Puri, who was already known to Sachi Devi, His mother. The influence of Sri Chaitanya's example and preaching is found in the vernacular literature of Pandaripur with an account of the vision of the famous saint Tukaram.

He then visited many places and temples on the banks of River Krishna-venva Krishna-Bhima. In this part Chaitanya obtained the famous Krishnakarnamrita by Vilvamangala. Crossing River Tapti, He went to Mahishmati and crossing River Narmada, He visited Dhanushtirtha, and Rishyamukha Hill, in Dandakaranya. After passing through Pampa, Panchavati Sri Chaitanya reached Nasik. Touching Brahmagiri, Kusavanta Hill, He went back to Nidyanagara and Rajahmundry. Rai Ramananda was extremely delighted to see Chaitanya from a successful tour of the South and conversed with Him, studying two manuscripts of Brahma Samhita and Krishna-karnamrita. Sri Chaitanya was happy to see the people whom He

had already met and who all greeted Him with general acclamation. Accepting all their devotion, Sri Chaitanya returned to Puri after a long sojourn of nearly two years in the South.

Throughout the journey, He encountered many intrigues from Buddhists and stubborn opposition from various religious sects—the Ramaites, Sri-Vaishnavas and Madhvas. His sound philosophical mind was open to what was best in all the system and we welded them into a perfect-whole in His system. All His opponents acknowledged finally His supremacy in the lore of Lord Krishna. His main stress was on Namasankirtana of Krishna by which a Vaishnava devotee is in close touch with the most loving personal God Who is identified with Sri Krishna of Vrja. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur with a vision of world-wide mission established Sri Chaitanya Math at Sree Dham Mayapur on 27-2-1918 and founded 64 branches under the name of Sri Gaudiya Math throughout India and abroad. In the South, we have the branches at Madras, Guntur, and Kovvur. Foot-prints of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu have been installed and worshipped at Srirangam, Tirupati, Mangalagiri, Simhachalam and Kurmachalam.

After Srila Saraswati Thakur Srila Bhakti Vilas Tirtha Goswami Maharaj became President-Acharya of Sri Chaitanya Math and its branches Sri Gaudiya Maths since 1947 to 1976. Almost every year he toured South India with entourage and preached the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and there was tremendous response. Today due to his untired effort Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is reverently respected and worshipped as an Incarnation of God in almost all parts of South India. Sri Gaudiya Math, Madras has got single name in preaching the religion. High dignitaries, like Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the then President of India, Sri Rajaji, Sri V. V. Giri and many other leaders of the country visited and participated on different occasions and

patronized to the couse of the Institution. In appreciation of the services Madras Corporation accorded cordial civic reception to our President Maharaj of the Math. And also a road in the city is named after Sri Gaudiya Math. This Math has published more than 30 volomous English publication Vaishnavism, Chaitanyism in particular including Srimad Bhagavatam and also Twelve Essential Upanishads. This Madras Gaudiya Math has been publishing a monthly English journal "The Gaudiya". And there are number of Tamil and Kannada books besides Telugu Publications.

This Math organised All India All Vaishnava Conference in which Vaishnava Mathadhisas and Sampradaya Heads such as Jeer of Ahobila Math, Sri Andavan Swamiji, Varada Yatiraja Swamigal of Perumbur Math, Pejawar Swamiji of Udipi, Swamiji of Bhandarkar Math, Swamiji of Peru Math, Swamiji of Vyasaray Math etc.

Occasionally the Math organises preaching tours covering almost all parts of Tamil Nadu and Madurai, Srirangam, Coimbatore are strongholds of preaching.



# **SRI AUROBINDO AND TAMIL LITERATURE**

**SHUKLA CHAKRABARTY**

Sri Aurobindo has been one of the greatest saints, philosophers and freedom fighters Bengal had given to India. His mastery over knowledge, material and spiritual, was phenomenal.

Sri Aurobindo was born on 15-8-1872 and was sent by his father to England at the age of eight for studies. He was educated at Manchester and Cambridge, and also passed the I. C. S. Examination. He learnt Latin and Greek, and also German and Italian. But only after his return to India in 1893, he learned Bengali, his mother tongue, and also learnt some Marathi, Gujarathi and Hindi.

It was the partition of Bengal in 1905, which made Sri Aurobindo take to active politics. He plunged into Indian Nationalism in full force. Sri Aurobindo joined the National Council of Education (now called the Jadavpur University), but left it later to join the journal *Bande Mataram* started by Sri Bipin Chandra Pai.

Sri Aurobindo was implicated in a sedition case but soon acquitted. But the British Government was after him, though after his vision of God in the Alipur Jail Sri Aurobindo was

a changed person — a God realised soul. He escaped to Pondicherry in April 1910 and spent the rest of his life there in spiritual quest.

It was here that Sri Subramaniya Bharati came into close association with Sri Aurobindo for over eight years. It was Bharati and his friends who received him at Pondicherry on his arrival and arranged for his stay. Amrita, a former manager of Aurobindo Ashram, records in detail of Sri Aurobindo's close association with Bharati. Theirs was a mutually fruitful friendship. Sri Nalinikanta Gupta, disciple and close associate of Sri Aurobindo, says that Sri Aurobindo who reciprocated Bharati's admiration and friendship learnt Tamil from Bharati to such an extent as to be able to appreciate the Tamil Vaishnava hymns (of 6th to 9th Cent. Tamil) sung by Bharati. His admiration for those beautiful hymns were so much that in the journal 'Arya' — (1st Volume) he had translated three of Andal's songs from Kuyil Pattu, four from her 'Dream of her marriage to Krishna', five from 'Take me to Lord Krishna', all in free verses. In the preface is given a beautiful introduction to the tradition of the soul's longing for the Divine as one's lover, the Tamil Alwars' soul stirring experiences in this love lorn struggle, and Andal's life history.

In the same volume Nammalwar's ten songs under the title 'Blessing the devotees' have also been translated by Sri Aurobindo.<sup>1</sup>

It is not just an appreciation of literary beauty or of religious sublimation that we see in Sri Aurobindo's account. But we see the master philosopher at work who is able to perceive the universal pattern, one who sees everything as a part of a grand design. His mastery over the cultures of west and east helps us to understand that it is only a lack of knowledge that blurs our vision, posing barriers and boundaries between races, languages and cultures.

As Sri Aurobindo says, "The Ramayana of Tulsidas, the songs of Ramprasad and of the Bauls — the wandering Vaishnava

devotees, the poetry of Ramdas and Tukaram, the sentences of Tiruvalluvar and the poems of Avvai and the inspired lyrics of the Southern saints and Alvars were known to all classes and their thought or their emotion entered deeply into the life of the people.”<sup>2</sup>

Then again, he asks, “Where else could the songs of a Tukaram, a Ramprasad, a Kabir, the Sikh Gurus and the chants of the Tamil saints with their fervid devotion but also their profound spiritual thinking have found so speedy an echo and formed a popular religious literature? This strong permeation or close nearness of the spiritual turn, this readiness of the mind of a whole nation to turn to the highest realities is the sign and fruit of an agelong, a real and a still living and supremely spiritual culture.”<sup>3</sup>

Sri Aurobindo writes about Andal The Vaishnava Poetess, “Preoccupied from the earliest times with divine knowledge and religious aspiration the Indian mind has turned all forms of human life and emotion and all the phenomena of the Universe into symbols and means by which the embodied soul may strive after and grasp the Supreme. Indian devotion especially seized upon the most intimate human relations and made them stepping — stones to the supra—human. God the Guru, God the Master, God the Friend, God the Mother, God the child, God the Self, each of these experiences—for to us these are more than merely ideas,—it has carried to its extreme possibilities. But none of them has it pursued, embraced, sung with a more exultant passion of intimate realisation than the yearning for God the Lover, God the Beloved. It would seem as if this passionate human symbol were the natural culminating point for the mounting flame of the soul’s devotion: for it is found wherever that devotion has entered into the most secret shrine of the inner temple. We meet it in Islamic poetry; certain experiences of the christian mystics repeat the forms and images with which we are familiar in the East, but usually with a certain timorousness foreign to the Eastern temperament. For the devotee who has once had this intense experience it is that which

admits to the most profound and hidden mystery of the Universe; for him the heart has the key of the last secret.

The work of a great Bengali poet has recently reintroduced this idea to the European mind, which has so much lost the memory of its old religious traditions as to welcome and wonder at it as a novel form or mystic self-expression. On the contrary it is ancient enough, like all things natural and eternal in the human soul. In Bengal a whole period of national poetry has been dominated by this single strain and it has inspired a religion and a philosophy. And in the Vaishnavism of the far South, in the songs of the Tamil Alwars we find it again in another form, giving a powerful and original turn to the images of our old classic poetry; for there it has been sung out by the rapt heart of a woman to the Heart of the Universe.

The Tamil word, Alwar, means one who has drowned, lost himself in the sea of the divine being. Among these canonised saints of Southern Vaishnavism ranks Vishnuchitta, Yogin and poet, of Villipattur in the land of the Pandyas. He is termed Perialwar, The Great Alwar. A tradition, which we need not believe, places him in the ninety-eighth year of the Kaliyuga. But these divine singers are ancient enough, since they precede the great saint and philosopher Ramanuja whose personality and teaching were the last flower of the long-growing Vaishnava tradition. Since his time Southern Vaishnavism has been a fixed creed and a system rather than a creator of new spiritual greatnesses.

The poetess Andal was the foster-daughter of Vishnuchitta, found by him, it is said, a new-born child under the sacred Tulsi-plant. We know little of Andal except what we can gather from a few legends, some of them richly beautiful and symbolic. Most of Vishnuchitta's poems have the infancy and boyhood of Krishna for their subject. Andal, brought up in that atmosphere, cast into the mould of her life what her foster-father had sung in inspired hymns. Her own poetry — we may suppose that she passed early in to the Light

towards which she yearned for it, is small in bulk, — is entirely occupied with her passion for the Divine Being. It is said that she went through a symbolic marriage with Sri Ranganatha, Vishnu in his temple at Srirangam, and disappeared into the image of her Lord. This tradition probably conceals some actual fact, for Andal's marriage with the Lord is still celebrated annually with considerable pomp and ceremony."4 The following are Sri Aurobindo's beautiful translations of Andal's poems<sup>5</sup>

## TO THE CUCKOO

O Cuckoo that peckest at the blossomed flower of  
honey-dripping cham—

paka and, inebriate, pipest forth the melodious notes, be seated in thy ease and with thy babblings, which are yet no babblings, call out for the coming of my Lord of the Venkata hill. For He, the pure one, bearing in his left hand the white summoning conch shows me not his form. But He has invaded my heart; and while I pine and sigh for his love, He looks on indifferent as if it were all a play.

I feel as if my bones had melted away and my long javelin eyes have not closed their lids for these many days, I am tassed on the waves of the sea of pain without finding the boat that is named the Lord of the highest realm. Even thou must know, O Cuckoo, the pain we feel when we are parted from those whom we love. He whose pennon bears the emblem of the golden eagle, call out for his coming, O bird.

I am a slave of Him whose stride has measured the worlds. And now because He is harsh to me, how strange that this southwind and these moonbeams should tear my flesh, enfeebling me. But thou, O Cuckoo, that ever livest in this garden of mine, it is not meet that thou shouldst pain me also. Indeed I shall drive thee out if He who

reposes on the waters of life come not to me by thy songs today.

## I DREAMED A DREAM

I Dreamed a dream, O friend.

The wedding was fixed for the morrow. And He, the Lion, Madhava, the young Bull whom they call the master of radiances, He came into the hall of wedding decorated with luxuriant palms.

I dreamed a dream, O friend.

And the throng of the Gods was there with Indra, the Mind Divine, at their head. And in the shrine they declared me bride and clad me in a new robe of affirmation. And Inner Force is the name of the goddess who adorned me with the garland of the wedding.

I dreamed a dream, O friend.

There were beatings of the drum and blowings of the conch; and under the canopy hung heavily with strings of pearls He came, my lover and my lord, the vanquisher of the demon Madhu and grasped me by the hand.

I dreamed a dream, O friend.

Those whose voices are blest, they sang the Vedic songs. The holy grass was laid. The sun was established. And He who was puissant like a war elephant in its rage, He seized my hand and we paced round the Flame.

## YE OTHERS

Ye others cannot conceive of the love that I bear to Krishna. And your warnings to me are vain like the pleadings of the deaf and mute. The Boy who left his mother's home and was reared by a different mother, — Og, take me forth to his city of Mathura where He won the field without fighting the battle and leave me there.

Of no further avail is modesty, For all the neighbours have known of this fully. Would ye really heal me of this

ailing and restore me to my pristine state? Then know ye this illness will go if I see Him, the maker of illusions, the youthful one who measured the world. Should you really wish to save me, then take me forth to his home in the hamlet of the cowherds and leave me there.

The rumour is already spread over the land that I fled with Him and went the lonely way, leaving all of you behind -- my parents, relations and friends. The tongue of scandal ye can hardly silence now. And He, the deceiver, is haunting me with his forms. Oh, take me forth at midnight to the door of the cowherd named Bliss who owns this son, the maker of havoc, this mocker, this pitiless player's and leave me there.

Oh, grieve not ye, my mothers. Others know little of this strange malady of mine. He whose hue is that of the blue sea, a certain youth called Krishna -- the gentle caress of his hand can heal me, for his Yoga is sure and proved.

On the bank of the waters he ascended the Kadamba tree and he leaped to his dance on the hood of the snake, the dance that killed the snake. Oh, take me forth to the bank of that take and leave me there.

There is a parrot here in this cage of mine that ever calls out, his name, Saying 'Govinda, Govinda'. In anger I chide it and refuse to feed it. 'O Thou' it then cries, in its highest pitch, 'O Thou who hast measured the worlds'. I tell you, my people, if ye really would avoid the top of scandal in all this wide country, if still ye would guard your weal and your good fame, then take me forth to his city of Dwaraka of high mansion and decorated turrets; and leave me there."

There is a brief account of Nammalwar's history after which Sri Aurobindo continues "from the philosophical and spiritual point of view, his poetry ranks among the highest in Tamil literature. But in point of literary excellence, there is a great inequality; for while some songs touch the level of the loftiest world-poets, others, even though rich in rhythm

and expression, fall much below the poet's capacity. In his great work known as the Tiruvaymoli (The Sacred Utterance) which contains more than a thousand stanzas, he has touched all the phases of the life divine and given expression to all forms of spiritual experience. The pure and passionless Reason, the direct perception in the high solar realm of truth itself, the ecstatic and sometimes poignant love that leaps into being at the vision of the "Beauty of God's face", the final Triumph where unity is achieved and "I and my Father are one" all these are uttered in his simple and flowing lines with a strength that is full of tenderness and truth.

"The lines which we translate below are a fair specimen of the great Alwar's poetry; but it has suffered considerably in the translation, — indeed the genius of the Tamil tongue hardly permits of an effective rendering, so utterly divergent is it from that of the English language." <sup>6</sup>

The following are his translations of Nammalwar's Hymn of the Golden Age. <sup>7</sup>

1. 'Tis glory, glory, glory! For Life's hard curse has expired; swept out are Pain and Hell, and Death has nought to do here. Mark ye, the Iron Age shall end. For we have seen the hosts of Vishnu; richly do they enter in and chant His praise and dance and thrive.
2. We have seen, we have seen, we have seen — seen things full sweet for our eyes. Come, all ye lovers of God, let us shout and dance for joy with oft-made surrenderrings. Wide do they roam on earth singing songs and dancing, the hosts of Krishna who wears the cool and beautiful Tulsi, the desire of the Bees.
3. The Iron Age shall change. It shall fade, it shall pass away. The gods shall be in our midst. The mighty Golden Age shall hold the earth and the flood of the highest Bliss shall swell. For the hosts of our dark-hued Lord, dark-hued like the cloud, dark-hued like the sea, widely they enter in singing songs, and everywhere they have seized on their stations.



4. The hosts of our Lord who reclines on the sea of Vastness, behold them thronging hither. Meseems they will tear up all these weeds of grasping cults. And varied songs do they sing, Our Lord's own hosts, as they dance falling, sitting, standing, marching, leaping, bending.
5. And many are the wondrous sights that strike mine eyes As by magic have Vishnu's hosts come in and firmly placed themselves everywhere. Nor doubt it, ye fiends and demons, if, born such be in our midst, take heed !. Ye shall never escape. For the Spirit of Time will slay and flying you away.
6. These hosts of the Lord of the Discus, they are here to free this earth of the devourers of Life, Disease and Hunger and Vengeful Hate and all other things of evil. And sweet are their songs as they leap and dance extending wide over earth. Go forth, ye lovers of God and meet these hosts divine; with right minds serve them and live.
7. The Gods that ye fix in your minds, in His name do they grant you deliverance. Even thus to immortality did the sage Markanda attain. I mean no offence to any, but there is no other God but Krishna. And let all your sacrifices be to them who are but His forms.
8. His forms he has placed as Gods to receive and taste the offerings that are brought in sacrifices in all the various worlds. He our divine Sovereign on whose mole-marked bosom the goddess Lakshmi rests—His hosts are singing sweetly and deign to increase on earth. O men, approach them, serve and live.
9. Go forth and live by serving our Lord, the deathless one. With your tongues chant ye the hymns, the sacred Riks of the Veda, nor err in the laws of wisdom. Oh, rich has become this earth in the blessed ones and faithful who serve them with flowers and incense and sandal and water.

10. In all these rising worlds they have thronged and wide they spread, those beauteous forms of Krishna — the unclad Rudra, is there, Indra, Brahma, all. The Iron Age shall cease to be — do ye but unite and serve these.

We find that Sri Aurobindo was not only drawn towards the intense love poems of the Tamil Vaishnava Alwars but, the Tamil language itself has roused his ever searching mind in such curiosity that we find the following lines from his essay: "It was my stay in Southern India which first seriously turned my thoughts to the Veda. Two observations that were forced on my mind gave a serious shock to my second-hand belief in the racial division between Northern Aryans and Southern Dravidians. The distinction had always rested for me on a supposed difference between the physical types of Aryan and Dravidian and a more definite incompatibility between the Northern-Sanskritic and the Southern non-Sanskritic tongues. I knew indeed of the later theories which suppose that a single homogeneous race, Dravidian or Indo-Afghan, inhabits the Indian peninsula; but hitherto I had not attached much importance to these speculations. I could not, however, be long in Southern India without being impressed by the general recurrence of northern or "Aryan" types in the Tamil race. Wherever I turned, I seemed to recognise with a startling distinctness, not only among the Brahmins but in all castes and classes, the old familiar faces, features, figures of my friends of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Hindustan even, though this similarity was less widely spread of my own province Bengal. The impression I received was as if an army of all the tribes of the North had descended on the South and submerged any previous populations that may have occupied it. A general impression of a southern type survived, but it was impossible to fix it rigidly while studying the physiognomy of individuals. And in the end I could not but perceive that whatever admixtures might have taken place, whatever regional differences might have been involved, there remains, behind all variations, a unity of physical as well as of cultural type throughout India. For the rest, this is a conclusion to which ethnological speculation itself has an increasing tendency.

But what then of the sharp distinction between Aryan and Dravidian races created by the philologists? It disappears. If at all an Aryan invasion is admitted, we have either to suppose that it flooded India and determined the physical type of the people, with whatever modifications, or that it was the incursion of small bands of a less civilised race who melted away into the original population. We have then to suppose that entering a vast peninsula occupied by a civilised people, builders of great cities, extensive traders, not without mental and spiritual culture, they were yet able to impose on them their own language, religion, ideas and manners. Such a miracle would be just possible if the invaders possessed a very highly organised language, a greater force of creative mind and a more dynamic religious form and spirit.

And there was always the difference of language to support the theory of a meeting of races. But here also my preconceived ideas were disturbed and confounded. For on examining the vocables of the Tamil language, in appearance so foreign to the Sanskritic form and character, I yet found myself continually guided by words or by families of words supposed to be pure Tamil in establishing new relations between Sanskrit and its distant sister, Latin and occasionally between the Greek and the Sanskrit. Sometimes the Tamil vocable not only suggested the connection, but proved the missing link in a family of connected words. And it was through this Dravidian language that I came first to perceive what seems to me now the true law, origins and, as it were, the embryology of the Aryan tongues. I was unable to pursue my examination far enough to establish any definite conclusion, but it certainly seems to me that the original connection between the Dravidian and Aryan tongues was far closer and more extensive than is usually supposed and the possibility suggests itself that they may even have been two divergent families derived from one lost primitive tongue. If so, the sole remaining evidence of an Aryan invension of Dravidian India would be the indications to be found in the Vedic hymns.

It was therefore, with a double interest that for the first time I took up the Veda in the original, though without any

immediate intention of a close or serious study."<sup>8</sup> After this he deals with vedic hymns and Upanishad.

He further says, "I have already indicated that my first study of Tamil words had brought me to what seemed a clue to the very origins and structure of the ancient Sanskrit tongue; and so far did this clue lead that I lost sight entirely of my original subject of interest, the connections between Aryan and Dravidian speech, and plunged into the far more interesting research of the origins and laws of development of human language itself. It seems to me that this great inquiry and not the ordinary preoccupation of linguistic scholars should be the first and central aim of any true science of Philology."<sup>9</sup> After this he deals with the Modern Philology.

Again while speaking on the origin of Aryan Speech: "I have disregarded as any other error of imperfect enquiry the rigid philological divorce of the Dravidian and Aryan languages. Whether there be a separate Dravidian stock or no it is to me a certainty that Tamil owes not only many of its most common terms but whole families of words to the original Aryan speech. Its evidences cannot be neglected in such an enquiry as I have undertaken, for they are of the greatest importance. Indeed the theory worked out by us took its rise originally not from any analysis of the Sanskrit word system, but from an observation of the relations of Tamil in its non-concretised element to the Greek, Latin and North Indian languages."<sup>10</sup>

From the various excerpts on Tamil language, race, philology etc. One can see the great mind at work ever probing into the mysteries of the world around him and trying to enolve the underlying truth. This is not to say that his beliefs on philology are to be taken literally. He had neither the atmosphere nor was he able to pursue the matter further with the necessary tools, his interests being of a very different kind. But still one cannot ignore the great wisdom that underlay his views.

## R E F E R E N C E

1. The works of Tamil poets were translated with the help of Subramaniam Bharati and published in the Arya in 1914 - 1915. (See, Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Volume 8, Bibliographical note).
2. Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. Vol. 14, P.321
3. „ „ „ „ „ Vol. 14, p.129
4. „ „ „ „ „ Vol. 17, pp 372-372
5. „ „ „ „ „ Vol. 8, pp 404-406
6. „ „ „ „ „ Vol. 17, p.374
7. „ „ „ „ „ Vol. 8, pp 398-399
8. „ „ „ „ „ Vol. 10, pp 35-36
9. „ „ „ „ „ Vol. 10, pp 46-47
10. „ „ „ „ „ Vol. 27, p. 166

# TAMIL POETRY AND CULTURE

T. B. SIDDALINGAIAH

Poetry depicts life. It reflects the ambitions, hopes and achievements of the people. It also mirrors the ideals, the ideologies and the noble thoughts of the mankind. The literature while giving the picture of all these sets the aims and goals also. The Sangam literature in Tamil of the pre-Christian era is no exception. The culture then was secular and the approach to life was on an even footing. The **purananuru** is full of such sentiments that contributed to a rich and purposeful life. Living is an art. If there is no jealousy there is no problem. If one can think of others as one's own the question of envy does not arise. "Everyone is our kith and kin and the whole world is but ours".<sup>1</sup> One can gain this attitude if one is aware of the impermence of life and world. The wise ones 'who wanted their names to live for ever in this temporal world, left behind their fame'.<sup>2</sup> How does one build up the name and the fame? Any extra-ordinary act will lead to this and the wise men of that era had listed them.

Bravery, learning, the mind to help others and the attitude to live for others were some of the ideals which the poets of that age cherished. There are a few intances mentioned in the **Purananuru** to bring out this aspect. A mother, when questioned about the whereabouts of her son, replied that he would be found in the war-front.<sup>3</sup> Another one sent her only son, a mere boy, to the battlefield despite the

fact that she lost her husband, brother and father consecutively during the previous days.<sup>4</sup> Death in the battle-field was considered the best. As a result even a dead child was cut up with a sword before burying it.<sup>5</sup> What is actually meant by this bravery. It is steadfastness without flinching or giving up. Cekkilar while describing staunch devotion makes use of the word 'viram', bringing out fully and comprehensively the meaning of this word.<sup>6</sup>

Learning makes a man perfect. Even the mother would be partial to the son for his education.<sup>7</sup> And a Pandya King extols learning and the means to learn. When one is educated his mind becomes so vast that everyone is accommodated in it. He does not want to save anything for himself or the family. He would like to share everything with others forgetting his own poverty. He would like to share everything with others, forgetting his own poverty. He would like his wife also to participate in this, without reservation.<sup>8</sup> Such men are the salt of the earth. The world goes on only because of men who live for the sake of others, without any trace of selfishness. They are prepared to give up life if the return is 'fame'; so also they would not accept even the whole world as a gift, if it is to come with a slander.<sup>9</sup> On account of such noble men the land they live in becomes 'good'.<sup>10</sup>

The poets and the bards went round in search of patrons of arts and enjoyed the freedom to express their views. They were proud of their learning and were particular to receive due recognition and respect. The patron's power or wealth did not deter them; they would discard him saying, "patron thou art not, nor are there not patrons."<sup>11</sup> But they did not hesitate to record the lofty-hearted who evinced the same interest in them and showered affection for ever as on the first day.<sup>12</sup>

The patrons-the Kings and the Chieftains-were not only lovers of poetry and music. Some of them were poets themselves. One of them, a Pandya King by name Arivudainambi, depicted the play of the children and declared that the lives of the barren people were absolutely useless, whatever their

earthly possessions were.<sup>13</sup> The Kings respected the poets and deemed it an honour to be sung by them. King Nedunceliyan, in his poem, said that his land be not be praised by the poets, if he did not vanquish his foes.<sup>14</sup> The respect was mutual and the result was excellent poetry compiled in the Purananuru. The Kings were happy to feed the poets and the bards in particular and the public in general. One Chola King was so much impressed with a Chieftain, Pannan, who fed the poor with dedication, that he called the latter, 'pacippini maruttuvan' (the doctor for hunger) and added 'let my life-span be transferred to Pannan so that he could live longer and feed the poor.'<sup>15</sup> A Cera King, Perumcorru Udiyan Ceraladan, is said to have provided food to both the armies of the Mahabharata war. Muranciur Mudinagarayar praises him saying 'may you live long like the Himalayas (in the north) and the Podiyil Hills (in the extreme south) for you have fed everyone at the battle where the hundred fought with the five and fell'.<sup>16</sup> For, feeding was considered the best of the dharmas. Manimekalai later on, takes up the cue and says that 'giving food is like giving one a life'.<sup>17</sup> And Adirai, one of the characters of that work, put rice in the bowl held by Manimekalai, the heroine, as though it was the elixier, saying let the whole world be cured of this disease, namely hunger'.<sup>18</sup> The dharma begets a good result in the next birth, if not in the present one. About the Chieftain Ay, the poet says that he is not a trader bartering his good deeds for the pleasant result in the next birth.<sup>19</sup> Speaking of trade the Sangam literature prescribes a code. The trader should not receive more and give less.<sup>20</sup>

Love is a subject treated very elaborately in the Sangam literature. In the anthology of eight works (Ettuttogai) five speak of this basic element of human beings. All aspects and dimensions of love have been fully expressed. Of course, it was agreed that love looks not with the eyes'. It is a merger or a fusion of two minds, losing their identity. It is like the rain water mixing with the red soil losing its original nature.<sup>21</sup> A poet tries to portray the dimensions of it. 'It is bigger than the earth and higher than the sky and deeper than the sea, the love. I developed with that one' says the lady.<sup>22</sup>



The love seems to grow deeper when the two are separated. Naturally one tries to avoid separation. We have a pen-picture of a lady trying to prevent the lover from his plan to go for acquiring wealth. She stands at the door-with tears rolling down the eyelids and obscuring the vision. She does not speak but hints at his giving up his effort.<sup>23</sup> Separation is painful not only for the lovers. Even a mother is pained at the prospect of the daughter going away with her husband. She is advised not to worry since it is a natural law like the sandal wood being useful to the user and not to the mountain where it was born, like the music giving pleasure to the listener but not to the instrument which produces it, and like the pearl being useful to the wearer and not to the sea which gave birth to it.<sup>24</sup>

The subjective poetry deals with the emotion of the people involved in love and also of the people like the mother, the friend and others. Their sentiments have been very naturally and fully expressed. Native similies are employed to stress the point. For example, the mood of a man while attempting to borrow something and the change of the mood while returning it have been used. It is said that it is not strange nor new, for it has been so from the very beginning.<sup>25</sup>

Love is such a fine and captivating subject that the two books of the Ten Idylls (Pattuppattu) also speak of these sentiments. The poet, Kadiyalur Uruttiran Kannanar, puts it in the words of the lover who declares that he would never allow himself to be separated from his lady love even if he was to get Kavirippumpattinam, a city well known for its riches.<sup>26</sup> So also the Nedunalvadaï speaks of the pangs of separation elaborately. But for the fact that these two works indicate the kings who were the heroes of the poems, those two would have been included in the subjective category. The rest of the ten poems speak of a poet or a bard guiding another to a patron. One of them, Maduraikkanchi speaks of the impermanence of life and the world and names the ideals to be followed.<sup>27</sup>

Chronologically we go into another era when didacticism prevail upon poets. Tirukkural, Naladiyar and others come

under this category. The Tirukkural as a manual for life prescribes do's and don'ts. It speaks of 'aram' (dharma) in all its conceivable aspects. It names two as the best 'aram': abstinence from killing and from speaking the untruth.<sup>28</sup> When one follows these dictums one becomes a 'perfect one' (canron) and Tiruvalluvar speaks of the qualities of the 'perfect one' elaborately. He is full of love and is prepared to give up his life for others.<sup>29</sup> And he goes further to do good to those who have wilfully harmed him.<sup>30</sup>

Tiruvalluvar has defined the righteousness in detail. He says if the mind is absolutely clean that alone is righteousness (aram).<sup>31</sup> He also prescribes that the sweet words coming out of the kind heart, with a pleasant look is the right conduct.<sup>32</sup> This leads a man to be compassionate. And a compassionate man truly does a penance for he accepts his sufferings silently and refrains from harming other beings. And this is the real penance.<sup>33</sup> If one can develop this attitude he would be able to seek the Truth. Whatever be the subject, the real seeker should find the truth and from whomsoever he may hear he should seek the truth.<sup>34</sup> The purpose of Tirukkural has been to make people 'noble'. This 'nobility' (canranmai) has been stressed right through. While defining nobility, the author questions, 'what is nobility, if it cannot do good to those who harmed (us).'<sup>35</sup> Also he says that the real poverty is not being poor; (it is nothing) if one has the inner strength of nobility.<sup>36</sup>

The rest of the eighteen didactic works more or less follow the Tirukkural in exposition.

The post-sangam poetry saw the emergence of the epics, Cilappathikaram and Manimekalai. The former is the first epic in Tamil and deals with the life of a merchant. This is itself extra-ordinary in the sense that the Kings alone were considered to deserve to be the heroes of epics. The author incidentally speaks for the first time of the religions which were prevalent then. Thus we find the exploits of Kannan (Krishna), Murugan (Kartikeya) and Korravai (Kali), the mention of Siva and Vishnu temples and the philosophical tenet

of Jainism and Buddhism. And the folk arts<sup>37</sup> have been extensively used to bring in an effect to the narration. The author deals with the story beautifully. The penpictures of the characters are superb. The Pandya King stuck to justice and gave up his life the moment he learnt that an innocent man was killed because of his hasty decision.<sup>38</sup> It can be said that the Cilappathikaram introduced a new cult namely the cult of chaste women. The description and the imagery the author had used in detailing the life of Krishna rank with the devotional outpourings of the later Alwars.<sup>39</sup> This is supported by the fact that it was the Cilappathikaram which mentions for the first time in the whole gamut of Tamil literature the holy mantras, namely Pancakshara and Astakshara of Saivism and Vaisnavism respectively.<sup>40</sup>

For the first time we come across a religious epic in its true sense in the Manimekalai. It speaks of the tenets of Buddhism elaborately. Without being polemical it speaks of the tenets of a few other system also. And yet it is absolutely Buddhistic in nature, as it stresses on the "birth being the cause for suffering and also that who are not born suffer not."<sup>41</sup>

These two and three other epics have been classified as the 'five great epics', after the Sanskrit tradition. These three are Jivakacanthamani, Valayapathi and Kundalakesi. The last two are not available in full and the first is filled with the philosophy of Jainism. The last chapter, Mukti Ilambagam; is exclusively a detailed study in Tamil of Jainistic principles. It is in this work that we come across a real hero of an epic; and the description and delienation of the character were borrowed by later epic poets. The author makes use of a metre which was later on accepted as a metre suitable for epic' poems.

Another set of epics go by the name of the 'five minor epics'. Again these five works have either Jainism or Buddhism as their basis.

The seventh century saw the emergence of Devotional Movement in Tamil Nadu. The two great religions, Saivism

and Vaisnavism started coming out of their stupor. The Nayanmars (saivaite devotees) and the Alwars (of Vaisnavism) poured out their hearts in their soul-stirring hymns. God, His grace and greatness, devotion to Him, the holy places where He took abode and the effect of singing the praise of the Lord etc., formed the theme of their poems. It was an attempt to revive the Vedic religion, in which the personal gods were showered upon with love and devotion. God is described in all the possible conceivable ways. The Tevaram trio viz, Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar, visited the shrines and sang the glory of Siva. Their poems were lyrical, guiding the people to the way of God. They assured that the love for God would get everything in this life; and also ensure a place in the heaven.<sup>42</sup> The love for God expands and the longing to see Him and listen to His name uttered increases. Manikkavacagar expresses in the words of his 'nayaki' "My dear koel, call for me my beloved God, whose feet extend beyond the seven worlds of nether and the head beyond the limit of the words"<sup>43</sup> This is the state of a girl (devotee) madly in love with God. Appar provides more vivid a picture. This girl happened to hear His name mentioned, she was curious to know more about Him-His place and manners; after learning these she fell madly in love with Him; she left behind her parents and others; she lost herself, forgot her name and identity and merged in the feet of the Lord.<sup>44</sup> And the feet, the refuge, is thrilling and scintillating, like the music, the southern wind and a cool pond.<sup>45</sup> When one indulges thus in happiness-ecstasy where is the chance for misery or pain? No one can cause any harm. There is nothing which can upset and 'we are not the subjects to any, and are not afraid of the god of death'.<sup>46</sup> The Lord is inseparately with the human beings and hence there is always only happiness and nothing else'. 'He is the music and the effects of music'.<sup>47</sup> Bewitched by this the soul travels along the path of devotion. The devotion leads to inseparability and an ever-lasting desire to be one with Him. And so, Andal, one of the Alwars, brooks of no idea of ever getting married to a human being. She says that she would not live if even there was a talk to give her in marriage to any man.<sup>48</sup> There is a constant desire to see Him and nothing else. Tiruppanalwar

mentions that his eyes, having feasted upon Ranganatha of Srirangam, could not think of seeing anything else.<sup>49</sup> Uttering the name of the Lord is itself the greatest pleasure. One Alwar declares that he would not accept the heavens in lieu of the taste of chanting various names of God.<sup>50</sup>

This devotion had another aspect also. It tried its best to conceive the qualities of God—His greatness, beauty, mercifulness etc; Nammalwar attempts to describe it. “He is with an eminence greater than any; He provided the greatest wisdom which is without a flaw, He is the Lord of the celestials.”<sup>51</sup>

These saints wanted to make the people love God, “even out of fear, if not with affection”.<sup>52</sup> God is not something somewhere else. It is with us and it is love. “God and love are not two different things; God is love; once this is realised they remain as love and God!”<sup>53</sup> The same Tirumular who has said this hands out a simple prescription for an easy religious life. “It is very easy for any one to place a green leaf on an idol, to give a handful of grass to a cow, to spare a morsel of food before eating, and talk pleasantly to others.”<sup>54</sup>

Cekkilar, the author of the Periyapuranam lists the lives of the Saivaite devotees. He describes them as the ones’ who look at gold and a piece of clay equally, and who would not think of liberation but are satisfied with the worship of Siva<sup>55</sup>. His portrayal of a character is a good specimen for the theme, devotion, he took up. The lady is weaving a garland using a thread and flowers. In her mind also a garland is being woven. The love for Siva is the thread and the holy mantra, pancakshara, is the flower.<sup>56</sup> Cekkilar’s description of Appar’s countenance is remarkable and is easily applicable to any devotee of any religion. ‘Tears from the eyes rolled down and drenched the chest; the mouth was full of songs of divine names and heart was filled with the holy feet of the Lord’.<sup>57</sup> He speaks of a group of devotees—‘appalum adic carndar’—a novel idea hitherto unknown. Under this group he includes all devotees beyond the boundaries—boundaries of time, language and land, “thus conceiving a democratic

family of the lovers of God in the whole Universe and of all times."<sup>58</sup> Of course this idea was originally conceived by Sundarar and Cekkilar expanded it.

The great Kamban gave the story of Rama in Tamil. He made some suitable changes in the narration and the story. For example, Rama worships Siva at Ramesvaram after slaying Rama, whereas we find worship taking place in Valmiki before the war. He introduced the story of Hiranya, which is not in the original. Kamban's Rama was very humane and he accepted Guha, Sugriva and Vibhishana as brothers. He tells Vibhishana, "by sending me to the forest, your father (Dasaratha) was blessed with (seven) sons."<sup>60</sup> His Rama is the Supreme God itself, and not Vishnu, one of the Trinity, which came down to set right thing.<sup>61</sup>

Love is self-effacing. Lakshmana followed Rama and Sita to the forest to serve them. Bharata's love for and devotion to Rama was in no way less. Guha was a hunter who fell in love with Rama at first sight. Kamban tries to bring the three devotees together as though to show the depth of their love. The purpose is not to compare or measure. It is only to show the dimension. Bharata meets Guha and enquires about Rama and others. Guha explains how Lakshmana served Rama. "when Rama and Sita slept, Laskhmana stood in watch with his bow and arrow ready, shedding tears, without even winking till dawn."<sup>62</sup> It was a narration of course. But we can feel very easily how Guha felt for he has been denied the chance to serve his beloved Lord. And, of course he was also sleepless as he could watch Lakshmana standing guard without sleep! Bharata's reaction was entirely different. His misery was two-fold. "Both of us are brothers, indeed, but what a contrast! I am the cause of all the misery and Lakshmana does everything to wipe it out. Foe, my love!"<sup>63</sup> Kamban set up an example for an ideal epic with all the beauty, splendour etc., As a result other epic poets imitate him and fall short of his richness and freshness.

The advent of the Europeans brought in a new outlook. Saint Ramalingar and others like him mixed social thinking

with religion. They believed in a unity-a religious commonness on the basis of equality of caste and creeds' like Tuiruvachagam, Ramalingar's Aruta is really soul-stirring. This trend was continued by Subrahmanya Bharati. He added yet another dimension to his poetry, namely patriotism. He sang of God, Mother Goddess and also the Goddess of Motherland. Freedom was his breath. And he fought for freedom from want, freedom from slavery etc.,- in short a political and social freedom. He addressed the children, the hope of the future. He could see Mother Goddess everywhere. He looked at God not as a God alone. God for him, was his father, mother, master, servant and his lady love too. He broke a new ground in Tamil poetry which would enrich the language for centuries to come.

Tamil poetry through out a history for more than 2000 years has undergone tremendous changes in form, content and approach. Each change brought in a new lustre, a new dimension. Human nature, in its varied forms like love, hunger, bravery, culture, eminence etc. have been portrayed fully in the early literature. The medieval literature saw the emergence of Bhakti Movement and depicted devotion, surrender and compassion in detail. This Bhakti Movement spread all over the country and is now entering the lands across the seas. The later Tamil poetry addressed itself to social problems and sought a way out of the problems.

## FOOT NOTES

1. Yadum ure, yavarum kelir Puraṇaṇuṁ, 192.
2. manna ulagattu mannudal kurittor tampugal nirit tamayn danare - ibid, 165
3. inra viyiro iduve, tonruvan mado porkkalatane - ibid, 86
4. orumagance alladu illol Orumugam nokkic Celgenā vridume- ibid, 279
5. Kulavi irappinum untadi pirappinum alanrenru valin tappar - ibid, 74.
6. ira anbinar yadum Kuraivilar, viram ennal vilambum tagaiyado - Priyapurāṇam 4.9;

7. pirrainilai muniyadu Kartal nanre... Cirappin palal tayum manam tiriya - Purananuru 183.
8. innork kennadu ennodum culadu, vallangu valdum ennadu, ellarkkum kodumadi manaikila voye - ibid, 163.
9. undalamma ivvulagam... tamakkena muyala nonral pirarkkena muyalunar unmai yane - ibid, 182
10. evvali uallavar adauar avvali nallai valiya nilane - ibid' 187; also, anravridadangiya Kolgaic Canror palaryan valum are - ibid, 191.
11. iravalar puravalai niyumu allai, puravalar iravalark killaiyumu allar - ibid, 162
12. orunal Cellalam irunal cellalam, palanal payinru palarodu cellinum, talainal pouira viruppinan mado - ibid, 101.
13. mayakkuru makkalai illorkkup pauyakkaurai illait tamvalu nale - ibid, 188.
14. Pulavar Padadu varaigaren nilvarai - ibid, 72.
15. yanvalu nalam Pannan valiya...Pacippini maruttuvan illam aritto ceytto Kurumin emakke - ibid, 173.
16. aivarodu Cinai... iraimpadinmar porudu Kalattoliya perum Corru migupadam varaiyadu Koduttoy... nadukkinri niliyaro... porkot timayamum podiyamum ponre - ibid, 2
17. undi Koduttor uyirkoduttore - Manimekalai.
18. paragam adangalum pacippini arugena, adirai ittanal aruyir marunden - ibid,
19. immaic ceydadu marumaikkamenum aravilai vanigan ay alan - Purananuru. 134.
20. Kolvadum migai koladu koduppadum kurai Kodadu - Pattinappalai, line 210.
21. cempulap peyalnir pola anbudai nencam tamkalandanave - Kurnutogai, 40.
22. nilattinum peride vaninum uyarndanru, nirinum aralavinre Caral Kadunkor kurincip pukkondu perunten ilaikkum nadanodu natpe - ibid, 3
23. Ovaceydiyin Onru ninainborrip pavai maytta pani nir nokkamodu - Agananuru,, 5.
24. palavuru naruncandam paduppavarkkalladai malaiyule pirappinum maikkavaidam en ceyyum - Kalitogai,, 6.
25. Unkadan valimolindirakkum kal muganumtam Kondadu



Kodukkumkal mugenum veradal Pandum ivvulagat  
tiyarkai ahdinrum puduvadaure - ilrid, 22.

26. muttac cirappin pattinam perinum varirum : Kundal  
vayangilai oliya varen valiya nence - Pattinappalai,  
lines 218-220
27. Maduraikkanchi, lines 205-9.
28. Onraga nalladu Kollamai marradan pincarap poyyamai  
nanru - Tirukkural 33.1 also see alukkaru ava-4.5; andanar  
enbor aravor...3.10; arattariduvena venda—4.7;
29. ... anbudaiyar enbum uriyar pirarkku - ibid, 8.2;
30. inna Ceydarkkum iniyave ceyyakkal : enna payattado  
Calbu - ibid, 99.7
31. Manattukkan macilanadal anaittaran akula nira pira -  
ibid, 4.4;
32. mugattan inidamarndu nokki agattanam incolinade aram -  
ibid, 10.3;
33. urra noy nonral uyirkku urukan Ceyyamai arre tavattir  
kuru - ibid, 27.1;
34. epporul ettanmaittayinum apporul meypporul Kanbadu  
arivu - ibid, 36.5; epporul yar yarvayk Ketpinum apporul  
meypporul kanbadu arivu - ibid, 43.3;
35. ibid, 99.7;
36. ibid, 99.8;
37. Kunrak kuravai, aycciyar kuravai, vettuva vari, urculvari.
38. poncey Kollan tancor Ketta yano aracan, yane kalvan-  
Cilappathikaram 2,20. lines 74-75.
39. ibid, aycciyar kuravai.
40. ibid, 11. lines 128-30.
41. pirandor uruvadu perugiya tunbam, piravar uruvadu  
perum perinbam, parrin varuvadu munnadu pinnadu arror  
uruvadu - Manimekalai
42. immaiye tarum corum kuraiyum ettalam idar Kedalumam,  
ammaiye civalogam alvadarku yadum aiyuravillaiye -  
Sundarar, 7,34.1;
43. gitam iniya kuyile kettiyel engal peruman padam  
irandum vinavil patalam elinukkappal, Coti mani mudi  
colinl collirandu ninra tonmai adigunam onrum illan  
andamilan varakkuvay - Tiruvacagam, Kuyil pattu, 1. . .
44. munnam avanudaiya namam Kettal...-6.25.7

45. macil vinaiyum malai madiyamum, vicu tenralum vingila venilum, mucu vandarai poygaiyum ponrade-Appar, 5.90.1.
46. namarkkum kudiyaillom namanai ancom - Appar, 6.98.1
47. elisaiyay isaippayanay...Sundarar, 7.51.10,
48. manidavarkkenru peccuppadil valagillan kanday-Andal, 508.
49. andarkon aniarangan enamudinaik Kanda Kanga marronrinaik kanave - 936.
50. paccaimamalaipol menip pavalavay kamalaccengan accuda amarar ere ayartam kolunde ennum iccuvai tavira yanpoy indira logam alum accuvai perinum venden...-Tondaradipodi., 873.
51. uyarvara uyarnalum udaiyavan evan avan mayarvaru madinalam arulinan evan avan ayarvurum amarargal adipadi evan avan tuyararu cudaradi toludeluen manane-2675.
52. anciyagilum anbu pattagilum, nencame ninai ninriyurai in - Appar, 5.23.9;
53. anbum civamum irandenbar arivilor... anbe civamay amarn dirundare - Tirumandiram 257.
54. yavarkkumam iravarkkoru paccilai... yavarkkumam pirarkkinnurai tane - ibid, 104.
55. Kedum akkamum ketta tiruvirar, odum cemponum okkave nokkuvar...- Periyapuranam 4.8.
56. anbu nara anceluttu nencu todukka alar todutte...-ibid, 29.226.
57. marbarap polikannir malaivarum tiru vadivum maduravakkil cervarum tiru vayil tintamilin malaigalum cemporracle carvana tiru manamum...-ibid, 21.225
58. Dr. Dorai Rangaswami, The Religion and Philosophy of Tevaram Book II, 1959, p. 1066.
59. Origin and development of Saiva Siddhanta upto 14th century, 1979, p.66.
60. Kuganodum aivaranem munbu pin kunru culvan, maganodum aruvaranem emmunbu anbin vanda, aganamar kadal aiya ninnodum eluvar anem, pugalarum kanam tandu pudalvaral polindan nundai - Kambaramayauam, 6507
61. mulamum naduvum irum illador mummaittaya kalamum kanakkum nitta karanan...ibid, 5884.

62. allaiyandamainda meni alaganum avalum tunca villaiyuniya kaiyodum veyduyirppodum viran kallaiyanduyarnda tolai kangal nivicoriyak kangul ellaikanbalavum ninran imaippilan nayanam enran - ibid, 2344.
63. enbattaik ketta maindan ira manuk Kilaiyar enru murbotta torrattenil yanenrum mudivilada tunbattuk keduvanen avan adu tudaikka ninran anbattuk Kellai undo alagidu enadimai enran - ibid, 2345.

# **A STUDY IN TAGORE AND BHARATHI**

**M. RAMASWAMY**

Fortunate in knowing the two languages, Bengali and Tamil, the subject 'Bengal & Tamilnadu' led my thoughts, as a matter of almost preprogrammed response, to Rabindranath Tagore and Subramania Bharathi, the path-finders in their respective languages - the path to the modern world.

Though born twenty years after Tagore and though he passed away twenty years before Tagore, Subramania Bharathi holds an identical place in modern Tamil literary renaissance as Tagore on the Bengali scene. I was attracted by the thought that perhaps, the Yuga Dharma, the particular turning point in India's historical and cultural evolution should produce two such poets and thinkers in two different languages. They saw to the success of an almost qualitative change in the literary field in the two languages. What Anthony Burgess says of T. S. Eliot may not be inappropriate to these two Indian poets as well. Burgess says: 'T. S. Eliot was a maker in a double sense, he made not only his poetry but also made the minds that read it'. The dawn of a new era in India's life, when the darkness overlying it during a millenium of our history was lifted, was both heralded and aided by these two great poets in their own languages.

With but half the life-span of his great contemporary Tagore, with most of his productive creative life-time spent

in avoiding the oppressive actions of the foreign ruler, with dire poverty that governed his life from the time he was seventeen till his death forcing him into back journalism (which he, however absorbed and used positively). Bharathi was able to give Tamil language the fillip needed to lift it out of the slough of archaic darkness of spirit and style and to put it on par with the modern world.

While the vast output of Tagore's creative genius can but be hinted at in a study of this small magnitude, the burning intensity of Bharathi's poems, so dazzlingly hot, that it seems to have burned his life away, too, calls for a very deep study.

Considering the time and space available, an attempt has been made in this paper to give a bird's-eye view of the vast territory of Tagore's creations and Bharathi's writings. At the end, the response of these two great poetic minds to the material, intellectual and spiritual challenge of the world, in space and time, is considered. The identity of their poetic response is contrasted with the variety of their individual human response.

Rabindranath Tagore was a colossus, a towering giant even among the stalwarts of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, stalwarts, not only in the literary arena but even amongst the social reformers and political activists.

History had placed India in a long dark age during which period of somnolence, their adventurous and creative spirit had been dormant or at their lowest ebb. Then India and Indians had, with the advent of the Europeans, been subjected to the cultural shock of western scientific thought and intellectual wealth. From the seventeenth century, the awakening of the Indian mind to the realities of the modern world started. The coming of the English to Bengal and the contact with the English led slowly at first and at a faster pace subsequently to the awareness by the Bengali mind of the slumber in which India had been sunk during the era of the Delhi Sultanate and the Moghul Empire.

An active, not a mere theoretical awareness, of the need to come abreast of the modern world led Raja Ram Mohan Roy to the conclusion that only through English as the medium and a western system of education, could India join the mainstream of human thought and technology. The Calcutta Hindu College (later to become the Presidency College) was started in 1818; the Christian Missionaries started the Serampore College. Like the long starving pouncing on food-spread, Bengal's youth poured into these institutions. A whole new world and Universe opened up before these ardent young spirits, who earlier had been mentally restrained by the age old Sanskritic and Persian systems of education and thought. The roll call of the brilliant minds dazzled and intoxicated with the freesoaring thought streams and adventurous sallies in undreamt of ways, even to-day thrills us. There was, however, a price to pay. Brilliant youngsters of cultured families lured by the seeming freedom, the English language revealed to them and by the machinations of the Christian Missionaries became converts to Christianity. Names like Krishna Mohan Bando-padhyaya, Mahesh Chandra Ghosh, Michael Madhusudan Dutt (till Rabindranath's ascendancy, the greatest of modern Bengali poets) and Jnanendra Mohan Thakur adorn this list. The Hindu reaction to these conversions and the way a saner tackling of the situation by Ram Mohan Roy and Devendranath Tagore amongst others who saved the country's cultural progress from the quick sands of obscurantism, form a brilliant chapter of our social history.

In the area of letters, Bengali was in the same dark age like other Indian languages. The seven or eight centuries from the sack of Somnath had seen the eclipse of the Hindu spirit of adventure in the world of deed and thought. Literature had, as a necessary consequence, become a dead thing, divorced from the realities of the lives of the people. Learning imprisoned in Sanskrit, Persian or Arabic remained the preserve of the few; What little of literary creations did come out, were concerned with the adulations of the princely or royal patrons or with escapism into the areas of religious penumbra.

The dawn of the Modern Age in Europe came with the use of the people's language by Dante. Dante (1265-1321) wrote his 'Divine Comedy' in Italian and not in the Scholar's Latin. Petrarch wrote his exquisite sonnets in Italian. The ball set rolling by them saw to the flowering of the various national languages of Europe. It is almost six centuries later that we find a similar awakening in India and use of the people's language in contrast to the scholar's language. In fact, the latter half of the 19th century can be called the Age of Bengali and also Tamil Literary Renaissance.

A second major cause for the retarded history of literature is the long centuries it took for printing to come to India. The oral tradition in India learning had restricted literary creation to poetry or verse. Only when the Printing Press came to India in the early years of the 19th century could learning spread among ever-increasing numbers and the hard bind of scholastics be broken.

Both in Bengal and Tamilnadu, the first half of the 19th century saw the setting up of printing presses. As these were mainly owned by the Christian Missionaries, religious tracts were the first output; then came text books in English and Bengali to help the foreigners in India to learn the local tongue for governing the country. English education which Indians took to, like ducks to water, opened the vision of the Modern Man to them.

By the middle of the 19th century, the Modern Movement in Bengali Literature was in full career. The first modern Bengali poem, Rangalal Banerjee's 'Padmini Upakyan' was published in 1858. The same year saw the coming out of the first modern Bengali drama, Michael Madhusudan Dutt's (1824-73) 'Sarmista'. His poem 'Tilottama' (1859) might be said to have ushered in the new era of Bengali poetry. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-91) had already in 1847 given a turn to Bengali prose-writing with his 'Vetal Panchavimsati'. 1858 also saw the publication of the first Bengali novel 'Alaler Gharar Dulal' of Tekchand Thakur. Soon to follow was 'Durgesh Nandini' (1865) of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya. The dramas of Dinabandhu Mitra

(who wrote 'Neel Darpan' the drama of the oppression of the Indigo Planters of Birbhum) and Girish Chandra Ghosh, (1844-1911), the novels of Bankim, the humour of Kaliprasanna Sinha, and the works of many others came out in torrents on the breaking of the mental and material (infra-structural) shackles that had held Bengali literary creativity pent up for ages.

Into this amalgam of fermenting, alive-with-the Mind-Force and Life-Force, vague and unstructured as it was, was born on 7-5-1861 a gifted child destined to lead and adorn in such vast and variegated array the language of Bengal and raise it to sublime heights before the eyes of the world.

Edward J. Thompson says "Rabindranath was fortunate in the date of his coming". He adds, "If he was fortunate in the time of his birth when such a flowering season lay before his native tongue, in his family he had a gift which cannot be overestimated" (Chapter II E. J. Thompson - Tagore His mind and Art).

One can see the justification for such an observation looking just to three generations [including Rabindranath's] of the Tagores. Rabindranath's grandfather, Dwarkanath (1794-1846) was a multi-faceted personality. Well-versed in Persian, Arabic and English, he was employed as Sheristadar in the 24 - Parganas Collectorate, was a partner in Commercial firms, Mackintosh & Co., Carr & Tagore, founded the Union Bank in 1829 and was all the while successful in his financial affairs.

Besides, he was a close friend of Ram Mohan Roy and a collaborator in his various activities in social reforms. He participated in the establishment of the Hindu College (1817); aided with scholarships, many students in Medical College and even supported a number of medical students in their studies in England. Dwarkanath also stood by Ram Mohan Roy in the founding of Brahma Samaj though Himself a vigraha worshipper. After Ram Mohan Roy's death, he even financially aided



Brahma Samaj. He made huge donations for the relief of the poor, both in his life time and by His will.<sup>2</sup>

Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905) popularly known as 'Maharshi' the father of Rabindranath, was the eldest son of Dwarkanath Tagore. At the age of seventeen, Dwarkanath took him from his studies to work as Assistant Treasurer in Union Bank. Later, Debendranath became a director of the Bank; he also became a partner of Carr & Tagore. By nature contemplative, (as witness the Trust created in 1840 by Dwarkanath to keep the family's fortune's safe), his grandmother's death in 1838 made Debendranath's leanings towards religion and philosophy more marked. On 6-10-1839, he established the Tatwabodhini Sabha (originally styled 'Tatwavenjini Sabha') with some friends. This was a significant event in the social life of Bengal.

In 1842, Tatwabodhini Sabha took over running Brahma Samaj. In December, 1843 Debendranath took up vows as a Brahma and took up its active propagation. On the financial front, the bank and business wherein the family was interested failed and in his own expansive way Debendranath undertook the discharge of all the liabilities. It was, however, his brother Girindranath who capably handled the family finances. Girindranath's death in 1854 added to the worsening of the family fortunes.

In 1858, Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra sen came together. Though the drive and energy of Keshab Chandra Sen rallied the fortunes of Brahma Samaj, his extreme views alienated Debendranath. There was a schism and Brahma Samaj broke into two in 1866. Debendranath gradually withdrew from active participation. He passed away in 1905.

Rabindranath's birth was at a turning point in the age. The ten or twelve years preceding saw the establishment of Bethune School and Calcutta University - coming after nearly fifty years of Bengal taking to English education. A spiritual reformation was in the air, following Tatwabodhini Sabha

merging in Brahmo Samaj. A literary revival was in progress with Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's prose writings; Rangalal Bandopadhyaya's and Michael Madhusudan's poetry and the dramas of Ramnarayan, Madhusudan and Dinabandhu. After a long period of gestation, the meeting of East and West was yielding fruits at last.

In this effervescent age, into a wealthy family, which has come down a little from its heyday of wealth and prosperity arising from commercial venture and service, a family of strong independent thoughts and habits, a family in which the mother tongue was consciously much in use, in which no chauvinism prevented exposure to and discussion of all the world's - Easts' & West's - literature and achievements, in which was fostered a grave attention to the religions and the culture of India's past, in which music was much fostered, in a family of many brothers and sisters, was born Rabindranath destined to carve for Bengal and India a respected niche in the hall of human fame.

The occurrences in Tagore's life are too well known to be repeated here. They shall be referred to when necessary in considering his literary creations. However, we must consider the formative years of Rabindranath's creative life.

In considering the long years of creative output of Tagore, one must note the preparations and the take-off stage. We may take July 1877 as the start of his creativity; then it was that in the journal 'Bharati' published by Rabindranath's elder brother Jyotirindranath from the Tagore residence at Jorasanko that the poem 'Bharathi', the first part of a serial study of literary criticism of Madhusudan Dutt's 'Meghnadh Vadh Kavya' and the first part of 'Bhikarini' were published. Rabindranath was only sixteen at that time; the output may appear too much unless we look at what might be called the years of apprenticeship.

In fact, we can almost take back the start of this tale of creativity by nine years. It is known from Tagore's own words that he started his virgin versifying in 1868 in a blue fool, scap

size notebook provided by a clerk in the house. The urge to write poetry was kindled by a nephew few years senior to Tagore who gave him some hints on versification. As Tagore himself narrates "Like a young calf with about-to-grow horns" he went about butting with his poetic talents all over the place. Tagore's elder brothers Satyendranath (who became the first Indian I.C.S.) Dwijendranath and Jyotirindranath were all creative activists in one way or the other. Jyotirindranath's wife, Kadambari Devi (marriage 1868) an ardent admirer of poetry, encouraged Rabindranath's interests till her death in 1884. Jyotirindranath's friend Akshay Kumar Chowdhuri was an M.A. in English, Dwijendranath's friend Beharilal Chakravarty was a most gifted Bengali poet then. The children in the Jorasanko house were getting education at home (besides whichever school they were attending) in English, Bengali, Sanskrit, Drawing and Music. The details of Tagore's early years show the existence of all the conditions propitious to the efflorescence of his genius. There were always books to read. By the time Tagore was ten, he had read Krittivasa's Ramayana, Kasiramdas Mahabharatha, the translations of Arabian and Persian tales and Robinson Crusoe, collected volumes of Bengali Journals like Vividhartha Sangraha and Abodh Bandhu. In school and at home, he found masters who encouraged his versifying. His brothers and his friends were quite often discussing the creations of great writers of the West. In 1877, Jyotirindranath started a literary journal 'Bharathi' so that his younger brother, Rabindranath's creations do not languish unpublished. Outside the Jorasanko house to which, except for attending school, Tagore's life was restricted, the renaissance in Bengal was on. Bankim Chandra's first novel 'Durgesh Nandini' appeared in 1864. The French Epic poem 'Paul et Virgini' was translated and published in 1869. In 1866 was started the annual Hindu Mela which opened up the horizons for the creativity of the youth of Bengal to exhibit their skills in various fields; and the Tagore family was closely connected with this. To the house of Debendranath Tagore, the pillar upholding Brahmo Samaj, there was always the visit of prominent intellectuals. In the Jorasanko house, the Tagore brothers organised a theatre for staging plays. The elder Tagore brothers also wrote some dramas and staged them.

This atmosphere was highly conducive to Rabindranath's early attempts at creativity. There is evidence of his translating Macbeth (He was taken by his master to recite this before Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar), he was introduced to and fell in love with Kalidasa. He came to know of Vaishnava Padavalis which attracted him immensely. In 1875-76 when he was just fourteen, he had published some verse and prose in the magazine (Jnanankur). In the Hindu Mela, he recited his own poem.

From the closeted life in the Jorasanko house, Rabindranath got a change when he was twelve. He stayed at Panihati where the river by the house, the sky and nature in all its exuberance entranced him and endowed him with another thread to weave into the tapestry of his poetry. That year saw his Upanayan and a journey with his father all the way from Bengal to Amritsar and the Himalays. Besides the exposure to nature in all her beauty and immensity, Tagore was inducted into the study of Sanskrit and Astronomy by his father. After staying some time in Ahmedabad, Rabindranath went to England in 1878 with Satyendranath, but returned in February, 1880 at his father's behest to Calcutta. This sojourn created an interest in Western Music.

In a spate, in a torrent and flood came Rabindranath's creations from 1877 when 'Bharathi' started appearing. This literary journal was started and published in the Jorasanko house of the Tagores by Jyotirindranath. Noting his younger brothers creative genius, Jyotirindranath wanted a suitable vehicle in which the output of Tagore's genius may appear regularly - Kabi-Kshini, Bhagna Hridaya, Sandhya Sangeet and prabhat Sangeet, Banaphul, a narrative poem, Valmiki Pratibha and Kalmurgaya - plays in songs, a playlet Rundrachanda and a historical romance 'Bauthakuranir Hat'. In the same period, had appeared Rabindranath's 'letters of a traveller to Europe' in serial form. This creative outpouring continued through all his life till his death in August, 1941.

Whatever Rabindranath touched, he adorned, and there was no area in language he did not touch. He found Bengali

language stirring into wakefulness and by the time he died, he had made it one of the greatest languages (in achievement and capability) of the world. Poet, he always was even when writing prose. Poems form the major part of his creations; but short stories, novels, essays, autobiography, literary criticism, lectures, prose, poems all are found amongst his creations. The Bengali language quite Sanskritized and laboured when he came upon it had become quite modern by the time of his death.

We will now attempt a bird's eye view of Rabindranath's achievements.

The pride of place, of course, goes to poetry, which, with the English version of Gitanjali, got him the Nobel Prize for Literature.

The first ten years of Rabindranath's creative life saw the collections of poems 'Kabi-Kahini, Bhagna Hridaya' 'Sandhya Sangeet' 'Prabhat Sangeet' 'Chabi-O-Gan' 'Shoushab Sangeet', 'Bhaner Singha Thakurer Padavati' and 'Kavi O Komal'.

In Kavi O Komal, is found a thread of the poet's Philosophy. He never thought of this world as but a great wonder and life in this world as a great joy. In the poem 'Life' he declares.

'I do not want to die in this beautiful world; I want to live in the midst of humanity... I want to sing of the sorrow and happiness of parting and meeting'

It is his realism (not gross materialism) which calls to all of us in the poem 'Marichika'

'Come friend, flinch not, step down upon the hard earth... Come down to the common life. The web of illusion is torn, take shelter within walls of rough stones'.

From the simplicity of the sombre 'Evening Song' the poet celebrates the great awakening with the poem 'Mirjhayer

**Swapna Banga**". He describes the breathtaking experience of the real awakening to Nature tearing aside the slumberous, self-obsessive mood of the 'Evening Songs'. This poem reiterates the thoughts of the poem "Life" but focuses much more beautifully on the vision of 'One world', One People' embracing all humanity into one.

"Manasi", "Sonar Tari", "Chitra", "Kanika", "Katha", "Kahini" "Kalpana" "Naivedya" and "Khaya" from the next fifteen years' creations.

"Manasi" a clearly maturer work contains some very great poems. It is also very wide in the subjects treated. Nature legend, social problems and political thought find a place therein. Brilliant nature poems like 'Sindhu Taranga' painting a sea-storm and 'Meghdut' portraying the vastness of India reveal Tagore's awareness and response to Nature. In 'Meghdut' and 'Ahalyar Prati' Tagore reveals in the ancient heritage of India, voyaging with the Yaskha's cloud over the vast panorama of the Indian terrain, feeling the pain of the love-lorn, humanity that Kalidasa has for all time portrayed, feeling with Ahalya in her frozen long expectation the passing of the ages and the pulsation of life in Nature that encompassed her. In 'Sindhu - Taranga, the poet portrays in magnificent lines the storm atsea which wrecked a ship and ended the life of many human beings.

'Manasi' is also noteworthy for the poems depicting the social and personal weaknesses that plagued the Indian of those days. In poems like "Dharma Prachar" "Banga Bir" etc., Tagore flays the spineless man of India of that time. He achieves a peak in such utterances in "Duranta Asha" E. Thompson translates a few lines.<sup>5</sup>

"With face smile-wreathed in happiness of slavery,  
with palms obsequiously joined, let your body writhe  
at your master's foot, in ecstasy at his caress; Rolling  
before his shoes, pick up bread buttered with contempt,  
fill your first greedily and go home ; There sit and

brag of your ancestors, brag that the whole world trembles with the dread of the Aryan might and pride”.

Rather than this, O! that I might be an Arab-Bedouin!

Beneath my feet the boundless desert,  
melting into the horizon!

My horse gallops, the sand flies;

Pouring my stream of life into the sky day and night

I go with fire burning in my heart !

My spear in my hand, courage in my heart always  
homeless!

Free of restraint as the desert wind in it blowing!

My blood swells as I leap in to peril !

Life tingles throughout my whole body, my whole mind !

These thoughts about the spineless Indians of that time come out most scathingly in the last two lines of ‘Banga Mata’ in the collection Chaitali (1985) ‘Seven Crores children, O Blessed Mother, you have made Bengalis not men’.

In ‘Sonar Tari’ a collection of poems which appeared in book form in 1894 (Tagore was 33 then) we see the greatness of Tagore’s nature poetry. Entrusted with the management of the family estates, Tagore had sojourned at Shelaidah (1890 - 1901) in the midst of rivers and fields and the wide open spaces and everchanging seasons in North Bengal.

An outpouring of poems celebrating the beauties of the river, the villages nestling on the river banks, the dusk and dawn, the cloudless blue sky and the water-laden clouds of the monsoon all find brilliant portrayal. A few lines from a translation in “Gardener” gives us a brilliant taste, though it lacks the music that Bengali language possesses which is woven into the poems by Tagore.

“Over the green and yellow rice fields sweep the shadows  
of the autumn clouds followed by the swift-chasing  
sun. The bees forget to sip their honey, drunken with

light, they foolishly hover and hum. The ducks in the islands of the river clamour in joy for mere nothing. Laughter floats in the air like foam on the flood. Brothers, let us squander our morning in futile songs”.

Living at Shalaidah first by himself and from 1897 with his family, Tagore got into the three main streams of his attitude towards the world — Man’s attitude towards and co-ordination with Nature., towards God and towards man. The glories of Nature all around and throughout the year fed the first thread; the vastness of the landscape, the silence and quietness the sky sometimes in its blue immensity, at other times in the angry rain-storms and clouds attuned his mind towards the Infinite — which is the second thread; and the country people all over the area in villages and on the river aroused his social consciousness and formed the third thread.

Brilliant collections ‘Chitra’. ‘Chaitali’ reveal the sweep and magnificence of Tagore’s naturalistic poetry. In fact, the sonnet-like poems in ‘Chaitali’ brilliantly depict the scenes of reverine Bengal. Tagore himself says “The language of these poems is so simple because there was no lack of certainty and hence no ornamentation was needed. The scenes are so specific due to a limit-bound view of things. There is the agony and ecstasy of music in them but not the form”.

In “Chaitali” are also found political poems and religious ones — like ‘Banga Mata’, ‘In the village’ etc.,

“Kalpana” published in 1900, according to E. Thompson<sup>6</sup>, reveals the pre-eminence of Tagore’s metrical poetry. There is great abundance and variety of order forms. Manner and matter have variety. “Unnati Lakshan” is a lambasting of hypocritical people; ‘Banga Lakshmi’ and ‘A Life’ are gentle patriotic songs of great tenderness and beauty. “Barsha Shesh” — the ‘Year’s end’ shows Tagore’s brilliant picturing of a land-storm which stands a brilliant twin to the poem of sea-storm “Sindhu Taranga” in “Manasi”.



“Katha” and “Kahim” — collections of narrative poems dealing with subjects from India’s past are brilliantly dramatic in content.

With “Kshanika”, Tagore’s later poetry may be said to begin. Tagore himself says “In ‘Kshanika’ I first found my language; in ‘Sandhya Sangeet’ I first found my genius. Before that I echoed other men’s songs. In ‘Manasi’ I first used compound letters as equivalent to two matras. But in ‘Kshanika’ I first realised the beauty and music of colloquial speech..... There had been nothing like it in our literature before “The poems reveal the joyous experience of discovery in its light-hearted and rollicking lines.

The shift from Shalaidah to Santiniketan in December, 1901 where Tagore started the Brahmacharya Asram, the death of his wife in November, 1902, of his second daughter in September, 1903 and of his youngest son in November, 1907, the partition of Bengal in 1905 all distracted the poet. One might see a period of relatively little poetry from the master. In 1901 ‘Nawedya’ came out and in 1906 ‘Kheya’.

‘Kheya’ reveals the mind preoccupied with death, the mind depressed but the delicate perfection of the poetry is there, having long become a second-nature to him. The turning of the entire mind towards God and the deep yearning for touching this Godhead gave us the great poem that is “Gitanjali”.

“Gitanjali”, ‘Gitali’ and “Gitimalya” reveal the poet’s closeness to the God he was searching—for every line, nay every word revealing the immanence of Godhead, the resonance between the Poet’s innermost love and Divinity and the positive assertion of the divine response to the thirsty seeker. The English version of Gitanjali contains poems from different collections in Bengali. One of the most famous is from ‘Naivedya’ and reveals the poet’s vision of and prayer for the nation’s, nay, mankind’s awakening.

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free; where the world has

not been broken into fragments by narrow domestic walls  
 Into that heaven of freedom, let my country awake"

The story is too well known to reiterate how in almost an idle moment the poet started translation the poems collected in the English 'Gitanjali'; how it took the literary elite of the West by storm leading to the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Rabindranath Tagore in 1913.

The mysticism which the West had been missing in its poetry for over a century or more came to them in these prose poems of Tagore; but the poet was not a dreamer-mystic. He was already conducting a unique experiment in education at Santiniketan.

Starting as a school in 1901, with the immediate purpose to provide schooling for the poet's sons, the system and the mechanics of the education were primarily based on the gurukula system of ancient Indian education. To develop the complete man, not to make of men highly polished, mechanical models thoroughly isolated from life-giving nature in boxes entitled classes in school rooms, was the basic concept. This idea grew more till the Viswa Bharathi (the Universal University) for Man, the International Man was founded in 1921. At the same time, was founded Sriniketan., the rural welfare department where all that was preached was practised by involvement with the life of the community all around.

With the publication of the English 'Gitanjali' and the bestowal of the Nobel Prize, Rabindranath Tagore was projected on to the International scene and was for more than a decade India's active spiritual and cultural Ambassador to the outside world. These strenuous years travelling all over the world lecturing and the cares of Santiniketan left the poet with not much time for poetry. Even then great poems as in the lyrics of "Balaka", (1916) the narratives of "Palataka" (1911), the prose poems of "Lipika" (1922) and "Punascha" (1932) with "Purabi" (1925) revealed the poet still on his creative mettle.

In the last five years of his life with his health failing and a feeling of death drawing near, we get the great poems "Prantik" (1938) "Nabajatak" "Sanai" "Rogsajyaya" (1940) and "Arogya" and "Janmadine" (1941)

"Prantik" (traveller) and "Senjuti" show the response to illness, the thought of death, the life beyond and the calm contemplation of the end. There are at the same time lines condemning the cruelty of man, a development that becoming very clear in the fourth decade of the twentieth century. "Nabajatak" (new born) celebrates the world and its wonders.

'Rogsoajyaya' 'Arogya' and 'Janmadine' shadowed by the awareness of approaching death, sing of the world, of life and of humanity. It has a mood of thanks giving for all that he has received, lived and experienced. The feel of the poet's mood can be sensed from the renderings by Dr. Amiya Chakravorty. In the beautiful lines from "Shesh — Lekha" (1941)

"On the bank of 'Rup-Narain'

I arise, awake;

This world, I realise, is  
not a dream,

Death-long tapasya of suffering is this life, to  
win truth'  
terrible value and to pay all debts in death".

the poet gives us the final message of the glory of life.

This hurried glimpse of the poetic exuberance of Rabindranath Tagore misses quite a few items in the rich spectrum of his poetry. The great elegiac poems in 'Smaran' written at the time of his wife's death, the children's poems 'Nadi' 'Shishu Bholanath' (1922) and 'Shishu' the letter written during the illness of his daughter, Renuka, the small sparks of thought 'Fireflies' (1929) the non-sense work of 'Khapchara' (1937) — they are in fact too many to receive a reasonable study in such a short survey.

Tagore, inspite of the voluminous output of the prose, short stories, novels, letters and dramas was essentially a poet. His

prose, his letters, his lectures all reveal his poetic sensibility, not only to the facts of experience but also to the form of their expression. The poetic outpourings are an impressive record of and reveal the development of his view of life, religion and philosophy.

The poet in him (which is almost the whole man) responded to and resonated with the throbbing life force in the universe. His early poetry gives evidence of this awareness and the yearning to grasp it. In 'Ahalyar Prati' in the collection 'Manasi' he addressess Ahalya and queries 'Did you then know her (The earth's) great friendliness? Was there under the stone a vague awareness?' The life force is not only of the organic world but even in the apparently dead inorganic world too - that is how the poet feels the life-force. Obviously, the poet's response to nature in its harmony of forms, colours, sounds and movements could not but be stronger in the search of the hidden spirit beyond.

The early curiosity about the spirit beyond, changes subsequently to an yearning to reach and touch the spirit. This phase gave the world some of its greatest poetry, 'Gitanjali', 'Gitali' and 'Gitimalya'. The need for personal contact with the 'pirit of this universe also led Tagore to the concept of Jiban Devata, the personal version of God establishing contact with the individual soul. Having sung all the songs of this Godhead in contact with the individual, Tagore developed the need for concretising the thanksgiving. His vast experience and sensitivity and vision lead him to 'the Religion of Man'. Service to man, man in all his poverty and grime, man as Naranarayana (though the poet does not name man as such) appears to the poet as the ultimate experience of Godhead. In the brilliant Poem No. 11 (English Gitanjali) this is expressed.

"Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads!  
Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a  
temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see  
thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard grounds  
and where the path maker is breaking stones. He is

with them in sun and shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil! Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow".

The humanism into which Tagore evolved is based on the awareness of the divinity of man and hence the emotional appeal needed for a soul-satisfying experience by man. Humanism had always been in Tagore's blood. Early evidence is seen in the poem 'Mukti' in 'sonar Tari'; the poet cries "If the universe goes away crying, shall I stay back alone in the bliss of enlightenment." This early in felt emotional humanism in the mature Tagore comes out as the concept of service to Man, to humanity particularly the downtrodden.

A poet he was through and through but his creations in the other genres of letters is no less.

Considering the dramas he wrote, one can see the wide variety of linguistic and dramatic forms successfully handled by him. He wrote dramas in verse, plays in songs, comic plays, prose dramas and dance dramas.

His first book of drama 'Rudra Chanda' (1881) came out when he was barely twenty. The same year saw the creation of 'Valmiki Pratibha' a play in songs. The following years saw the coming of the verse dramas 'Prakritir Pratibodh' 'Malini' (1884) 'Raja O Rani' (1889) 'Visarjan' (1890) Chitrangada (1892) 'Bidhai Abhirap' (1900) (Playlets in blank verse) dance dramas like 'Chandalika' (1933) 'Chitrangada' (1936) 'Shyama' (1939) song dramas (Operas) like 'Kalmrigaya' (1882), 'Mayar Khela' (1888) 'Ritu Ranga' (1927) 'Shap Mochan' (1931) comic plays like 'Gorai Golad' (1892) 'Baikunter Khata' (1897) and Chira Kumar Sabha (1926) and allegorical and symbolic plays like 'Raja' (1910) (translated in English as 'The King of the Dark Chamber') 'Dak Ghar' (1912) 'Achalayatam' (1912) 'Arupratan' (1920) (Raja rewritten) 'Muktadhara' (1922) 'Rakta Kavabi' (1926).

Dr. B. C. Chakdrabarty<sup>7</sup> in considering Tagore's contribution to English literature treating the 'Gitanjali' period as a watershed in Tagore's literary career has pointed out that in the earlier serious plays like 'Prakirtir Pratisodh', 'Visarjan' and 'Malini', Tagore has shown his attitude towards the world, his philosophy of life and his view of institutionalised or rigid religion and attitudes to life. Neither to deny the world, nor to deny the spirit, to be aware of the human, the humane in life is the lesson we are made aware of in these plays. The lack of an integrated philosophy of life exemplified by the Sanyasi's asceticism in 'Prakirtir Pratisodh' is revealed as one extreme, whereas the other extreme is portrayed and revealed as inadequate in 'Raja' (The king of the dark chamber) where the queen is looking for a visible God in the external world. Tagore emphasizes the need for understanding the one, the Infinite in the 'Dark Chamber' in the 'Antahkaran' before realising it in the outer world of variety.

Tagore's concept of death and of freedom in life are exemplified in 'Dak Ghar' (1911) (The Post Office). W.B. Yeats considers deliverance as the theme of the play. As Dr. Chakraborty points out, Tagore has himself given the interpretation "Amal represents the man whose soul has received the call of the open road". The death of Amal, the orphan boy who is protected in the shuttered room after the windows are opened, is not really death but awakening in the world of spiritual freedom when the 'I' is foregone and only 'Thou' the divinity reigns.

In the second dramatic period, Tagore, in his great symbolic plays 'Phalguni', 'Muktadhara' and 'Rakta Karabi' is arguing for and establishing the creed of faith in mankind and in selfless service of humanity. While 'Phalguni' highlights the need for a constructive positive attitude towards the world and its affairs, the others two plays indict two of the greatest of human tragedies—the wrong done to man by chauvinistic nationalism and by industrialisation. 'Muktadhara' deals with nationalism gone awry, one nation trying to cow down and exploit another nation. The king or Uttarakut dams a river in his high-land to deprive a neighbouring people down in the plains who need the water for

survival. Prince Abhijit sacrifices his life to undo the wrong. 'Raktakarabi' deals with the deadening effects of industrialisation to counteract which the hero lays down his life.

Comic plays in the nature of Moliere are 'Gorai Galad' (1892) which Tagore revised and rewrote as 'Sheshraksha' (1928) and 'Chira Kumar Sabha' (1926) which is a fully dramatised version of the 1908 novel 'Prajapatir Nirbandha'. These almost frothy plays underline the petty foibles of human beings which finally bow down to the deeper psychological truths of the human Psyche.

Tagore's dance dramas again are a great achievement. The integration of word, song and dance embodying ennobling truths are seen in 'Chandalika' 'Chitrangada' and 'Natir Puja'.

Playlets like 'Kunti-Karna' or 'Bidai Abhisap' (Kacha-Devayani) 'Reensodh' 'Shapmochan' reveal and round off the dramatic creativity of Tagore.

To a critic fed on modern European dramas, Tagore's plays appear loosely structured and too vocal. But a proper view would be to look at a drama against the background of the people and their culture. Translations also obscure this element. But no one can deny that every play of Tagore has a basis of essential human truth poetically expounded.

The exuberance of the creative instinct in Tagore chose yet another path to disclose its vitality. SHORT STORIES flowed from his pen as did poems and dramas. This genre made a delayed appearance in Tagore's writings, getting liberated, as it were, by his sojourn at Shelaidah when he saw the people living in riverine North Bengal, when his poetic Muse flowered in such glorious creations as 'Sonar Tari' 'Chitra' and 'Chaitali'. The stories, in language lyrical in intensity, dealing with the simple folk of village and town form the harvest of this period. Collections of short stories like 'Chota galpa' 'Vichitra Galpa. 'Katha Chatushtay' (1894) Galpa Dastak (1895) were published in this period. Stories, well-known to English-knowing readers,

like 'The Post Master', 'The Kabuliwala' 'The Child's Return' (also styled 'My Lord the baby') and the Babus of Nayanjore reveal Tagore's depth of understanding of the well-springs of human action, the weaknesses, the foibles and the strength of man's Psyche. The haunting tale of 'Hungry Stones' is quite well known.

Tagore's portrayals of women almost always excels those of the manfolk. This essentially must have sprung from his instinctive awareness of woman's contribution to social welfare and culture. The mother, the beloved and the daughter are always present sustaining the social fabric which men would tear asunder in a mood of reckless explosion. This attitude of the poet is revealed in a series of stories written in the nineties of the last century.

In stories like 'Elder Sister' (1895) and 'Punishment' (1893) Tagore reveals the strength of the feminine character. Other tales in this period like 'the Deal', 'The Judge' and 'The Middle One' reveal what Indian women lived through, the harshness, the misery and the suffering which was their lot. There are in these stories the first hints of the awakening of consciousness in women of their rights.

More complex emotions and motivations too were depicted in Tagore's stories like 'Master Moshai' and 'The son of Rashmoni'. While the stories of this period deal with the individual's life and mind, later stories (Tagore wrote the last of his stories in 1941, the year he passed away) reveal his knowledge of the hidden depths in men and women and his attitude towards the deeper concealed urges and instincts of men and of the clash of these psychological realities with social norms and expectations.

Tagore established the short story as a genre in Indian literature and the profusion of these created by him stand next only to his poetry and stand as a monument to his obvious understanding and compassions towards his fellow men and women.



Novels too came from the genius of Tagore, the earliest 'Bauthakuranir Hat' being written 1883 (Tagore was 22 then) and 'Rajarshi' in 1887. His real career as novelist may be said to start with 'Choker Bali' (1901). This is translated in English as "Binodini" and in Tamil as "Maya Vinodini". With only four important characters, this psychological novel deals with the mental conflicts that rage in minds of Mahendra, Asha, Binodini and Bihari. The idealistic Bihari, the human, humane and realistic Vinodini, the weak-willed Mahendra and the pale neutral Asha, adorn this non-episodic novel.

'Naukadubi' (1906) translated in English as "The wreck" is more like a thriller starting with a ship wreck on the wedding night, the coming together of Ramesh and Kamala and how later they realise they are not husband and wife. Compared with 'Choker Bali' this novel is weak in many respects.

'Gora' (1910) gives us a picture of Bengali Society at the turn of the century and the Social attitudes in conflict with human reactions and relations. Gora, the hero, a convinced Hindu with the absolute certitude of faith in religious attitudes sanctioned over ages finds himself attracted to a Brahmo girl, similar to the attraction which in his friend he had been strongly critical of. Tagore gives him an easy escape from his dilemma, by being made aware of his being an Irish child brought up by his really foster parents. As Prof. S.C. Sen Gupta remarks, by this play, Tagore may have lost an opportunity for solving a really ticklish psychological problem and creating a very great novel. However, Gora's mother, Anandamoyee is a great creation, the mother in women who understands with the heart all the problems of humanity.

'Ghare Bhaire' (1916) and 'Yogayag' (1927) reveal a greater awareness of the problems of modern men and women. While the former made recently into a film by Satyajit Ray deals with the problem of extra marital attractions, the latter condemns the attitude of men who consider their wives as a species of property and the awakening woman's (like Ibsen's Nora) response to the awakening; but the novel ends without a real solution — the wife

going back to the husband, atleast to life in his house, as she finds herself carrying his child.

'Sesher Kavita' translated in English as 'Farewell, my friend' again fails to emerge as a great novel because the ending is abrupt and not deducible from the characters of the major characters. But for sheer brilliance of language and depiction of the tenderness of love, this novel is unique.

'Dui Bon' (1933), "Malancha" and "Char Adhyaya (1934) are later novels dealing again with the attraction between men and women, in the first two extra-marital attraction. These again fail to fulfil expectations as the psychology of the dramatic personae fail to get treated in depth; but again the brilliance of the language makes the works memorable creations.

Besides dramas, novels and short stories, Tagore's prose writings fall into a number of formal divisions - belles - lettres, literary criticism, essays on non-literary subjects, travel, autobiography and letters. This classification is not rigid, there being overlapping and overflowing of the types. This vast volume of prose is as great an achievement of Tagore as his poetry. Just as he took Bengali into the new era of poetry, he also led bengali prose into the modern age. From the Sadhu Bhasa in use for prose at the beginning of Tagore's life to the Chalitbhasa fully in use by the time of his death, Tagore had a full hand in the development of Bengali prose. As Bhuddhadev Bose says Tagore was a split personality in prose writing — with Sadhu-bhasa for public consumption and the Chalit Bhasa for his contemporaneous letters. Slowly Chalitbhasa, the language of day-to-day transactions and life took over completely. We may note this in the short stories; the earlier ones are in an 'artificial' literary language while in 'Tin Sanghi', the last of his stories, the language is that of daily speech.

The scene in the far south of India, in the land of the Tamils was at the beginning of the 19th century similar to the scene in Bengal. The English Trading Company was in absolute control. Unlike in Bengal, where Calcutta was almost all of Bengal and wherefrom the company ruled, and traded as far

as Afghanistan, the interface between the Indian natives and the English was much smaller in the Tamil Land. Though the Christian Missionaries had brought the printing press to South India much earlier, they were used only for printing Christian tracts; only by the second quarter of the 19th century did the Indian Press start functioning. The first Tamil daily came out in 1831.<sup>8</sup> The Missionaries and also the English employees of the East India Company had necessarily to know the local tongue and on the initiative of the company the first printing of a book of Tamil Grammar was made in 1811.<sup>9</sup> The oral tradition and the consequent need of verse form and the palmleaf manuscripts and copies which mark the pre-printing press era continued in Tamilnadu till late in the 19th century - almost to the beginning of the twentieth.

This tradition kept a big chasm between the common man and the literate. There was no prose written which could make the people informed and the long years of apprenticeship needed to master the language by the oral tradition made the Tamil scholar and verse-writer out of touch with the people. The first novel in Tamil, "Pratapa Mudaliar Charitram" was published in 1885; the author in the preface remarks "My object in writing this work of fiction is to supply the want of prose works in Tamil, a want which is admitted and lamented by all". Though the list of Tamil writers of the 19th century so far as is known runs into pages, all were verifiers or poets in the old tradition. Prof A. Srinivasa Raghavan concludes<sup>10</sup> - "These, therefore, could not create a literature portraying the tribulations of the people or a literature capable of calling for their deliverance. The life of the people was a desert".

While the Tamil literary scene was so arid, deep below amongst the mass of people the folk-lore songs, the bakti cult, and faith in God kept alive the language's essential vitality. Evidence to this vitality is found for example in the dramas in songs "Nandan Charitira Kirtanai" of Gopala Krishna Bharathi. The brilliant use of folk idiom and phraseology in this song drama is a precursor to the emerging twentieth century Tamil.

Vedanayagam Pillai who wrote the first Tamil novel was also a poet who had learnt Tamil in the traditional way. His poetry, however, shows in places the same influence, awareness and use of the folk phrases and idiom, the desire and need to communicate with the masses as contrasted with literati, the intellectual and the pseudos.

The 'Arutpa' of Ramalinga Swamigal by its emotional power and simple language reached a large audience but its content was still the moral and spiritual. Krishna Pillai whose 'Iratchanya Yatrikam' is a Christian Tamil epic which shows the easing of the rigid scholastic linguistic discipline was, however not reaching the people. The verse drama 'Manonmanyam' (1881) of Sundaram Pillai was again only for the few.

Novels like 'Padmavati Charitram' (1898) of A. Madhaviah, 'Kamalambal Charitram' of Rajam Iyer, the novels of Natesa Sastri and Guruswami Sarma, the works of Marai Malai Adigal, Arumuga Navalar, and U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, the plays of V.G. suryanarayna Sastri (1896, 1898) 'Parithi Mal Kalaiznan) and Bummal Sambanda Mudaliar (1895) bear glorious evidence to the Tamil Mind's creativity liberated from the material shackles of the pre-printing press era and from the mental shackles of scholastic lifelessness.

This was the scene, a time of ferment arising out of the clash of two cultures, a time of fusion and creation when Subramanya Bharathi was born.

Rabindranath Tagore was already twenty two. Poems like 'Kabi Kshini' 'Bhagna Hriday' and 'Sandhya Sangeet' were already published. 'Valmiki Pratibha' 'Kalmringaya and 'Rudra Chandra' were already written and acted; already for the last five years, Tagore's writings were appearing in 'Bharati' - he had written a four-part serial critically studying Madhusudan Dutta's 'Meghnadh Vadh Kavya! he had been to England for more than a year and had his travel diary published. It was at such a time that in the extreme south of this vast land of ours was born on 11th December, 1882, the child later to

set alight the Tamil literary firmament as 'Subramania Bharathi'. This was in Ettayapuram, a zamin in the Southernmost district of Tirunelveli in the then Madras Presidency. His father Chinnasami Iyer was well versed in Tamil, English, logic and Mathematics. He was also greatly interested in modern technology starting a textile mill at that period in the remote corner of India that is Ettayapuram.

Bharathi lost his mother when he was five; his father married again two years later. Bharathi was cared for by his maternal grandfather who made him familiar with classical Tamil poetry, and by his grandmother who lived in the same town.

Though his father taught him at home and sent him to the local school, like Tagore, Bharathi resisted and resented the confinement of the class room. He liked wandering about the fields and the open spaces around the town. He also used to accompany his father to the Zamindar's court where thronged the poets and versifiers of those days. Bharathi, the boy delighted the people in the Court with his ability to complete lines of verses left fragmentary and tossed to him in challenge. This so impressed the people in the Court that even when he was only eleven they gave him the title 'Bharathi' by which name he is known since that day.<sup>11</sup> We have no samples of what he wrote or sang then; perhaps they are lost for ever and we may never know if he was a mere versifier or some deeper songs did see light. It is, however, not unlikely that like Tagore who when only six started writing poetry what was produced was verse only. Tagore himself considers that his real poetic output starts from 'Santhya Sangeet' and earlier writings were perhaps mere verse. The details of Tagore's life are very well-documented; we know little of the details of Bharathi's life - What he did, what he read what gifted men or company he came across in his early years.

Bharathi was sent to school at Tirunelveli and spent there years in unwilling bondage.

Later on he describes this<sup>12</sup>

“My father ordered me to Nellai  
To acquire the foreign knowledge,  
As if feeding a lion cub with grass”

Bharathi returned to Ettayapuram; he was married in 1897 when he was fifteen. He was employed as a companion to the Raja, to compose and recite as the mood dictated. Tragedy struck when Bharathi's father died in 1898 and the family was left destitute. Invited by an aunt, Bharathi went to Benaras, learnt Hindi and Sanskrit and passed the Allahabad University Entrance Examination. He developed a love for English poetry; he also learnt to question everything. Returning to Ettayapuram in 1902 at the behest of the Raja, Bharathi spent two years at the court. The life irked him and he left in 1904 to work for a few months as a Tamil teacher in Madurai.

In 1904 the first poem of Bharathi saw the light of day. He was 22 when this first publication of his work came out. Bharathi started his own paper “Chakrawartini”. Bharathi's brilliant rendering into Tamil of the ‘Vande Mataram’ of Bankim Chandra was published.

He came to Madras and joined the editorial board of the ‘Swadesa Mitran’ under Sri G. Subramania Iyer. The stirrings that started in Banaras now grew into patriotic fervour. His main duty was translation of news of speeches his genius created the new Tamil Prose. The partition of Bengal in 1905 and the storm it raised found Bharathi fretting to get away from ‘Swadesa Mitran’ where he was denied a chance to give vent to his burning patriotic thoughts and comments.

Attending the Congress Session in 1905 at Varanasi and in 1906 at Calcutta made him a follower of the extremists in the congress like Tilak. 1905 too saw Bharathi meet sister Nivedita and take her as his guru. In 1906, Bharathi

got a real opportunity for free political writing as Editor of 'India'. These years saw Bharathi in the centre of hectic political activity.

In 1908 there of his most famous poems 'Vande Mataram' 'Nattu Vanakkam' and 'Yengal Nadu' (our land) were printed (15000 copies) and distributed free all over Tamilnadu as a booklet. His poems, fourteen in number, came out as book 'Swadesa Geetangal'. And in 'India' he started a serial 'Jnana Ratham'.

Bharathi's articles, satire, humour, his songs had such a great influence on Tamils that the British India Government was worried. The judge who sentenced V.O. Chidambaram Pillai - a friend of Bharathi - for running the first Indian Shipping Service is reported to have remarked "On hearing these, Bharathis' songs, even a corpse will jump up".

The Government using the Press Act moved against 'India'. To escape incarceration in his ill health, his friends got him off to voluntary exile in Pondicherry. Friends got the press also shifted and till 1910, Bharathi edited and published 'India' which was smuggled into India. Then the stringent ban of its entry into India led to its closure.

In 1909, Bharathi had published another 19 poems as a book 'Janma Bhoomi'. In 1910, Arabindo come to Pondicherry. Bharathi happily joined him and VVS Iyer. This year saw the publication of Bharathi's 'Mata Mani Vachakam' including his autobiographical verses.

Arabindo following his spiritual quest gave a fill to Bharathi's spiritual side. Bharathi started off with translations of 'Veda Rishikal Kavithai' 'Yoga Sutras of Patanjali' and 'Bhagavadgita', the preface to, the third by Bharathi being a masterpiece of Tamil.

The enforced rest from journalistic and editorial duties revitalised his poetic mind and his great creations 'Kannan

Pattu' (lyrics) 'Panchali Sapatham' (a classic verse drama) and Kuyil Pattu' (a philosophical story poem) resulted in 1912.

Kannan Pattu, a series of short poems show Bharathi's deep understanding and emotional response to the Divine. Unlike Tagore's unnamed and almost nirguna personal God, Bharathi, though mainly a worshipper of Sakti (the Divine Mother) sang of all the Gods of the Hindu pantheon. He sang of Murugan (Kartikaya), Saraswati, Lakshmi, Ganesha and even the village Goddess, Muthumariamman. And of course in 'Kannan Pattu (22 poems in all) he sang of Lord Krishna in all the brilliant variety that blazes in the poems of the Vaishnavaites Alvars. He conceives of Krishna as Father, Mother, Servant, friend, guru, disciple, king and of course as the lover and as the beloved. In the midst of all the flood of devotion, we also find Bharathi, the humourist. In the poem "Kannan - my servant", he sings of the wiles and deceits of a servant all the while with the suggestion of Krishna, the compassionate.

Sensing heavy work the servant stays away and when questioned the next day he says

"The scorpion in the pot bit me with its teeth ;  
The spirit came all over my wife ;  
It was the twelfth day after grandmother's death"

In the midst of this scene come, Krishna the new servant "I am a Gopala cowherd" he says and queried about wages, replies :

"Wife have I none, nor children  
Single am I ; though seeming young  
Am ageless ; your kindness alone I need.  
Money never is my desire but the love in your heart".

The rasas with jingling anklets dance through the songs on Kannan.

Though moving away, in that period, from aggressive patriotism towards spiritualism Bharathi wanted to write an



epic with as he says in the preface to "Panchali Sapatham", simple words easy style, easily understandable, rhetoric and popular tunes". He says there is very little contribution by him to the plot he has taken from Vyasa. He is responsible only for the Tamil language and style,

And what an achievement this verse-drama is ! There are those who see the allegory of enslaved Bharatha Mata in this play ; but the play stands and will stand, as long as Tamil lives, as a great drama of the human spirit, of human weaknessess and vacillations and of the undaunted faith in the ultimate victory of Dharma. At the end God's Grace saves Draupadi, the brothers vow vengeance ; and Arjuna says :<sup>13</sup>

"Deceit overwhelms the dharmic path  
for a time ; again Dharma wins ;  
That the world should know this secret,  
of evolution through us  
Fate has done this deed; patiently  
let us await further events;  
Today we stand bound, let's for bear,  
Time shall change; we will see Dharma  
Winning then a bow there is  
And Gandiva is its name"

The 'Kuyil' (the song of the cuckoo) is another great work of the Pondicherry period. Bharathi himself throws in the closing lines of this poem a challenge to the learned to find out what the work means. And we find the drawing of ranks with a very large and venerable group of savents considering the long poem as an allegorical song of the quest and merging of Paramatma - Jeevatma (Universal and Individual Soul). But Prof T. Veuugopalan gives a more probable and less self - contradicting exposition ; he sees 'Kuyil' as an allegory of the story and condition of Tamil poetry at the beginning of the 20th century.

These three works from the high water mark of Bharathi's poetic achievement.

During the succeeding years, he wrote as a freelance journalist and rest mostly as an outlet of his creative urge. The manuscripts remained without publication till 1918 when he returned to British India. He was arrested and detained and later conditionally released. He went to Kadayam for recuperating but his social reform in action alienated the high caste people of the place, Later he toured Tamilnadu lecturing at many places.

In March, 1919 Bharathi called on Mahtma Gandhi for a just few minutes of his characteristic talk. Soon after, with in couple of days of this meeting, Bharathi sang his praise Gandhi in a brilliant poem.

In November, 1920, he returned to Madras and Swadesa Mitran. Eschewing political writing Bharathi wrote much, particularly veering towards Vedanta In August, 1921, he was hurt by the temple elephant which he was feeding and talking to. Not fully recovering his health, Bharathi passed away on 11th September, 1921.

Thus like a meteor blazing across the skies, the stormy petrel of a poet passed across the Tamil sky. Only a few of his writings were published during his lifetime — but whatever was, touched the heart of the Tamils and they were never again the same as they were earlier.

## TAGORE AND BHARATHI

Bharathi is popularly, in the people's mind, identified as the great Tamil singer of PATRIOTIC POEMS "Senthamil Nadennum Pothinile" (when the "Land of sweet Tamil" is uttered) or "Mannum Imayamalai Engal Malaiye" (The glorious Himalayas, our mountain) or "Thayin Manikkodi Pareer" (See our Mother's glorious flag) bear eloquent witness to this view of Bharathi. His patriotic poems form a sizable chunk of his poetry.

Tagore, by his comparison, is not known as such a vehement ebullient writer of patriotic songs, but he gave us the

majestic "Jana Gana Mana" the song of our land. In the first decade of the 20th century, when the partition of Bengal roused the wraths of all Indians, Tagore's songs became a fixed item sung on all occasions of protest. Tagore, however, withdrew from the political arena by 1910.

The reason for the contrast is not too far to see. In 1905 Tagore was 44 and Bharathi was 22. Tagore has had already major achievements in literary creativity. 'Manasi' 'Chitra', 'Chaitali', 'Kanika', and even 'Naivedya' (1901) were behind him, besides innumerable dramas, short stories, novels and other prose works. "Gitanjali" was already revealing itself. He also underwent the trauma of losing his wife and two children and his father too. As a mature thoughtful literary artist, he responded with intellectual understanding. He considered the socio-political scene differently from the young poet Bharathi (who incidentally never saw forty) whose awakening was in the arena of "Swadesamitran" and who went as a reporter and delegate to the Varanasi (1904), Calcutta (1905) and Surat (1906) Congress Sessions. Thus when Bharathi breaks into song and they are printed, it can't be a surprise if they are 'Swadesa Geetangal' (The Motherland songs). He sings :<sup>14</sup>

"When will this thirst for freedom slake ?  
 When will our love of slavery die ?  
 When will our Mother's fetters break ?  
 When will our tribulations cease ?  
 Lord ! Architect of the Bharat War,  
 And sustainer of Aryan Life !  
 Lead, lead us, to victory !  
 Is it right we remain slaves ?"

Tagore had also a different understanding of social evolution and history. He considered<sup>15</sup> that Indian culture and material welfare are less responsive to political changes but depended more on society and social leaders who became a second centre of power. He acted<sup>16</sup> on this understanding of history.

B. But where Bharathi sings of the cowardice, ignorance and benightedness of the Indian at the turn of the century Tagore is not very different. Bharathi laments in 'Nenju Porukkutillaye'.<sup>17</sup>

"Oh my heart aches, my heart aches  
 They quake at this, they tremble at that  
 There is nothing in the world but causes fear in them.  
 At sight of soldier they shake and shiver;  
 They go pale with fear,  
 When a chowkidhar approaches.  
 Countless their affliction.  
 They have hardly strength to walk.  
 Must these pass their days like beasts/without reason,  
 blind?"

In the poem 'Nikazhkindra Hindusthanamum...'<sup>18</sup>

Bharathi roars :

"You weak-shouldered mannikin, away, away  
 You with the shrunken heart, away, away.  
 You of the listless face away, away.  
 You with lack-lustre eyes, away away".

In 'Bangabir' & 'Duranta Asha' (Manasi 1890) Tagore castigates the vain-glorious Indian, weak-bodied and spectacled who cover up their present idleness, inactivity and cowardice with tall talk about the glories of the ancient past. (In the 'Fake Patriots' Bharathi too sang nearly 15 years later of the Indian being the same vain-glorious tall talker.) Tagore epitomizes all these in two brilliant lines ending the poem 'Banga Mata' in 'Chaitali'.

"Seven crores children, O! Mother!  
 You have made Bengalis, not men!"

Tagore earlier on in the same poem prays to the Mother

"In virtue, in sin, in misery, in pleasure  
 In falling and in rising  
 Make them become men  
 your children".

This first decade of the century saw Tagore retire to Santiniketan to continue his experiment in education and to weave the magic of Gitanjali. The poet of beauty in Nature was undergoing metamorphosis into the poet of the beauty of Godhead. Bharathi, too, left for Pondicherry. There he wrote his famous works 'Kuyil' 'Panchali Sapatham' and the 'Krishna Poems'.

### C. UTOPIA

One of Tagore's greatest poems runs :<sup>19</sup>

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;  
 Where knowledge is free;  
 .....  
 Into that heaven of freedom, my father let my country  
 awake"

Bharathi sings the same thoughts in :<sup>20</sup>

"Come, Come, you with the shining eyes.,  
 Come, Come, you with the steely heart,  
 Come, Come, you with the honeyed speech,  
 Come, board-shouldered Titan, Come !"

In four brilliant lines pregnant with all the wisdom of the human race, laying a profound emphasis on the dignity of the individual Bharathi sings of the future Bharatha Samudayam (Indian Society), Bharathi reveals the core of the 'heaven of Tagore.

"Let us now a rule make  
 And hold it for ever and ever  
 Let but a man lone go unfed,  
 The Universe, we shall destroy".

## D. Russian Revolution

Bharathi responded in his explosively emotional way to the thrill of the Russian revolution. His poem "The new Russia—The fall of the Czar" is a brilliant poem in Tamil. The evocation of the rise of the New Age after the fall of the Dark is hailed "Krita Yuga is risen"—Bharathi's favourite phrase for the enlightened future of his dream and vision. An indication of the power of the poem (the difficulties in translating poetry apply more than anywhere else to this poem) can be given by mentioning some of the phrases and similies. "Mother Kali let her glance rest in Russia" "Like Hiranya ruled the tyrant", 'Dharma the idiot Czar treated as mere chaff', 'Deceit and lies like snakes infested the land' 'A mere sound led to prison and a 'Why' to exile', 'Mother's compassion came'; 'Like Himalaya tumbled the Czar' 'the time-serving riff-roff like forest trees in the storm became mere fire-wood' like a foundering wall fell Kali' etc.,

Though Bharathi, in the less than three years, he lived after this, does in his writings mention Russia now and then, Tagore lived to see the outcome of this historic revolution in Russian life. Tagore visited Soviet Russia in 1930, at the ripe age of 69. His "Russiar Chitti" (The Russian letters) gives a balanced view, greatly praising its massive organisation of universal education and uplift of the under-privileged to a position of self-respect. He, at the same could not look with equanimity at the sacrifice of the individual and his individuality to the community's interest as interpreted by the Soviet Government. He pleads for an intergrated development of the individual and the community.

## E. NATURE

Tagore's worship of beauty in Nature upto the Naivedya Gitanjali period is that of the passionate poet revelling in the 'Ananda' - the bliss of existence. Every moment, every scene lured out from him songs in praise and portrayal of the glory of God's creations.

The portraits of riverine Bengal in all seasons by night, by day, in moonlit or on dark nights are some of the great gems in

any language of pictorial verse recalling the pictures of Keats "Ode to Autumn". The 'Sindhu Taranga' (the sea waves) (in Manasi) a great picture of storm and shipwreck, 'Barsha Shesh', (Kalpana) the picture of a storm on land gives us brilliant word paintings.

'Barsha Shesh' of Tagore reminds one of Bharathi's "Rain". A glance at Tagore's 'Barsha Shesh' and Bharathi's "Rain" (alas both translated) show us the poetic mind at work'

Tagore thus : 21

"Like fruit, shaken free by an impatient wind  
from the veils of its mother flower  
thou comest, New year, whirling in a frantic dance  
Amid the stampede of the wind-lashed clouds  
And infuriate showers;  
while trampled by the turbulence  
Are scattered away the faded and the frail  
in an eddying agony of death".

Bharathi thus : 22

"Shattering the bounds of space  
Came the rain :  
Dheem Tarikita dheem, dheem tarikita dheem,  
dheem tarikita dheem!  
The hills are bent,  
And the waters burst and leap and sweep  
In a mad race;  
The wind beats like a fiend in pain ;  
The world reels and is bent :  
Lightning leaps in a clap  
And the sea  
Dashes its mane against Heaven's dome ;  
And the sky beats a mad tattoo and laughs in mad spree.  
The corners of space crumble".

# The picture of peaceful Nature -

Tagore thus : 23

'Over the green and yellow rice-field sweep  
the shadow of the autumn clouds followed  
by the swift-chasing sun.  
The bees forget to sip their honey ; drunken with  
light they foolishly hover and hum,  
The ducks in the islands of the river clamour  
In joy for mere nothing'.

While in the Autumn of Keats "Until they (the bees) think warm days will never cease ; for Summer has overbrimmed their clammy cells" the bees ate drunk with honey, Tagor's bees are drunk, with light.

Bharathi thus : 24

'Caw ! It is the crow.  
In the sky, the flame doth glow.  
Caw, Caw!  
The crows dark with beauty, passing  
Sweet to my eyes  
From branch to branch, they move and cry,  
They crowd  
and wander into the cloud  
Look, in the west  
The Mother has donned the crescent in her crest'.

In Bharathi, these pure Nature poems are not many ; he cannot, for a moment, forget that the people of the land need to be awakened and he casts the net all the time to find a lesson for man from Nature. And one has to be thankful when this missionary pauses for a while - perhaps too much overwhelmed by the particular scene in Nature - (cf. the sunset <sup>25</sup> in Panchali Sapatham) / or the sunrise <sup>26</sup> in 'Kuyil')



Bharathi, the patriot, had sung in Tamil (is it only a translation) Bankim Chandra's 'Vande Mataram' song and had received his vision of mother from Sister Nivedita. So in many a song in the patriotic Poems ' (Swadesa Geethangal) and even elsewhere (The land of Bharat (Vidura's view of India)<sup>27</sup> in Panchali Sapatham) it is the beauty of our land, the land of Bharathi that Bharathi sings of. We recall the cloud - messenger of Kalidasa giving the bird's (cloud's) eye-view of the Punya Bhoomi of Bharath ; we see it in the early poem 'Megh Dhut' where Tagore after paying homage to Kalidasa sings of the sweeping land of ours.

Tagore summarises his love of Nature in four brilliant lines in chaitali (1895)<sup>28</sup>

'Let whose will, with shut and brooding eyes,  
If Earth be real or mere dream surmise!  
Meanwhile let me with thirsty vision drink  
Its beauty ere my sun of life shall sink".

## F. HUMANISM

Tagore's love of humanity I have already pointed out Reiterating the same in Tagore's words (as translated)<sup>29, 30, 31</sup>

"I do not want to die in this glorious world,  
I want to remain in the midst of humanity".  
"In the ascetic way is not my liberation"  
"And if mankind passes on crying, weeping  
shall I in meditating Samadhi tarry behind".

Bharathi, the patriot, the political refugee, the hard-worked journalist, in poverty had rarely time to reflect on his view of mankind. We can, however, see the summation of Bharathi's philosophy of life in the prose poem "Bliss"<sup>32</sup>

"This world is sweet. The space herein has sweetness  
The wind is sweet.

.....

The reptiles are good  
The beasts are all sweet.  
And the fish are good

The men are the sweetest

.....

Youth is sweet. Old age is good.

Life is good. Death is sweet.

.....

O sentience, may thou live long ;

Thou art one. Thou art the light

.....

Thou the good, thou the bliss.

Tagore has, in all his wide and international tours, in his lectures pleaded for a proper respect and regard for human values. He had sharply criticised national chauvinism and the mad gallop of humanity into the industrial age. His brilliant dramas 'Mukta Dhara' and 'Rakta Karabi' (Red Oleanders) give artistic expression to these sentiments. 'Chandalika' reveals the oneness of human beings, devoid of fissiparous classifications of caste and creed. His poems in 'Patraput' <sup>33</sup>, <sup>34</sup> and 'Prantik' <sup>35</sup> reveal the poet's heart-broken cry at man's inhumanity to man.

"Across the sky rush  
with blazing blasphemy  
the soulless swarm of vulture machines  
carrying their missiles of ravenous  
passion for human entrails".

The dignity of the individual human being is so poignantly pictured in 'Santhal women' <sup>36</sup> The haunting poignant picture, the lovely scene ends in a verse which makes us write with the poet in shame and agony.

"I sit on my terrace watching the young woman toiling at her task hour after hour. My heart is touched with shame when I feel that the woman's service sacredly ordained for her loved ones, its dignity soiled by the market price, should have been robbed by me with the help of a few pieces of copper".

What Tagore later <sup>37</sup> expressed about the invasion of Abyssinia, we find in 1915 expressed by Bharathi about the invasion of Belgium by Germany. <sup>38</sup>

"Righteousness it was that laid you low  
When the stranger, swollen with arrogant might

Came with fell intent to do cruel wrong,  
you did not meekly suffer it - No.

In three brilliant poems, <sup>39</sup>, <sup>40</sup>, <sup>41</sup> Bharathi sings of the emancipation of the down-trodden men and of womankind from the millenia of thralldom.

"Dance, brothers, and let us sing.  
We have found liberty sweet  
Dance brothers and let us sing.  
No more shall we call the Brahman Lord :  
No more shall we call the white man master  
No more shall we bow to those that live by begging.  
No more shall we toil as slaves  
For those that deceive us.

.....

The day of equality has come.  
The end of falsehood and deceit has arrived  
There is no noble birth but goodness  
The evil-minded can no more flourish".

"Dance my sisters, dance, my sisters

.....

We have found our own souls, our own souls  
The touch of books is no more sin;  
They are gone that doomed us to ignorance  
The funny men that in prison homes  
Sought to imprison the woman's soul  
Are gone, are gone.

.....

They talked of chastity, sisters,  
Chastity is good for both, say we".

## G. RELIGION

Tagore, the poet, as all poets in human history, responded emotionally to the universe in which he found himself. We have already noted his impassioned lines in 'Chitali' - the desire with thirsty vision to drink its beauty. In 'Manasi' in 'Ahalyar Prati' <sup>42</sup> we see his sympathy, his thought unifying man and nature., "its sympathy with all the dim stirrings of hidden life".

This throbbing advaitic (though not consciously thought out) Awareness of the life-force changes into the recognition of the personal God, the Jiban Devata, to the clear recognition of which and to the poet's response to which the world owes the Gitanjali. This has been categorically enunciated by the poet. The Jiban Devata is treated as individual to each human being and to activate him. This view of the Divine was held by Tagore all his life. In the Hibbert lectures (1930) <sup>43</sup> Tagore clearly states that for living people in this world, the Personal God is the proper need. Towards the end he says, "There are many of us whose prayer is dualism... For them religion is a truth which is ultimate..... They know that human imperfection is the cause of our sorrow but there is a fulfilment in love within the range of our limitation which accepts all sufferings and yet rises above them".

Tagore, though born in Sakti-worshipping Bengal, with Vande Mataram in the air, has no name for his God. To the Brahmo Samaj atmosphere wherein he grew up and which appealed to the newly awakened intellect of Bengal must this be attributed. The God is almost Nirguna but He has compassion and love to his devotee. His Grace is all the time haunting the air, the locale of the Gitanjali songs, waiting and wanting to shower the devotee with all that his soul thirsts for and craves.

Bharathi emotionally lived his Advaitic Vedanta knowledge which association with Aurobindo in the Pondicherry days later strengthened. In his pondicherry days, we hear, he used to throw the last few grains that only were available to satisfy the family's hunger to the sparrows and to enjoy the clamour and happiness of these little birds.

And he sings too —

"The crow, the sparrow they are our Jathi-

The towering mountain and the sea our crowd

Wherever I turn, none but me

To look, to see, all is but a gay dance".

So all the Gods and Goddesses are his to love, venerate and sing about. Though he is overwhelmingly a Sakti Upasaka, he sings as we have seen, brilliantly of Krishna, Murugan (Kartikaya) and others. And Bharathi speaks of the supreme

ecstasy of God's touch when he says "When I, in the midst of fire, place my finger", Nandalaa I feel in thrill of your touch". The pain, the feeling is real but is experienced, enjoyed as the touch of God.

The world is not unreal - no, not at all to the poet Bharathi. Nor to the poet Rabindranath. They are alive and thrill to the entire Universe. Bharathi says clearly in a short note introducing the poem 'False? True?' which puts to rest all doubts about Bharathi's world view.

Bharathi writes - "All sastras are all almost true. But the same Sastra will not always suit or fit all persons always. Let me give a small illustration.

A rich man' old; he eats but once; having given his worldly affairs to his son, is free, observes all rites and restrictions, chants, Sundara Kanda and Kathopanishad; never goes out on principle, which is suited to the old man.

A sixteen year old poor boy; father is dead; the day's food for self, mother and sister depends on going out and earning a few rupees. Will it be right for him to adopt the Sundara Kanda way of life?

This world is false so says one Sastra in our country. Let the Sannyasis repeat it often. I have no grievance. But can it suit a householder? Can it be uttered inside the house? Is it not an insult? Are the lands and house father bequeathed us illusions? Like a golden statue stands the wife. She shed sympathetic tears for all our troubles; she waxed happy in our good fortune. She brought up our children. Is she a delusion? Are the children too a delusion? I ask parents! Are the children false? Are the household good false?

The above Sastra will not suit a householder. What we need in this world are long life, good health, intelligence and wealth. We should request our gods for these, All gods are one. The divine light should be in 'A R A M' (Dharma) wealth and pleasure. If the divine permeates these, liberation comes by itself".

His innumerable songs remind one of the greatest exponent of Advaita Adi Sankara who sang such great devotional hymns like 'Bhajha Govindham' & 'Saundarya lahari' to the Saguna gods of our land".

## H. INDUSTRY - MODERN WORLD

As we mentioned earlier, Tagore feared the degrading dehumanising power of industry. In his lectures in the west, he had made it clear. In his talks in Tokyo too, he had expressed a warning that Japan is doing wrong to her people and to her culture by going the way of the Industrial West.

Bharathi, on the other hand, sings of the need for industries.

'Melt the iron  
Make the machines  
Crush the Cane.  
Dive for pearls.  
Let pearls of sweat  
fall on the land  
Labour in ways  
many a thousand  
I sing your glory  
you are Brahma's art.'

Of course, he is not a crass materialist. The third stanza calls for poems, songs and dance and science and philosophy too. Bharathi was much more conscious than Tagore (was it his experience of poverty) of the need for economic betterment of the Indian people. He, therefore, wants modern industries but properly humanised with poetry, song and dance.

Bharathi sings 'Illaiyenra chollai illaiyaga vaippen' (We shall make the word 'shortage' non-existent) and 'Manidhar unavai manidhar parikkum vazhakkam iniundo?' (shall there exist the act of man snatching another man's food?)

## ACTION IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

Mostly known to those, who do not know Bengali language only as the mystic dreamer of "Gitanjali" and as the practi-

sing educationist founder of Santiniketan and Viswabharathi, Tagore had been quite active in practical socio-political activities. In the annual Hindu Mela started by Raj Narayan Basu, the Tagore Brothers had been active participants. Rabindranath had recited his poetry and sung patriotic songs written by him.

However, on two occasions, his actions were highly dramatic. One of these, very well known to all Indians and to the chagrin of the west his renouncing the knighthood after the Jalianwaalabagh atrocity of General O 'Dyer. He wrote to the Viceroy: "The time has come. Badges of honour make our shame more glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation and I, for my part, wish to stand shorn of all special distinctions by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings". Tagore was then nearly sixty.

Earlier in 1905, in his mid-forties, Tagore had in person, led a protest against the partition of Bengal. He drew up a programme to be observed by all Bengalis on the day marked for the partition. The day was to be a day of mourning; there was to be no cooking in Bengali homes. To show that partition not with standing Bengalis are brothers, whichever side of the partition line they may find themselves, in everyone was to take a dip in the Ganges and then to the tie rakhis on each others' wrists. Tagore himself acted on this in the midst of enthusiastic crowds and even visited a mosque en-route and tied rakhis on his Muslim brothers there.

Either the rulers in Calcutta were comparatively more cultured or perhaps those in Madras were more frightened. Subramania Bharathi did not get away with his political activities. With his incendiary writings in 'Swadesamitran' and 'India' and with his rousing patriotic songs, fifteen thousand copies of which were printed and circulated all over Tamilnadu, Bharathi was a thorn in the sides of British. They went after his press and him personally. To remain free and continue his fight, Bharathi had to take shelter in French Pondicherry for ten long years.

Nor did the people of his caste like his socially enlightened action. After his return from exile in French India, he came back to Kadayam village; his equal treatment and intercourse with people of all castes and religions led to his being forced by the Brahmins of Kadayam to move and live outside the village.

As dramatic as anything were his other acts in Pondicherry. His complete disregard and opposition to untouchability so wonderfully put by him in his famous songs ('Viduthalai - Freedom' and 'Aduvome-Palla song') was always practised by him. He used to take refreshments in his servant maid's house. He even conducted a sacred-thread ceremony (Upanayana) for the Harijan boy Kanakalingam. Once he had food prepared by his wife and did Devi pooja and fed fifty Harijans.

We have thus seen two great poetic souls, at two ends of this vast land of ours living and singing at the dawn of the twentieth century. One could see how the environment political, social, religious and personal with their trials and tribulations have drawn from these sensitive minds such glorious songs that shall remain immortal.

In the vast expanse of his creations, Tagore stands far ahead of Bharathi, but in the nature of his output, Bharathi does not lag behind Bharathi was a great admirer of Tagore. He has translated eight short stories and five of Tagore's essays which were published in 'Modern Review' in June to December, 1917. Less than three months before his death, Bharathi wrote in the Swadesa Mitran of 25-8-1917 about Tagore "On the twelfth of last June, Rabindranath gave an epoch making talk before the State University in Tokyo. Tagore is one of those who are working in the footsteps of Vivekananda.

Vivekananda showed the spiritual path. Rabindranath Tagore has been sent by Bharatha Mata to tell the foreign lands that The worldly life, genuine poetry and spiritual awareness all are rooted in the same base.'



If one gains fame, it should like Rabindranath. Is it only in Bengal? Only in India? Only all over Asia? No, in Germany, Austria, France, all over the world spreads his fame. For, all this, he sang in Bengali only. The world has seen but mere translations; and the fame is for that".

Both Tagore and Bharathi have written a large quantity of prose. These could but be just hinted at, the main emphasis in this paper being to see the poetic mind in its spatiotemporal framework. The prose written by both appear sheer poetry; such is the felicity of their language. From poetry both have gone on writing prose poems and the prose they wrote has become poetic prose. Both have rendered signal service to their languages making them fit tools for modern man.

India is one whatever self-serving evil men may try to say. History is replete with the story of the oneness of the Indian people, though the politicians of yore (styling themselves kings and chieftains) had misled them into internecine quarrels and wars. It is the unselfish souls of great teachers and great poets that have been stemming the rot that selfish men try to infuse into our land. Two such torch-bearers are Tagore and Bharathi who have reiterated in word and song the indomitable spirit and the oneness of Mankind for ever and ever.

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# **NEW TRENDS IN MODERN BENGALI POETRY**

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There is no end of controversy regarding the artistic achievement of contemporary Bengali literature, because the critics can never be unanimous about contemporary literature. So modern readers may have reasonable misgivings about the chronology and order of contemporary writers as well as about the form of literature and its social accountability. The 'young turks' are always impetuous and worshippers of novelty. It is in the nature of the young people to consider their own age as 'progressive', because they are brought up in it, and condemn their immediate predecessors as decadent, conservative or reactionary. They cannot make an objective evaluation of their literary predecessors. The old writers who are still alive continue to stick to their own literary ideals, and they refuse to go beyond Rabindranath. Rabindranath is their outer limit. They fail to recognise the development of Bengali literature after the death of Tagore. Many post-Tagore writers have moved away from Rabindranath. And when they try to tread on a new track, they, by implication only, ensure the greatness of Rabindranath. The creative urge can never be satisfied by blind imitation or even by intelligent following. Genuine creative talent must forge out new art-forms and move in new directions. The present state of Bengali literature only reaffirms this axiomatic truth. The modern writers are

fully aware of the lofty heights scaled by Rabindranath and so they try to outgrow the influence of Rabindranath and break new grounds.

When exactly did modernism begin? Hopkins, the Victorian poet was the first man to introduce modern sensibility and imagery in English poetry by bringing about many technical innovations. After his death in 1889 people quickly forgot him. But, in 1918, When Robert Bridges brought out a collection of poems by Hopkins (*The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*), the British readers realised that this Victorian poet had paved the way for modern English poetry. Again, after the First World War there was a sea-change in the Philosophy of life, and sense of values and culture. Literature was also inevitably affected by this change of outlook. That is why the literature of the postwar period is known as modern literature. It was around this time that the Imagist Group was formed in England under the leadership of T.E. Hulme and Amy Lowell. The book entitled *Some Imagist Poets*, published in 1915; contained some of these new kinds of poems. In England the post-war literature is known as modern literature. In Bengal generally speaking, the modern period comprises the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, because the literature prior to this period is known as mediaeval literature.

That is why we should like to call the literature of the present time as 'contemporary literature, although the expression 'contemporary literature' is rather vague and not strictly specified. However, in the context of our present discussion contemporary literature would mean Bengali literature produced after the Second World War.

Rabindranath died in 1941. Sometime before that, around 1930, there was a global depression resulting in acute unemployment which completely disturbed the normal life and thought. Bengali youths were not very much impressed by non-cooperation movement organised by Mahatma Gandhi. Meanwhile, India was involved in the politics of the second world War. The holocaust of war disturbed the mental peace of the Bengalis and the old, time-honoured, traditional

values began to disintegrate. The spontaneous movement of 1942, the sight of Japanese planes on the horizon and the news of frequent infiltrations of the Japanese army in the eastern border completely broke the heart of all and sundry. And, above all, the famine, deliberately created by the British, communal riots and the acceptance of the two-nation theory that culminated in the partition of the country, the influx of refugees into West Bengal, and the consequent moral degeneration of the Bengali race, the exploitation of industrialists, the recurrent resistance movements of labourers, strikes and lockouts, filled out the lugubrious lot of the land. On the other hand, there was the mounting affluence of the new-rich. Again, poverty-stricken, cheerless, miserable life of the lower stratum of the society, rampant political corruption, the broken youth, and the control of politics by settish businessmen, became part and parcel of modern existence. All these factors were largely responsible for the complete disintegration of values in the post-War Bengal. Furthermore when other states have closed their doors on the Bengalis, collapsing economic fabric of Bengal has failed to offer jobs and opportunities to youths. All these social, familial and psychological disruptions have made the middle class Bengalis completely desperate about their future. For the present Bengali youth the past does not exist, the present is full of tensions and anxieties and the future is absolutely uncertain, if not completely bleak. The spectre of the society has inevitable cast its gloom on Bengali literature. Throughout the nineteenth century and the first three decades of the twentieth century it was the middle class Bengalis who nurtured the Bengali literature. But, after the Second World war, this class became fragmented on account of various social, political and economic disasters. Here we shall make an attempt to understand the sensibility of the contemporary Bengali poetry through a brief discussion of the literature of our time.

We have already seen that from the second decade of the twentieth century new notes were heard in Bengali poetry influenced by Rabindranath. Mohitlal, Nazrul and Jatindranath were the first to strike new notes. But they could not completely escape the influence of Rabindranath. Novelties were confined to Mohitlal's bold sensuousness and anti-spiritual approach to life,

Nazrul's revolutionary ardour and bursting vitality reflected in ideas and language and Jatindranath's languid scepticism about the world and life. In spite of newness in certain directions they did not try to produce any new aesthetics or poetic ideal. But gradually a rising note of revolt against Rabindranath became increasingly audible.

The Sabujpatra (1913) under the leadership of Pramatha Chowdhury broke away from the old tradition and tried to establish rationalism and modern sensibility in literature. But this periodical effected liberation mainly in the fields of essays and articles. Rabindranath himself brought in modernism during his Balaka and punasca period. A faint effort to reject Rabindranath in favour of new poetic ideal was evidenced in the Kallol (1923) of Calcutta and the Pragati (1927) of Decca. The Kallol confined to a very limited literary group, tried to realise its ideals within it. Some of the members of the group that came into existence in connection with the Bharati, under the leadership of Manilal Gangopadhyay joined the Kallol and tried with their contributions to make the periodical the principal organ of modern literature. The Kallol was published under the editorship of Gokulchandra Nag and Dineshranjan Das. After the death of Gokulchandra, Premendra Mitra acted as a joint-editor of this journal for sometime. The Kallol survived till 1930. Many of the writers who became eminent afterwards (Achintya, Buddhadev, Premendra, Tarasankar, Nazrul, Mohitlal, Jibananda, Jatindranath 'Yubanasva' or Manish Ghatak, Sailajananda et al) made their maiden appearance in the Kallol. The faint beginning of modern Bengali poetry can be noticed in this literary magazine. Then one can mention the Kali-kalam (1926) edited by Sailajananda Mukhopadhyay and the Pragati (1927). Pragati under the joint editorship of Buddhdev Basu and Ajit Dutta increasingly stronger and louder. Bandir Bandana (Hymn of a hymnsayer) by Buddhadev Basu and Kusumer Mas (The month of flowers) by Ajit Dutta were published in 1930 within a period of few months. Prathama (The first one) by Premendra Mitra was published in book form in 1932; but the poems collected in this volume were composed between 1924 and 1928. Tanvi (Young lady) by Sudhindranath Dutta was also published in 1980, although his

originality was manifest only in 1935 in Orchestra. Bishnu De's first collection of poems entitled *Urvashi O Artemis* was published in 1932. Jhara Palak (Moulted feather), the first collection of poems by Jibananda Das was published in 1927, but we do not meet the real Jibananda in this volume. It is largely an echo of Mohitlal and Nazrul. We meet the original Jibananda in *Dhusar Pandulipi* (Grey manuscript) in 1936. Although he started writing from 1927 he did not come into his real self before 1936. Amiya Chakraborty and Samar Sen appeared in the poetical arena still later. So it is evident that we do not find modern Bengali poetry worth its name before 1940.

In Bengal, modern poetry originated from a revolt against Rabindranath and after imbibing the influence of the post-War English poetry. Most of the modern Bengali writers were admirers of modern English poetry and some of them were coming over European poetry and they tried to introduce the latest diction in Bengali Poetry.

Modern English poetry had its real beginning just before or around the first World War (Between 1912 and 1917 T.E.) Hulme formed the Imagist Group. Amy Lowell, an American woman poet and Ezra Pound, another American poet, started propagating through this group, for a new type of poetry. According to them romanticism must be replaced by absolute objectivity concerned only with the poet's response to a visual object or scene. Pound was the first to use the Imagist method in poetry. The imagists were amply influenced by the French poet Baudelaire and the Japanese lyric form haiku. Lowell, Pound and Eliot - three American poets - brought about a new epoch in poetry. Of course, Hopkins had much earlier suggested modern poetry through his technical innovations towards the end of the nineteenth century. The Imagist Group soon broke up but modern English poetry discovered its identity by 1930. Thomas Stearns Eliot, an American citizen, who came to London in 1915, effected revolution in poetry long before he became a British citizen in 1927. In *Prufrock and Other observations* (1917), *Ara Vos Prec* (1919) *Poems* (1920), *The Waste Land* (1922) etc. he constructed a new poetic theory regarding form and technique of poetry. Although Ezra Pound started writing poetry in 1919 he became an established



poet only around 1918, and in 1920 he started writing the famous *Cantos*. W.H. Auden appeared much later. His first collection of poems entitled 'Poems' was published in 1930. Stephen Spender's maiden publication, *Twenty Poems* of Cecil De Lewis was published in 1935, although the poems were composed during the period between 1929 and 1933. In view of the above facts we are driven to the conclusion that modern Bengali poetry at its very inception was directly influenced by modern English poetry.

Thirty years that cover the period from 1930 to 1960 constitute the period of modern Bengali poetry's search for identity. It is after a series of obstacles, struggles and eccentricities that modern poetry ultimately emerged as a significant body of poetry. Buddhadev Basu, Premendra Mitra, Ajit Dutta and Achintya Sengupta strongly felt the urge to do something new in Bengali poetry. The *Kallol* in Calcutta and the *Pragati* in Dacca were pioneers in experimenting with modern ideas. In spite of the virulent attacks from the *Sanibarar Cithi* (converted into a monthly in 1927) modern Bengali poetry continued to grow. The first phase of modern Bengali poetry was nurtured and developed by the four poets mentioned above. Of them Achintyakumar later shifted to fiction. The three (Buddhadev, Premendra and Ajit Dutta) effected a new awareness about poetry but it is difficult to believe that they brought about any serious revolution.

Ajit Dutta is a born romantic. Right from the age of the *Pragati* down to modern times he has been mainly concerned with love, beauty and pure romance. His *Kusumer Mas* (The month of flowers, 1930), *Patakanya* (A girl of the nether world, 1938), *Nastacad* (A defiled moon, 1945), *Punar-naba* (Ever new, 1947) and *Chayar Alpana* (Embroidery of shadow, 1953), show that in spite of his avowed rejection of Rabindranath he has not been able to escape the influence of Tagore in any respect. His romance centers round the earthly lady, 'Malati' and weaves a pattern of realistic dream and golden romance. Some of his sonnets are sure to attain permanence. Poetry in his hands is never reduced to just a vehicle of various theories and philosophical speculations. His

poetry, therefore, is very pleasant. His romantic reveries are superbly expressed in measured diction. Let us cite one example :

Malatir chaya-cokhe adhire dhire nibe ase also  
 caitra-purnimar cad thatapi madir madalas,  
 malatir akhi hote punja punja kusum milalo  
 mrityur mohann sprse tanu tar sithil abas.  
 jyotsna-sikta baimakase nibe ase caitra-madhuras,  
 tathapi e ajikar madhuratri na haite ses  
 adhare labhite habe bimugdher adharparas,  
 rupasi malatai tai dhariyache aparup bes,  
 aparup malati se-adhare cumban yar, bakse yar ananta  
 asles.

Light fades slowly in the darkening eyes of Malati  
 The full moon of Caitra still doowsily benumbed,  
 Piles of flowers wither in the eyes of Malati.  
 Her mortal frame becoming lax and insensate  
 with the loving touch of death.  
 The vernal intoxication is fast running out of the  
 moon-blanchd golden sky  
 But I must drink deep the nectar of her lips  
 before this enchanted night slips out.

My beautiful Malati has assumed a charming form  
 A charming Malati—a matchless beauty  
 With kiss on her lips and an unending embrace.

The magic web that he weaves by an admixture of romance and fairy tale is rare in contemporary poetry :

Gablr samudratale prabaldviper sima chadi,  
 timira yekhane thake taro niche saper dalan,  
 sat-dinga madhukar ye dur sagare dey padi,  
 yekhane samudratale marakat maniker them.

taro dure, taro dher nice,  
 laksa phana nihsvase duliche,  
 ekela sonar kanya sei dese aghore ghumay,  
 jhilmil phanar chayay.

At the bottom of the unfathomable ocean,  
 Beyond the limits of the coral islands  
 And lower than the habitations of the whales  
 Stands the palace of snakes.  
 Beyond the sunset point voyaged by the  
 legendary fleet of seven vessels  
 Lies, in the depth of the ocean.  
 the emerald tower  
 Still further and deeper down  
 The golden girl sleeps alone in deep slumber.  
 Guarded by thousand snakes with sparkling hoods."

Buddhadev Basu (1908-1974) was first to oppose the poetic ideals of Rabindranath strongly and consciously, and set upon himself the task of bringing about a radical change in form and technique of poetry. His first collection of poems *Marmabani* (1925) is out of print. But this *Bandir Bandana* (1930), *Prthibir Prati* (To the earth, 1933), *Kankabati* (1937), *Damayanti* (1943), *Draupadir Sadi Robe of Draupadi*, (1948), *Siter Prarthana: Basanter Uttar* (Prayer of winter: Reply of spring, 1955) are quite well-known. Although he sharply criticized Rabindranath, his actual poetic realm consists of nothing but romance, love and beauty. Occasionally there are yearnings for a grater life. He also raised his voice against parochialism prevalent in the society. But his impatience to accept the bond of earthly love, infinite passions of a finite heart and romantic exuberance have stood in the way of his powerful expression. He believed, like the Imagist Group of England, that he was the guardian of modern Bengali poetry. As a result of this self-styled guardianship the natural flow of his expression is often thwarted. It is a clog on his poetic movements that he had deeply imbibed the influence of Rabindranath and tried throughout his life to disown it. It is only towards the end of his life that he got over the obsession of becoming the father of a 'school' and it is only then that his rich creativity is liberated through soft and tranquil expressions of romantic beauty. Buddhadev did not break any new ground in form and technique of poetry, although his conscious efforts in this direction cannot be gainsaid. He was so much fascinated by the descriptions of sensual passions and lust for life depicted in the poetry of *Budelaire* and the writings of D. H. Lawrence that he had practically no time to seriously

experiment with poetry. In his later career Buddhadev Basu became slightly conscious of his weaknesses and tried to use new kind of diction and symbols in his poetry. Some of his poems of latter days express his conviction in the languor of life. In this connection it may be mentioned that under the editorship of Basu the quarterly Kavita became the powerful vehicle of experimentation of young and budding poets during the forties. Here are a few lines from one of his familiar poems of the early period.

prabrttir abcechedya karagare cirantam bandi kari'  
rekhecho amay-  
nirmam nirmata mama! e kebal akaran anandatomar,  
mane kari mukta hadbo, mane kari, rahite dibo na  
mor tare e nikhile bandhaner cinha matra tar.  
ruksha dasyubese tai hasyamukhe bhese yai ucchvasita  
syeccacar-store,  
upeksiyacale yai samsar-samaj-gada laksa laksa  
ksudra kantaker  
misthur aghat, dastyer sneher santan  
sankocer buke hani tibra tiksna rudha parithas,  
abajnar kathor bhartsana.

You have made me a permanent prisoner of my own  
inextricable carnal desires, oh, my pitiless Creator.  
Such is your pleasure.

I plan to be free; I decide to sever all connections and throw away all signs of bondage, with this earth. I yield to the reductions of a dissolute life, and ignore, like a ruthless dacoit, the thousand little acts of cruelty of this world and the society, I spurn the slavery of affection, and I scorn modesty with sharp and strong lashing rebukes.

Premendra Mitra can claim some novelty in the creation of a new poetic vocabulary. His *Prathama* (The first one, 1932), *Samrat* (The emperor, 1940), *Ferari Fouz* (The absconding army, 1948), *Sagar Theke Phera* (Return from the sea, 1956), *Harin Cita Cil* (Heron, Chita and Kite, 1960), etc. are quite admirable not so much on account of technique as for their message of humanism. Buddhadev could not come

out from the confines of his narrow self, but Premendra Mitra merged his self in the world consciousness. Somewhat in the manner of Whitman and Spender he has stood by the side of the ordinary pedestrian and experienced God in the vast expanse of the world. His powerful vitality, the sunsteeped tropical sky, bone-white desert-bed only reveal the greater and nobler aspects of life. Premendra Mitra has saved modern Bengali poetry from the anaemia of self-centred insipid romance. It is also true that his fiery consciousness is mainly related to the externals. His conviction gives greater emphasis on the externals than on the essential problems of life. It must also be admitted that his poetic technique is rather weak and not very original. Here are a few lines from one of his famous poems :

hatabhagader bandarite bhai  
 sei sab yata bhanga jahajer bhid —  
 sirdada yar beke gelo ar dadadadi gelo chide  
 kabja o kal begadalo abasese,  
 jaulas gelo dhuye year ar patakao pade nuye;  
 phuto khole ar raite se nare bhesse,  
 — yader nongar namabar thai  
 duniyar kinaray  
 — yata hatabhaga asamarther nirbasiter nid  
 In the port of these hopeless people  
 Crowd the broken ships  
 With dented frames and tattered cords  
 and machines gone out of order;  
 With colours fading and flagging  
 holds leaking,  
 unable to float any longer.  
 The crowd of hopeless, incompetent exiles  
 anchor only at the brink of the world.

The dreams of Buddhadeb Basu and Premendra Mitra were however, differently realised by other poets. There is then no doubt about the independent status of modern Bengali poetry. The Poetry of Jibananda Das, Sudhindranath Datta, Bishnu De, Samar Sen and Amiya Chakraborty cannot be said to be the imitation of Western poetry. In their hands modern Bengali poetry came of age. In their poems one can distinctly hear the

individual voices. Jibananda Das (1809-1954) is the most important poet of this period. He started his poetical career in imitation of Nazrul and Mohitlal (Jharapalak of Jibananda, for example), but in his subsequent poetical works, namely, *Dhusar Pandulipi* (The grey manuscript, 1936), *Banalata Sen* (1942), *Mahaprthibi* (The great world, 1942), *Satti Tarar Timir* (Darkness from seven starts, 1948), *Rupasi Bangla* (The beautiful Bengal, 1959) he found his real poetic self. Imagism, symbolism and surrealism blended with the unaccounted for melancholy, futile efforts to look for corridors of history, the chilled pain of the coming winter months have made the poetry of Jibananda extremely sensuous and strangely romantic. Jibananda has been tormented by despondent, cheerless agony on account of the futility of the twentieth century, death of desires and life fizzling out through the chinks of his fingers. It appears that the tyranny of modern existence and deep-seated dissatisfaction have been assimilated into romantic outlook of the poet. The limitations of reality bound by space and time have proved inimical to the soaring imagination of the poet. Therefore, he has voyaged into the hoary periods of history and has escaped the temporal and the spatial limitations. In the post-Tagore period Jibananda is certainly the most significant poet both in terms of the poetic content and the poetic form. novelty of syntactic structures which was once the most important target of attack of *Sanibarar Cithi*, (edited by Sajanikanta Das), is apparently incongruous and absurd play with words. But as the relation between the object and the symbol is not always manifest in surrealism, so in Jibananda the image, form and content are not apparently very congruous. But once one gets used to his mind and temperament one can clearly see the relation between the stylistic device and the mind of the poet. It is Jibananda who has successfully led modern Bengali poetry in a new direction. Here are a few lines from his remarkable poem.

dekhechi sabuj pata aghraner andhakare hayeche halud  
hijaler janalay alo ar bulbuli kariyache khela idur siter  
rate resamer mato rome makhiyache khud, caler dhusar  
gandhe tarangera rup hoye jhoreche du'bela nirjan  
macher cokhe; pukurer pare has sandhyar adhare

peyeche ghumer ghran-meyeli kater sparsa laye geche  
tare.

I have seen green leaves yellowing in the  
dark of Aghran, the play of light and bulbul  
by the hazel window,  
Rats covering their silken  
coats with huskings in chilly winter night.  
Enamoured of the smell of rice, the waves  
Transfigure in the eyes of the lonely fish;  
The duck smells sleep in the darkness gathering  
on the bank of a tank in the evening  
When a soft female hand gently takes it home.

# **TRANSLATIONS FROM BENGALI TO TAMIL AND TAMIL TO BENGALI**

**R. BHANUMATHI**

Literature in any language belongs to the whole world as it reflects the progress and experience of human kind throughout its long journey. Many streams of thought have contributed towards the enrichment of this unique treasure. It is a good fortune of modern man that science has brought the people of the world closer to one another.

The need for translating the literature of one language into other languages arises at this point. By coming in contact with the literature of other languages we become familiar with the problems, feelings and experiences of the people speaking those languages. From this point of view translation from one language to another is a meaningful journey towards the goal of achieving unity of entire humanity.

Translation is all the more important in a country like India inhabited by people speaking different languages and professing different religions. There are differences in the day to day affairs like food, dress, customs, beliefs, rituals etc. These differences, especially the linguistic gulf, have to be bridged at the earliest possible time. Otherwise national integration would remain a day dream.



The ancient Tamils gave due importance to the unity of mankind. This is revealed in the works of Kanian Poongundranar in Purananuru: "Yadum are Yavarum Kelir" (Every place is my native place and all are my relatives). They realized that one of the avenues of achieving the unity of mankind is the knowledge about other people. They also must have realised that one of the ways of obtaining this knowledge is the translation of literature. So it is not surprising to find a mention about translation in Tolkappiam the oldest Tamil text we have today. Tolkappiar, the author of the book, while mentioning about the kinds of secondary works (Valainul yays that 'summarising amplifying both summarising, amplifying, both summarising and translation are the four kinds of secondary literatures'. (Tol. Sutra No : 1567). Ilampuranar, one of the early outstanding commentators of Tamil, in his commentary to the mentioned sutra says: "By Translation, Tolkappiar means the translation of Sanskrit works into Tamil". The Sutra and its commentary make it clear that the ancient Tamils gave due place to translations and that Sanskrit was the source language.

In the medieval period come across neither any reference about translation, nor do we get any translation, itself. But there are many epic works which have borrowed either the central theme or the entire story from Sanskrit works. Except the first twin epics "Silappadhikaram" and "Manimekalai" other epics had borrowed central theme or story. Dr. M. Varadarajan in his History of Tamil Literature remarks that "It is in the epic period that the trend to borrow the story from Sanskrit works started". (History of Tamil literature by M. Varadarajan, Sahitya Akademy Publication. - 1972.)

During the modern period translation started attaining importance in all the languages of India. It has developed into a separate branch of study. Translation is included in the curriculum of many Universities of India. The reason for this development can be attributed to three factors:

Firstly, the Christian Missionary activities inaugurated translation in the modern period. The Christian Missionaries wan-

ted the Principles of their religion to reach the people belonging to the lowest stratum of the society, since they understood that these people could be easily converted to Christianity. So in their programme of spreading their religion, was included the translation of Bible and other religious texts in different languages of India in simple prose. Bible was first translated into Tamil in 1774. Latter on it was rendered into other languages of India. Following their heels, other people started translating secular texts.

Secondly, one of the direct impacts of the British rule in India was the growth of a strong sense of unity among the different regions of India. Fighting against a common enemy for a common cause they forgot their differences and ill-feelings. Translation from one Indian language to another was found to be one of the best modes of comenting the differences between different regions of India as it makes the problem and experiances of the people of one region common to all the people of India.

Thirdly, the British rule introduced English education in India. This enabled the educated section to peep into the outer world through the window of English knowledge. New forms of literatures like novels, short stories had already become popular in the western countries. As per human instinct the educated mass wanted to see these new forms in their language also. This inagurated the translation of western literatures through English into Indian languages. Subsequently translations from the Indian language into another were many.

These factors which have their roots in the last couple of centuries bore frints in this century. In the beginning of this century competent translators undertook the task of seeing the outstanding literatures of their mother tongue in other Indian and foreign languages and vice-versa.

## TRANSLATION OF BENGALI WORKS INTO TAMIL

So far as Tamil is concerned the first half of this century can rightly be described as the golden age of translation.

'It was during this period most works of eminent Bengali writers like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Rabindradath Tagore. Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Tarasankar Bandopadhyaya, Vibunthi Bhushan Bandopadhyaya and Balai Chand Mukhopadhyaya (Ban Phul) were rendered into Tamil.

Though most of the works translated from Bengali into Tamil are novels and short stories, the first translation was a religious text. In 1870 'Maharshi' Debendranath Tagore's 'Bhahmo Dharmo' was translated into Tamil by Sridhar Nayakar with the original title unaltered in the translation.

Since that year for more than three decades there was hardly any translation from Bengali into Tamil. The golden period of translation was inaugurated by Mahesh Kumar Sarma when he translated 'Ananda Math', the famous novel of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya in 1960.

Mahesh Kumar Sarma, though has translated only a few works, occupies important place in the history of translation as one of the pioneers in this field. Following 'Ananda Math' he translated 'Chandra Sekhar' another famous novel of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya in 1912. He translated the works of eminent Bengali writers like Prabhodh Kumar Mukhopadhyaya also.

A mention may be made about Punaivana Natha Mudaliar, T. V. Krishnaswamy sastry, C. T. Venkata Varadachari, C. Subramania Bharatiar, Va. Ra., C. Tircitrabalam Pillai, C. S. Sundaram Iyer, S. N. Sankaralinga Iyer, Sri Sailadachariar, R. B. Kuzantaiswamy Pillai, M. Kuppaswamy Iyer, R. Rajaeudamani, K. C. Veeraraghava Iyer and others who made contributions in this field during the early decades of this century.

A special mention must be made about the brothers Sri T. N. Kumaraswamy and Sri T. N. Senapati for invaluable and relentless service they have rendered in this field. They have translated the works of outstanding Bengali writers. Besides novels and short stories they have translated dramas-

poems, essays, autobiographics, travel accounts etc. More than fifty Bengali works respectively. Sri T. N. Kumaraswamy has the credit of translating all the works of Mahakavi Rabindranath Tagore.

Even today Sri T.N. Senapathy continues the work begun by the brothers in 1933. He has recently translated 'Tirukkural' one of the outstanding Tamil texts of the post Sangam period into Bengali. Though Nalini Mohan Sanyal has rendered this text earlier, it is Sri Senapathy who has translated above Thrukkural directly from Tamil. It is undoubtedly a valuable service to Bengali literature. Silappadiharam, the first epic literature in Tamil, and the biography of Nayanmars and Alvars are under translation; by him.

R.Shanmuga Sundaram, K. Ja Ayaraman, Saraswati Ramnath, V.S. Venkertesan, K.P. Rajagopalan, V.R.M. Chetiar, Thattam Ranganayaki (Kumudini), Guhap Priyai, V. Ranganathan, Ranganatha Attreya, Dhinkaran, Swarnatonbal, A. Kandaswamy, N.C. Deivasaikamani, M.V. Venkatram, V.K. Ramnathan, Tanjam, S. Guruswamy, K. Savitri Ammal, Ti. Ja.Ra., S. Alagappan, K.S. Appaswamy Iyer, T.S. Parthasarathy, Periaswamy Tooran, P. Kothanda Raman, S. Dorothy, S. Krishnamurthy and others have made valuable contributions since the thirties of this century. Sri A.K. Jayaraman has the credit of translating all the works of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya.

Translation activities saw a gradual slump during the last two decades. Individual efforts in this field have come down. At present the responsibility of translating worthy works from one Indian language into another is taken up by institutions like Sahitya Academy, National books trust etc. Publisers like New Century Book House, Saiva Sindhandu Nur Padippuk Kazham, Tamil periodicals like Kalaimagal, Manjari, Deepam Idayam Pesuhiradu etc. encourage translations by publishing worthy rendering time to time. Among the mentioned periodicals 'Manjari' publishes translation regularly.

The Tamil translators concentrated their attention on two forms of literature - novels and short stories. Most of the

works translated from Bengali are novels and short stories, The reason for this is not far to seek. In all the spheres of life Bengal was a head of other regions of India. Western education spread in Bengal before it did in other regions of India. It is already mentioned in this article that one of the impacts of the spread of western education was the introduction of novels and short stories in the field of literature.

The first Bengali novel 'Alaer Garer Dulai' was published in a monthly magazine from 1855 to 1857. Later in 1858 it was published in a book form. All the novels of Bankim Chandra were written between 1865 and 1886. His first novel 'Durgesh Nandini' was written in 1865 and his last novel 'Sitaram' in 1886. Rabindranath Tagore's novels were written between 1883 and 1934. His first novel 'Boul Thakuranir Hat' came out in 1883 and his novel 'Ihar Adhyay' in 1934. Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's literary life was from 1901 in which year his first novel 'Debdas' was published. His last novel 'Shesh Prashno' was published in 1934. Simultaneously short stories of Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra were published in different Bengali magazines.

So it can be seen that novels and short stories which took birth in the later half of the last century were well developed in the early decades of this century. Works which could be placed on an equal footing with other world literatures were produced during this period. Bengal produced authors of international reputation in the fields of novels and short stories.

We see a different picture in the Tamil literature. The first novel 'Pratapa Mudaliar Carithiram' by Mayuram Vedanayakam Pillai appeared in 1876. This novel, a bundle of numerous side stories, historical accounts, proverbs and petty events could hardly do justice to the modern sense of the term. 'Kamalambal Carithiram' written by Rajam Iyer which could rightly be called the first novel in Tamil appeared in 1896. Within few years 'Padmavati Carithram', 'Muthu Meerakshi' both written by Madhavaiah were published. No

doubt these three novels reveal the social consciousness of the authors. They pinpoint the ill practices deep rooted in our society.

‘But the early decades of this century saw a dark period in the history of Tamil literature. Mystery thrillers by authors like J.R. Rangaraju, Arani Kuppaswamy Mudaliar, Vaduvur Duraiswamy Iyenger, etc. flooded the market. Only rare attempts were made to produce works which reflected the life of the Tamils! (Tamil ilakkiya varalaru - by Dr. M. Varadarajan, Sahitya Akademy Publication,) 1972)

It was at this period a handful of translators most of whom were established writers cast their eyes on the Bengali literature in which novels and short stories had already taken a good shape.

As Dr. M. Varadarajan points out ‘novels developed in other countries of the world before they did in Tamil. The Tamils started translating them. These stories attracted the people English, French, Russian, Bengali etc. were the languages from which mostly stories were translated. So before novels developed as a form of literature in Tamil translated stories.

(Tilakkiya Marabu - by Dr. M. Varadarajan, P. 160)

The following list would give an idea of the works translated from Bengali into Tamil.

Total no. of works translated	: 195
Novels	: 139
Shorts story collections	: 26
Drama collections	: 13
Poems collections	: 5
Essays collections	: 3
Religion	: 2
Letter Collections	: 2
Travel accounts	: 2
Bigoraphy	: 1
Autobiography	: 1
Children literature	: 1

The above given date clearly reveals the trend in the translation of the Bengali works into Tamil.

## TRANSLATIONS FROM TAMIL TO BENGALI

To our surprise and reasons not known translations from Tamil to Bengali are scanty. The number of works translated from Tamil to Bengali is so less that it is negligible as compared to the number of works rendered from Bengali to Tamil.

Most of the works translated from Tamil to Bengali are religious works. Besides the religious texts, translation of two moral texts, one short story collection, one novel, one epic literature and one travel accounts have place in the list of translations from Tamil to Bengali.

Bengali society is indebted to Sri Yatindra Ramanujacharya of Sri Balaram Dharma who has rendered valuable service to Bengali literature. It is he who has given the Bengali readers the rare opportunity of enjoying the Tamil Vaishnava literatures namely,

Tiruvaimoli (Sahasra Giti)

Tiruppavai (Srivrata)

Tiruppallandu (Tiruppallandu)

A bibliography of translations from Bengali to Tamil and vice versa will not be out of place in this article. This bibliography is mostly based on 'A bibliography of translations published by the International Institute of Tamil studies, Adaiyar, Madras. A few additions are made here and there. The bibliographical account is exhaustive by no means. Tagore's Geetanjali is still being translated from time to time.

# TRANSLATIONS FROM BENGALI TO TAMIL

Translation	Original	Author	Translator
1. Agni	Agun	Tarasankar Banerjee.	T.N. Kumaraswamy
2. Annan Tambi	Baigunter will	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
3. Vaiguntar Uyii	"	"	R. Shanmugasundaram
4. Andapura Rahasiyam	Kapala Kuntala or Marunmayi	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	M. Ramalinga Mudaliar
5. Alla	Na	Tara Shankar Banerjee	T.N. Senapati
6. Arpudak Kanaiyazi			Punnaivananatha Mudaliar
7. Asala	Griha daha	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	R. Shanmugasundaram
8. Adivanattuk Kappal		Kamala Kanta Varma	A.K. Jayaraman
9. Amarnath	Jogaran	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	R. Shanmugasundaram
10. Amulyan	Bindur Chele	"	T.N. Kumaraswamy
11. Ananda madam	Ananda Mat	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	Maresh Kumar Sarma



Ananda madam	Ananda Mat	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	C. Tiruchitrambalam Pillai
"	"	"	T.N. Kumarswamy
12. Aval	Se	Tarasankar Banerjee	A.K. Jayaraman
13. Arokkiya Niketan	Arogya Niketan	"	T.N. Senapati
14. Indira	Indira	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	T.N. Kumaraswamy
15. Ilacciappen	Ranga Matir	Sourindra Mohan	S. Guruswamy
Illtiya Hindu Hotel	Adarsa Hindu Hotel	Vibhudhi Bhushan Banerjee	T.N. Senapathi
16. Udainda Ullam	Biraj Ban	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	T.N. Senapathi
17. Usha		"	A.K. Jayaraman
18. "	Nababidan	"	A.K. Jayaraman & V.S. Venkataran
19. Upatiyayar Manaivi	Pandit Moshai	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
20. Urimaik Kural	Mej didi, Kasi Nath, Patanirdesh, Anuradha, Tarpa Churna,	"	"
21. Ezu Navalgal		"	"

22. Kattai Bramachari	Ramer Sumati, Maneber Satrunari	Subodh Basu	T. N. Senapati
23. Kanavan	Swamy	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A. K. Jayaraman
24. Kapala Kuntal	Kapala Kuntala	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	T. N. Kumaraswamy
25. Kamalavin Kanavan	Shesh Prashno	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A. K. Jayaraman
26. Kavi	Kavi	Tara Shankar Banerjee	T. N. Kumaraswamy
27. Kanavu Mudiavillai	Sri Kanta	Sart Chandra Chatterjee	A. K. Jayaraman
28. Kamala	Shesh Prashno	"	T. N. Senápathi
29. Karaiyan	Gunpoka	Shirshendhn Mukhopadhyaya	S. Krishnamurthy
30. Kala Vellam		"	A. K. Jayaraman
31. Kanchanamalai		Haraprasad Sastry	K. P. Rajagopalan
32. Kadal Kagal	Gardener	Rabindranath Tagore	V. R. M. Chettiar
33. Grihadaham	Grihadaho	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A. K. Jayaraman
34. Krishna Kantan Uyil	Krishna Kanter Uyil	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	T. N. Kumaraswamy
35. Kumudini	Jogajog	Rabindrananth Tagore	Dadam Ranganayaki

36. Konca Neram	Kichu Kan	Balai Chand Mukherjee	T. N. Senapathi
37. Koil	Mandir	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
38. Gora	Gora	Rabindranath Tagore	T. N. Kumaraswamy
39. Chanchalak Kumari		Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	Guhap Priyai
40. Sandiya		Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	R. Shamugasundaram
41. Chandrasekaran	Chaudra Sekar	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	Tiruchitrambalam Pillai
"	"	"	Maresh Kumar Sarma
"	"	"	V. R. Venkatesan
42. Chandrana than	Chandranath	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
43. Chadurangam	Chaturango	Rabindranath Tagore	T. M. Kumaraswamy
44. Sandiya	Bamuner Me	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
45. Chandra			"
46. Anupama			"
47. Chambal Kollaikkaragal	Abishopto Champal	Tarun Kumar Bhaduri	V. Ranganathan
48. Savitri	Shesher Parichai	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	R. Shanmugasundaram

49. Savitri	Charitraheen	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
50. Chidainda Kudu	Nashta Rid	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Kumaraswamy
51. Sita		Durjendralal Roy	S.N. Shankaralinga Iyer
52. Sitaraman	Sitaram	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	C.S. Sundaram Iyer
53. Sudha		R.C. Dutt	V.S. Venkatesan
54. Subadra		"	M.V. Venkatran
55. Subadha	Subadra	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
56. Shailaja	Nishkriti	"	A.K. Jayaraman
57. Shaibalani	Chandra Sekar	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	"
58. Soudamani	Swamy	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	Ranganatha Attreya
59. Jnanada		"	T.N. Kumaraswamy
60. "		"	V.S. Venkatesan
61. Doluk		Hiranmayi Ghoshal	A.K. Jayaraman
62. Tayum Magalum		Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	T.N. Kumaraswamy
63. Durgesh Nandini	Durgesh Nandini	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman

64.	Durgesh Nandini	Durgesh Nandini	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	K. P. Rajagopalan
65.	Tunai	Shodasi	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	Souri
66.	Duruva	Dhruba	Rakhal Das Banerjee	T. N. Kumaraswamy
67.	Davadas	Debdas	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	Dhinakaran
	"	"	"	A. K. Jayaraman
68.	Peir Chanda Viyani	Debi Chauda Urani	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	Swarnambal
69.	Nallu Addiyayam	Char Adyay	Rabindranath Tagore	T. N. Senapathi
70.	Nirmala or Oru Patterikai Asiriarin Vidumurai		Probodh Kumar Mukherjee	Mahesh Kumar Sarma
71.	Nilatin Geetam		Tara Sankar Banerjee	R. Shanmugasundaram
72.	Niraja		"	"
73.	Nila Kanda Paravayaitedi	Neel Kanta Pakir Khoje	Atin Banerjee	S. Krihnamurty
74.	Nancile Patta Vadu		Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A. K. Jayaraman
75.	Bhadradipar		Rabindranath Tagore	C. Subramana Bharathi
76.	Parimala		Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	T. V. Krishnaswamy Sastry
77.	Bali Pitam	Malini	Rabindranath Tagore	K. Kanda Swamy

87. Parvathi	Pader dabi	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	V.S. Venkatesan
79. Bharati		"	A. K. Jayaraman
80. Prabavati		Nagendranath Chatterjee	Sri Sailadachariyar
81. Bramanappen	Bamunur Me	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A. K. Jayaraman
82. Vimala or Diman Magal		R. C. Dutt	R. B. Kuzantaisami Pillai
83. Binduvin Selvan	Bindur Chele	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A. K. Jayaraman
84. Piravi		"	R. Shunmugasundaram
85. Pudumaipen	Mejdidi Mahesh	"	"
86. Puyal	Nauka Dubi	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Kumaraswamy
87. Poontottam	Malancho	"	"
88. Bairavi	Dena Pavna	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	R. Sunmugasundaram
89. Bairavi	Dena Pavna	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	T. N. Kumaraswamy
90. Pommallattam	Putul Naceriti Kehtha	Manik Banerjee	"
91. Maharashtra Jivana Udayam	Maharashtra Jivan Prabat	R.C. Dutt	A. K. Jayaraman

92.	Manamanval	Parneeta	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
93.	Manamagal	"	"	N.C. Deivasikamani
94.	Malai Ittaval	"	"	T.N. Kumaraswamy
95.	Mayagan	Mayuko	R. D. Banerjee	"
96.	Mayurakshi	Mayarakshi	Saroj Kumar Roy Chowdhuri	"
97.	Madangini	Rajmohaner Bam	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	"
98.	Madavi		R.C. Dutta	M.V. Venkatram
99.	Madavi Kanganam	Madavir Kankan		V.K. Ramanathan
100.	Maya Vinodini	Choker Bali	Rabindranath Tagore	Tanjam
101.	Malati	Subadha	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
102.	Mithuna Lagnam	Mitun Lagno	Bimal Mitra	R. Shamugasundaram
103.	Mirunalini	Mrinalini	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	"
104.	"	"	"	K.P. Rajagopalan
105.	"	"	"	V. S.
106.	Meevar Vilchi		Drijendralal Roy	Dinakaran

107. Mummanigal		Sart Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
108. Muvar	Tin Sangi	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Kumaraswamy
109. Malgosh	Malgosh		T.N. Senapathi
110. Mayattirai		Tara Sankar Banerjee	R. Shanmugasundaram
111. Yattirigam	Maha Prastaner Pathe	Probodh Kumar Sanyal	T.N. Kumaraswamy
112. Rajani	Rajani	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	S. Guruswamy
113. Rajputtara Adikkatin-Astamanam	Rajput Jivan Sandhya	R.C. Dutt	T.N. Kumaraswamy
114. Radharani	Radharani	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	A. Kandaswamy
115. Rama	Palli Samaj	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	R. Shanmugasundaram
116. Raja Kumari Viba	Bau Takuranirhat	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Kumaraswamy
117. Rajarishi	Rajarishi Parneeta	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
118. Lalita	Shesher Kabita	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Kumaraswamy
119. Lavanya		Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
120. Vandana	Aranyak	Bibhudi Bhushan Banerjee	T.N. Senapathi
121. Vanavasi		Rabindranath Tagore	Lalitha
122. Valarmati			



123.	Vipra Das	Vipradas	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
124.	Vinodini	Coker Bali	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Kumaraswamy
125.	Vilakkum Vittilum		Saroj Kumar Roy Chowdhuri	"
126.	Visha Vrikshan	Bish Brikho	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	"
127.	"	"	Ban Phul	V.S. Kumaraswamy
128.	Visha Juram	Taiphoid		V.N. Kumaraswamy
129.	Vijaya	Bijoya	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
130.	"	"	"	G. Guruswamy
131.	Vidum Valiyum	Ghore Bhaire	Rabindranath Tagore.	K. Savitri Ammal
132.	Sri Kantan	Sri Kanto	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	R. Shanmugasundaram
133.	Jamindarini	Kasinath	"	"
134.	Hiranmayi		Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	K.P. Rajagopalan
135.	Hemangini		Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	S. Guruswamy
136.	Hemangini		Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
137.	Swarnalata		Taranath Ganguli	P.S. Nellaippan & P. Natarajan
138.	"		"	P.S. Nellaippan

# SHORT-STORIES

1. Arasiyal Kaidi	Dui bon	Rabindranath Tagore.	T.N. Kumaraswamy
2. Irusagodarigal		Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	"
3. Irulil Oli		Rabindranath Tagore.	V.S.
4. Karum Kadirum	Galpa Guchcha	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	T.N. Kumaraswamy & T.N. Senapathi
5. Sarat Chandrar Kathaigal		Rabindranath Tagore	Sri Sri Acharya
6. Ciru Kataigal		"	Bharathi
7. Tagore Cirukataigal		Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	A.K. Jayaraman
8. Nalu Kataigal		Rabindranath Tagore	M. Kuppuswamy Iyer
9. Nirmala	Bhai Photo	"	T.N. Kumaraswamy
10. Netrip Pottu		"	Bharthiar
11. Pattini Pen	Gupta Dhari	"	Sri Sri Acharya
12. Pudaiyal			

13.	Post Master	"	T.N. Kumaraswamy & T.N. Senapathi
14.	Mahamaya	"	T.N. Kumaraswamy
15.	Mahamaya	"	T.N. Senapathi
16.	Malati	Swarnakumari Devi	Sri Sailadada Chariar
17.	Manabangam	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Kumaraswamy & T.N. Senapathi
18.	Ravindra Natharin- ciru Kataigal	"	R. Raja sundamani
19.	Ravindrar Katait tirattu I	"	T. N. Kumaraswamy
20.	Ravindrar Katait tirattu II	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Kumaraswamy
21.	Lambakarnan	Raj Sekhar Basu	Tadam Ranganayaki
22.	Vankaccirukadai	Narayan Ganguli	R. Bhanumathi
23.	Vidudalai	Kalyani Mukherjee	T.N. Kumaraswamy
24.	Vetri	Rabindranath Tagore	"
25.	Sri Ramakrisnar Conna- Kataigal	Ramakrishna Paramahamsar	Ramakrishna Madam

# DRAMAS

Translation	Original	Author	Translator
1. Iduva Nahariham ?		Michel Madhu Sudhan Dutta.	Iswara Chandra Sekara Sastry.
2. Kundu Kili & other dramas		Harindranath Chatterjee	Ti. Ja. Ra.
3. Chitra.	Chitrangata	Rabindranath Tagore	S. Alagappan
4. "	"	"	K.S. Appaswamy Iyer
5. Sita		Dvijendralal Roy	S.N. Sankaralinga Iyer
6. Post-Office	Dak Ghar	Rabindranath Tagore	K.C. Veeraraghava Iyer
7. Tagurin Nahaicuvai nadakangal	Hasya Kauduk	"	T.N. Kumaraswamy
8. Natiyin poojai	Natir Puja	Dvijendralal Roy	A. Kandaswamy
9. Nurjahan			"
10. Pulaicci	Chantalika	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Kumaraswamy
11. Malini	"	"	T.N. Senapathi
12. Ravindrar natak tirattu I		"	T.N. Parthasarathy
13. Ravindrar natak tirattu II		"	"

# POEMS

207

Translation	Original	Author	Translator
1. Pattip paravaigal		Rabindranath Tagore	Periaswamy Tooran
2. Mallihai		"	P. Kothandaraman
3. Ravindrar Kavidait tirattu		"	T.N. Kumaraswamy
4. Ravindrar Kuzan- dai ilakkiam		"	Periaswamy Tooran
5. Valarpirai		"	S. Dorothy
1. Kaviyin Katai	<u>Valkai Varalaru</u> Kabir Kotha	Leela Majumdar	T.N. Senapathi
1. Ilamaip paruvam	<u>Autobiography</u> Chela bela <u>Religion</u> Brahmo Dharmo	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Senapathi
1. Brahma Dharmam		Devendranath Tagore	Sridhar Nayakar
2. Manidanin amayam		"	T.N. Senapathi

# ESSAYS

Translation	Original	Author	Translator
1. Ravindranatha Tagur Arulia Panchavayasagal		Rabindranath Tagore	C. Subramania Bharathi
2. Ravindrar Katturait tirattu I	Prabandha I	"	T.N. Senapathi
3. Ravindrar Katurait tirattu II	Prabandha II	"	T.N. Kumaraswamy
1. Ilaignan Kanavu.	<u>Letters</u>	Subash Chandra Bose	T.N. Kumaraswamy
2. Tagore Kaditangal	Citi Patro	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Senapathi

## TRAVEL ACCOUNTS

Translation	Original	Author	Translator
1. Japan Yatirai	Japan Jatric		T.N. Kumaraswamy
2. Java yatirai	Java Jatric Children literature.		"
<u>Children Literature</u>			
Ciruvai Ilakkiyam	Bala Sahitya	Rabindranath Tagore	T.N. Senapathi

## TRANSLATIONS FROM TAMIL TO BENGALI

1. Galpa Sauchayan	Cirukataik Kalanjyam	A.Cidambaranatha chettiar	Vishnupada Bhattacharya
2. Kallol dhvan	Alai Osai	Kalki	Shirshendu Mukhopadhyaya
3. Katha Mahapharat	Vyasari Virundu	Rajagopalachariar	Sheshadri Yatintra
4. Sahasra Giti	Tiruvaimoli	Nammalwar	Ramanuja Charyar
5. Srivrata	Turippavai	Andal	"
6. Sobiyet Samaje jemon dehechi	Soviet Natil oru Tamil Manavi	V. S. Kamala	"
7. Tirukkural	Tirukkural	Tiruvalluvar	Sanyal Nalini Mohan
8. Tiruppallandu	Tiruppallandu	Periavar	Yatintra Ramanuja Das
9. Upadesh Ratna Mala	Upadesa Ratna Mala	Manavala Mamuni	"

# TAMILNADU AND BENGAL

RANGANAYAKI MAHAPATRA

The label 'Indian' denotes much more than a mere geographical identification. Its history and development is inclusive of such vast domains, the origin and evolvement of so many cultures, races and religions, so many doctrines and their clashes, their influences and challenges, yet retaining through the ages its basic unity in diversity, which is a dynamic process that will demand the life - time work of dedicated researchers. The greatness of each individual region and community that contributed to this great synthesis has to be duly recognised, but more important than that is to appreciate the fact that the Indianness, the fusion, has already taken place since time immemorial.

As far as Tamilnadu and Bengal it is a rewarding study to trace the links that have so forcefully bound the two people for centuries.

It is true that the 'earliest vigorous bloom of Tamil culture began before the Sanskritization of the South could have any strong impact on Tamils society. But it did not develop in a cultural vacuum, and so, was not achieved in isolation. It is also true that the Tamil literature is the only Indian literature which at least in its beginnings, is, almost entirely independent of Aryan, and specially Sanskrit influence<sup>1</sup>. But the one language which was almost equally spread over the South Indian territory as the language of the highest learning and culture, was Sanskrit. Intellectual exchange very probably took place between even the other



Dravidian languages through the medium of Sankrit and the Prakrit. And Sanskrit literature composed in the South was of a very high quality and of considerable volume. But whether Tamil, Kanarese or Kerala, these authors of Sanskrit works were also very much influenced and enriched by the indigenous traditions. Sri Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva are some of the typical cases. It is Sanskrit which bridged the gulf between the Dravidian languages and the rest of the Indian languages.

The links between Tamilnadu and Bengal can be studied from so many angles i.e. cultural, political, religious, literary etc. and they are all closely connected with each other. But the two aspects, i.e. religion and literature are the most prominent all along, preserved by living traditions.

Silappadikaram, one of the twin epics of the post-sangam works in Tamil is a treasure-house of historical data of the early centuries of the A.D. and also attested by authentic historians. We get enough references there of the maritime trade that flourished between Tamilnadu ports and the East Indian ports of Orissa and Bengal. The name of one kind of boats, used by Tamilians was 'Vangam' (Vangam Kadal Kadaintha Madhavanai - Andal Tiruppavai).

We also here of political adventures like the one by Cheran Chenguttuvan, who hoisted his flag on the Himalayas, defeating the Aryan Kings Kanaka and Vijaya. References made later in the time of Rajendra Chola I, are historically attested, incised on the Southern wall of the Raja Rajeswara temple of Thanjavur.

The Sena King's of Bengal in the 12th cent. A. D. were from Karnataka, and through them the Vaishnavism of the South Indian type got to develop and Bengal. Nearly for 400 years before Tagore the Vaishnava Bhakti literature seems to have formed the major portion of Bengali literature.

And, the political leaders that Bengal produced during the freedom struggle of India in the 18th and 19th centuries united the whole country. Tamilnadu, second to

none in its patriotism, took to Bengal whole heartedly. For nearly another half a century or more, almost nothing but Bengal existed and inspired the Tamilians whether in the political front or in the literary field.

Its love for Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna have been immortalised by the Ramakrishna Missions of the South and the Vivekananda Rock-Memorial at Kanyakumari standing as strong and dignified as the one in whose memory it was erected. It seems, Swami Narendra, who was earlier given the name 'Vividisananda' by the Khetri Ruler in admirations, was, on a second visit to Khetri before his sojourn to America was renamed by Rajaji who suggested the change to Vivekananda, a name easier and clearer. Swami Vivekananda's connection with Tamilnadu is a matter of pride and affection,

The literary scene in Tamilnadu was also undergoing a thorough change as it happened with all the other leading languages of India, due to the Western impact as well as the natural outcome of awakenings in so many fronts.

Sri Subrahmanya Bharathi, who rejuvenated the Tamil language, literature and people, was the one who introduced to Tamilnadu all the prominent political, spiritual and literary giants of Bengal through his writings. Perhaps as the first and only Indian poet to sing of India and its people with a thorough understanding of their diversity and unity, it was Bharathi who sang 'Long Live Bengali' - (Vangame Valiya), which inaugurated his composition of nationalistic literature in Tamil.

It was Bharathi, who interpreted Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna for the people of Tamilnadu. Inspired by Vivekananda's faith of revival of the great vedic culture in India, Bharathi was overwhelmed by the Swamiji's courage and convictions; though it did not stop him from pointing out some flaws in the Swamiji's arguments regarding the position of women in Indian society. Bharathi who knew and himself formed part of the great Tamil tradition, made people understand the continuity of our Indian tradition in the Saints. Tayumanavar,

**Ramalinga Swamigal and Ramakrishna Paramahansa.** His was a unifying vision, cutting through all regional and even national barriers reaching international heights. It is only surprising and a little sad too how the other Indian journalists, poets, & politicians, who were his contemporaries did not mention him, though he was in the fore front as a fiery journalist rebellious poet, writing prolifically in English as well, organising or attending and inspiring all the political meetings whether in Tamilnadu or outside.

His pride in Rabindranath Tagore knew no bounds. He declared him as a national asset and inspiration and paid his homage as a poet. Bharathi also translated a number of short-stories and essays of Tagore.

Bharathi's close association with Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry in exile for over eight years, where Bharathi's most glorious literary output was achieved, was mutually a very fruitful one. He helped Sri Aurobindo learn Tamil and enjoy the great Alwars of Tamilnadu and Sri Aurobindo has immortalised his admiration for them by his beautiful translations of Nammalwar's and Andal's poems. But inspite of such close and continuous association we find many a biographical reference of it only in Bharathi's writings but not vice-versa, atleast none that is worth mentioning.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother became the pride and property of Pondicherry. They have a very large number of admirers and disciples all over Tamilnadu. Especially during the fifties, it was a matter of prestige for many a middle class educated man to get an admission for his ward in the International University of Aurobindo. But their admirers were mostly the scholastic and intellectual type, not very much in touch with the commoner. But gradually the Ashram has lost its touch with the local people, after the demise of the 'Mother' and with more foreigners coming in. But still, for the people of Bengal, it is a place of pilgrimage, of love and admiration.

As for the impact of the Bengali literature on Tamilnadu, Bharathi and his patriot friend and versatile writer V.V.S. Iyer,

both in their admiration for Tagore, translated his works into Tamil and also produced creative writings bearing clearly Tagore's influence. It is said that it was Tagore's 'National Anthem' which had inspired Bharathi considerably in his memorable adoration of Tamilnadu. V.V.S. Iyer who is known as the Father of short-stories in Tamil wrote his famous 'Kulattangarai Arasa maram' inspired by Tagore's 'The River Steps'. Both Bharathi and V.V.S. Iyer collaborated in translating Tagore's; As a Bhanga.

From 1922 onwards, Tagore's works started getting translated on a large scale, though not necessarily from the originals. It was the two brothers T. N. Kumara Swami and T.N. Senapati, who had stayed for sometime in Santi Niketan which enriched Tamil with their translations of Tagore directly from Bengali.

Right from Desika Vinayakam Pillai and S.D.S. Yogyar many have translated Geetanjali into Tamil including V.R.M. Chettiar. Even now translations keep coming in, of selected songs from Geetanjali in verse forms. There was not a single library worth its name in Tamilnadu fifty years back which did not have Tamil translations of all the novels of Sarat Chandra-Chatterji and most of Bankim Chandra Chatterji. They were more popular than Tagore among the reading public.

It is an undeniable fact that these Bengali literary giants, particularly Tagore, inspired the Tamil writers to take up their mother tongue for literary ventures. That must have given new hope for the creative writers of Tamil, of weaning the public of their thirst for reading cheap imported thrillers in English or their translations. New experiments were started in themes as well as forms, though imitative to a large extent. Tamil literature owes its debt to Tagore in one more aspect, for turning its attention to a new chapter - child literature, which is still not completely explored.

But more than anything else the force that has forged the two people, the Tamils and the Bengalis together for centuries, is religion, particularly the Vaishnavism of Tamilnadu.

The Saiva system in south India also 'appears to have wielded a living, contact with the rest of India'. Rama Chatterji in 'Religion in Bengal' writes - "The main source of information is the record of Raja Raja incised in the great Tanjavur temple. The Kings order from Gangai Konda Cholapuram was two thousand Kalams of padddy and measure the corps to be used in the worship of the deity. Afterwards they were to be enjoyed by the priests of the temple and Saiva Charya Sarva Siva Pandita or by his pupils or pupil's pupils, who were natives of Arya desa, Madhya desa and Gaudesa ('Bengal')! Some stray verses quoted by Ananta Sambu from Siddhanta Saravali of Trilochana refers to Rajendra Chola I, who in his course of campaign towards north, is said to have brought Saiva teachers from the bank of the Ganges and then settled them in every part of the Chola country.

'The village Arppakkam (Arppakkam inscription, district Chingleput) was donated to the Saiva preceptor Umapati Deva or Jnana Siva Deva from Gauda desa by Rajadiraja in his, 5th regnal year. To put an end to the heroic exploit of the marching army of his rival from ceylon, the king sought divine help from his preceptor Umapati.

Even much earlier the Smartha religion founded by Sankara had spread upto Kashmir in the North and Bengal was no exception. Right down to the 19th Century Totapuri, Sri Ramakrishna's Guru and Swami Vivekananta were all Advaitins. Even Chaitanya belonged to the Bharathi order though he cast off all such earlier initiations, to from his own Achintya Bheda-bheda. In his book 'An Outline of the Religions Literature in India'. J.N. Farquhar writes on 'Bhakti (A.D. 900 to 1350) that 'the sects which ruled the development of Hinduism during these centuries received their inspiration in a large measure from the enthusiastic Bhakti of the wandering singers of the Tamil country. Both the Saiva and Vaishnava Bhakti Movements of the South had these features of emotional Bhakti, of personal relationship to God, community singing, introduction of the Tamil hymn in the temples etc. in common. It was a natural outcome of a reaction against the sacrifice-ridden religion of the Brahmanic period. Using the medium of the vernacular for the devotional hymns with such

music, rhythm, and emotion drew the masses to these Bhakti movements as never before forming an effective force against the onslaught of the abstract and dry religions of Jainism and Bhddhism.

From the 7th century A.D. onwards there was a revival of Vaishnavism in the Tamil Country, and Sri Ramanujas brilliant commentaries took the Alwar's devotional literature and philosophy beyond the borders of Tamilnadu, and all over India, thanks to the medium of Sanskrit. He never wrote any work in Tamil. It is Farquhar's conjecture that Bhagavata, which was the source of spiritual inspiration for centuries and centuries must have been written about A.D. 900, some where in the Tamil country, in some community of ascetics belonging to the Bhagavata sect. <sup>2</sup> The two greatest books of this period were 'Ramanuja's Sri Bhasya and the Bhagavata Purana. From these two sources, two streams of Bhakti came, one quiet and meditative and the other explosive and emotional. The latter type of devotion can be felt everywhere from the 13th cent. onward'. Sri Chaitanya typified this emotional Bhakti Ramananda who is said to be the Prasisya of Ramanuja spear headed the Bhakti religion in North India having such famous disciples like Kabir and Nanak. Though Sri Ramanuja's brilliant theological exposition of Visistadvaita brought the whole of Tamilnadu and Andhra under its influence, in Bengal, the other one, the emotional Bhakti seems to have caught on. It was during the period of Lakshmana Sena the famous poet Jayadeva wrote his Gita Govinda. This emotional and explosive Bhakti took Bengal and Orissa, by storm with the advent of Sri Chaitnya.

But Sri Chaitnya does not seem to have been interested in any theological hair splittings. Rather it was the six Goswamis who codify Chaitanyism and four out of them are from the South, three from Karnataka and one from Srirangam. Gopala Bhatta's Hari Bhakti Vilasa which is considered to be an authority on Chaitnyaite rituals and worships is in essence the Sri Vaishnavism of Srirangam,

But as far Bengal, Vaishnavite religious literature has reigned supreme for nearly 400 year and that certainly has moulded the thought and expression of all the poets, who tended to be a little mystic. including Rabindranath Tagore.

'Tagore who has drunk deep at the wells of the culture of East and the West, has chalked out his own life of approach to God.' He does not turn away from the joys of the world. In spite of all the differences in Tagore from any sectarian philosophy, one can clearly hear the voices of the Alwars' in Tagore's songs — this mysticism is the basic Indianness that runs through the entire Bhakti literature.

"The bitter agony of the soul and the travail of the spirit in separation and the ineffable joy of the soul in union, all this finds immortal expression in Gitanjali" (R.S. Desikan)

Right from the first verse in Geetanjali where Tagore sings -

'This little flute of a need thou has carried over hills and dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new.

At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses. Its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable'.

Which reminds one of Nammalwar's 'What can I say?

As the life of my life, one with it  
He makes poetry with my words.  
No, They are His words  
and it is He who sings His own praise

one can hear the same voice again and again. The Alwar cries 'He has come into my heart', (Peria Thiruvantati) 'There is nothing more to wish for',

'He the divine cowherd  
So distant from us,  
He who changes his form so  
That no one can near him,

He the infinite mystery  
 who on that distant day  
 Mesgured the worlds with his feet,  
 Has today come to me.  
 How, I do not know,  
 And life is passing sweet'.

(A. Srinivasa Raghavan)

Tagore is thrilled none the less. (Geetanjali - 49)

'You came down from your throne and stood at my cottage door.

I was singing all alone in a corner and the melody caught your ear you came down and stood at my cottage door.

Masters are many in yours hall, and songs are sung there at all hours. But the simple carol of this novice struck at your love. One plaintive little strain mingled with the great music of the world, and with a flower for a prize you came down and stopped at my cottage door.

It is like drowning in the ocean trying to find out which drop is different.

Perhaps that is the reason, why picking up the thread again and going back to the Alwars was so natural and easy for the people of Bengal as with the Swamiji of Sri Balaram Dharma Sopan, Sri Yatundra Ramanuja Charya, who brought Sri Vaishnavism to Bengal even in this 20th century, dedicating his everything, to a life of devotion and service diving deep into the Alwars' ocean of love for the God. The Alwars of the Kaveri banks of Tamilnadu are back at the serene and sacred banks of the magnificent Ganges of Bengal. The eternal Indian lives here among the Ramanuja Dasas of Bengal.



## Foot note

- 1 Still, "references to the Dana-stuti hymns of the Rg Veda depicting a bard composing a hymn in praise of his patron who was often the Chief of a clan recall to the mind interesting parallels in early Sangam literature of Tamil, (Puram). 'The occasion for this was a successful cattle raid (Vetchi of Tamil) "against a neighbouring Chief or tribe and his followers captured a large number of cattle and preferably a few herders as well. The newly acquired herd was distributed, among the clansmen, with of course, a major share for the Chief. From this wealth he rewarded the bard composed the 'Stuti' or eulogy on the Chief. The bard bestowed immortality on the Chief in return of gifts. After all we know of the Rajas and Chieftains largely from this body of literature.

— Culture in Early India - Romila Thapar - Third of the series of lectures, Stephen College, Delhi.

- 2 In the eleventh book of the Bhagavata Purana there is a passage which suggests that it may have been written in Tamil Country. It is given below:

Translate into English :-

Men born in the Krita, Treta, Dvapara ages wished to take birth in the Kali age, because they knew that in this age would be born great souls devoted to Narayana. These souls would be thinly scattered in various places, but in the Dravida land they would be found in some numbers, living by the side of such rivers as Tamra parni, Krita mata, Payasvini, Kaveri, the holy."

# **MODERN POETRY, NOVEL, SHORT-STORY AND DRAMA IN TAMIL**

**-A. N. PERUMAL**

Literature is the living record of life in which reality survives with artistic values. What is supreme in literature is really sublime and hence worth preservation for posterity. The cultural values emanated from the literary works reveal the life style and the social set up of the people. Due to variations in creative talents and to procure satisfactorily the different appreciative moods of the people different authors produce literary works in various forms like Poems, Novels, Short-Stories, Drama and so on. Each of the genres required special talents since they differ from one another in form and content.

The passage of time sees a lot of change in everyone of the literary genres as to the requirements of the people who develops day by day in their way of life and nature of understanding. The Tamils have a rich heritage of their own and from the dim dawn of history, they can boast of a fine literary tradition of their own. Due to progressive thinking the subject matter of the literary works vary. Deep thinking influenced by circumstances caused for the emergence of good literature.

A few decades in the later half of the nineteenth century and all the 87 years passed in the twentieth century have seen many

improvements added to the onward march of Tamil literature. Change of form in poetry and modernization of drama took place during this particular span of time. Genres like novel and short-story made their marked entrance in an honoured manner with the the whole hearted acceptance and patronage of the masses. To have a fair idea of these four literary sources, it would necessarily be useful to know something about the social set up and political situations prevailed in Tamilnadu during this period.

## SOCIAL SET UP

Nineteenth century saw nearly the whole of Tamilnadu under the yoke of the Britishers who encouraged English education and designed ways and means to establish themselves firmly in Tamil soil. Christianity spread with proper assistance from the ruling power. Because of the earlier Muslim invasions their religion got some hold over the Tamil population here and there.

The Rationalist Movement was started which paced slowly when the Britishers were in power and gained power after independence with the support of Diravida Kalakam. Consequently rationalism takes root in this soil of religious varieties. Notable influence of this movement could be seen with deep marks in the literary creations of the period.

Not only religion but castes and tribes also have split the society into pieces. Each communal block has got its own customs and practices to identify itself. Moreover, clashes considered rankwise with better reservations and prospects for the higher. The strong hold of communal disparity slowly weakens as time passes. What happened in the society is reflected in literary works.

In the nineteenth century a system equivalent to feudalism existed in Tamilnadu. In the overlordship over the peasantry would be the helpless way of life. Naturally fueds and friction would be the resultant factors. The helpless peasantry hardened with heavy loads of suffering finally revolted to shake off their yokes. Such intrigues could not escape the keen eyes of the creative writers.

Marxist ideology set foot in support of the labour community. Consequently the havenots revolted against the haves with a question mark the ownership. The Government machinery tries to avoid clicks and clashes and thinks over the remedial measures. A change has been noted in the usual life of the rural folks. In the meantime urban population increases in proportion to the effect of industrialisation of the country.

An awakening among the lower classes fetched new problems and proper solutions were sort out. This awakening made the thinkers to draw remedial measures which were the subject matter of their literary works.

## POLITICAL SITUATIONS

In the last years of the nineteenth century the Nationlist Movement spread and the whole country turned first against foreign imperialism. The solidarity of the nation of the prosecution of foreign goods, patronisation of hand made articles, restoration of rural prosperity were all the nation wide thought and action. The fight for freedom was considered as a common affair in which poets, writers and artistes participated with appreciative talents.

At the prospects of freedom some began to think about the future of the nation. They seem to be the harbingers for the remarkable changes that has to come in the society. Soon the country became free and enjoyed a national government. In a state of Democracy there would be possibilites for both the political awakening and difference of opinion. So, in such circumstances more of materialistic ideas with free thinking are richly employed in the literary works. With this fund of knowledge about the social and political conditions of Tamilnadu it would be better to analyse the salient features of Modern Poetry, Novels, Short-Stories and Dramas.

The Poetical works from Subramania Bharathi's days upto the present day have to be considered as modern poetry which runs to a period over of hundred years. Nationalism and strong

patriotic fervor held the poetic nerve of Bharathi. Like cannon blasts poems sprung from his fearless heart and roused his country men to fearless action against imperialistic antagonism. What he outpoured would immediately reverberate in the hearts of millions and infiltrated vigour. The life blood of Bharathi's earlier poems is unstinted patriotism. He could not bear his mother land in fetters. His patriotic songs are composed with selected words which are very easy to grasp, but very powerful in effect. If anyone thinks of his poems as only poetic explosions he would go wrong since they were wrought out of poetic inspiration.

Bharathi's poems like *Kuil Pattu*, *Panchali Capatham* and *Kannan Pattu* are best examples to prove his poetic talents. He shows himself a born poet and worths the title 'Bharathi' conferred on him at the early age of seven. God Kannan, who is noted for diplomacy is his favourite and Goddess Kali who stands for valour, is his abiding support. He thinks everything in relation with divinity.

The deplorable position of the women folks is painfully pointed out and in as many places as possible Bharathi tries to make them fearless and powerful. As a spokesman for the emancipation of women he vehemently attacked certain practices in the society curtailing the free movement of ladies.

He is a poet easily understood by the mass unlike the earlier poets who boasted to be hardly comprehensible even for the elites. Bharathi boldly crosses the path of tradition and becomes the harbinger of the new form of poetry. Patriotism, divine thoughts and social reformation are the main concerns of Bharathi's poetic deliberations.

Bharatidasan a contemporary and follower of Bharathi is a rationalist with great attachment to Tamil language. He tries hard to hit against the orthodox way of life and to enforce new practices in the society which are intelligible to common mass. No doubt, in his lengthy poem *Kudumpa Vilakku*, Bharatidasan encouraged the traditional way of family

life as described in Thirukkural. He proved himself to be a good nature poet in his Azhagin Cirippu. The then prevailed political condition and the social situation turn his path to rationalistic view of thought.

Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai was a patriotic poet infusing Gandhian Philosophy and national outlook besides traditional social views in his free flowing simple (termed) poems. Kavimani Desikavinayakam Pillai composes a few poems on ordinary objects, which would be useful and interesting to the children. His lengthy poems like Aciya Jothi and Umarkkaiyam are adaptations from foreign sources. They are meritoriously composed to apprehension and admiration of the Tamils. The social satire in his Marumakkal Vazhi Manmiyam laughs at certain unwanted customs and practices prevailed in his society.

S.D.S. Yogyar and Suddhananda Bharathi are more philosophic than social. Mythically they try to approach human mind in the hope of relieving it from worldly sufferings. Vanidhasan in the pattern of Bharathidasan, wants to rationalise the life of the people. Surada is acclaimed as the poet of similes. Nature, society and Tamil are his main subjects. P. Thuran, M.P. Somu, Puttaneri R. Subramaniam and Suriya Narayana Sastri also have a few poems to their credit. They followed the traditional form of presentation.

Poets like Kannadhasan, Aranka Seenivasan and A.K. Adittar attempted to write epics. Manita Theivam Gandhi Kathai of Aranka Seenivasan and Elliay of A. K. Adittar are the memorable poetic narrations of the twentieth century. Both the authors have used their talents in such a way that they could be compared with the most celebrated Kambar who belonged to the twelfth century. The life and achievements of Mahatma Gandhi is explicitly and elegantly portrayed in Gandhi Kathai while the universally acclaimed Illied of Homar is remarkably given to the Tamils in the name of Elliayam with all literary merits.

Just as a new wave free verse movement sterned in the political arena of the Tamils. Naa. Pichaimurti by his Kattu

Vattu and Azhakin Suruti with philosophic outlook introduced this new form as poetry following the pattern of Walt Witman of the West and hence earned the name. The father of free verse in Tamil Ci.Cu. Chellappa followed him with a few places of free verse which carry Gandhian thoughts and views. The preoccupation of frustration in some of his poems clearly indicates the degradation of the society as felt by the poet.

The poetical works of Vaiteeswaran, Kalyanji, Kalappriya and Gannakkuttan in free verse in form. Cirpi Balasubramaniam, Abdul Rahman, Naa. Kamaracan, Meera, M. Metha, Vairamuttu, Tamilanpan satirise the society with realism in their poems. The existing social pattern with Marxist approach is seriously criticised by Inqulop, Akniputtiran, Tanikaiselvan, Elaya Bharathi, Subbiah and Danajjanan. Their poems are replete with social and political satires blended with realism.

Azha Velliyappa, Tanikani Ulakanathan and Vanidhasan are notable for their poems for children. They are melodious, simple and rhythmical, these poems kinder the taste of the children. They are in a style easily grasped and remembered. They don't have serious themes but they are interesting and preaches morality.

From a rich heritage of the past, Tamil poetry changed its form in the past hundered years to give useful messages to the society in an easier and effective way. Most of the poets restrict themselves to the society and attempts to bring better changes. Certain revolutionary suggestions try to shake even the very foundation of the existing social pattern. Some of the poems in free verse are more affluent with superfluous vanities which could not stand the tide of the times.

## NOVEL

The influx of Western education causes for the introduction of a new form of prose literature called novel. Novel made its entrance when people wanted something to read and enjoy and hence received with popular appeal. Men of creative talents in

their great desire to enrich Tamil with new forms of literature as in Western languages, began to write novels and thanks to the advent of printing press, they were easily printed in thousands and quickly circulated among the public. Pleasure of reading increased considerably and so more and more novels are written to satisfy the needs.

The first novel, Piratapa Mudaliyar Carittiram by Vedanayagam Pillai reached the readers in 1877. It faithfully portrays society and morality. This was followed by Madaviah's Padma-vathi Carittiram and Rajam Aiyar's Kamalambal Carittiram. The earlier novel reflects the traditional culture of the Tamils as explicated in average family life. Since the novelists felt of the society to be consolidated, they wrote with that motive. Moral degradation was pointed out with an expectation of rectification.

The nation's call for its independence was accepted with readiness by the high spirited novelists who powerfully and effectively infused the spirit of patriotism among the masses. Gandhian philosophy and idealism were taught through the media of novels. K.S. Venkata Ramani caught the willing conscience of the people to suffer for the cause of the nation through his novel 'Murugan Oor Ulavan' (Murugan the Tiller). The novel 'Mannacai' by K.S. Sankara Ram, voices village upliftment.

G. Rajavelu, a political sufferer himself wrote one in the name '1942' which graphically describes the Quit India Movement which started against the aggressors in the year 1942. It may serve to be a fine record of the hair splitting incidents happened during that historical occasion. This novel can truly pass its memory to the generations to come. Kopura Thipam by Naa. Parthasarati, Alai Ocai by Kalki, Puduvelam and Pen by Akilan, Mannil Theriyutu Vanam by Chidambara Subramanian, Kallukkul Iram by R. S. Nallaperumal and Jevakitam, Mannin Kural and Kilinchal Kopuram by Jagasirpiyan are a few novels which infuse national consciousness.

Jagasirpiyan speaks of the Sarvodaya Movement in his novels while Akilan in 'Nencil Alaikal' makes much of the



valourous actions - done by the Indian National Army. Mu. Varadarajan is out and out a Gandhian in his *Neerottam*, *Vada Malar*, *Mankudicai* and *Kayamai*. His idealised views about the Tamil Society have been expressed in free flowing language. Undoubtedly the Tamil novelists have contributed a lot to the service of the nation.

In the social novels, the problems in the society are analysed and questioned with the hope of solving them smoothly with great alacrity. At times warnings are given about the impending dangers and it is worth noticing that some problems are left without giving due consideration. The cause and effects of such are openly discussed where everyone can easily identify what is what and who is who.

Problems like inequality of castes, religious fanaticism child marriage, inequality of sex, inter-caste and widow marriages, evils of dowry system, clashes between the land owners and the farm labourers, unemployment, quarrel between the employer and the employee, maintenance of law and order, injustice, language security, job security and so on are taken as themes. Most of the novels are social and they deal with the problems currently relishable to the public.

There are some psychological novels which deal with the various mental problems and suggest remedial measures in an acceptable manner. Conscientious and affectedness is seriously scrutinized by Jayakanthan in his *Oru Nadikai Nadakam Parkkiral* and *Oru Veedu Oru Manitan Oru Ulakam*. Stream of consciousness is depicted in the novel *Pallikondapuram* of Neelapadmanaban. Mob psychology is clearly shown in its true colours in *Nilamennum Nallal* and *Veshankal* by Indira Parthasarathi. Psychology pertaining to sex finds open expression through Janaki Raman's novels such as *Amma Vantal* and *Moha Mul*.

Some novels are written in the pattern of Marxist ideology in a realistic way. *Karisa!* by Ponninan, *Kurutippunal* by Rajam Krishnan, *Malarum Carukum* by Selvaraj, *Erikkaraiyil* by Jayakanthan, *Panchum Pacium* by Regunathan, *Urukkul Oru Puratci*

by Samuthiram and Thannir by Ashokamittiran can be considered as revolutionary productions marking the way of progress towards Marxist set up of society.

In Tamil there are some novels to be better called as historical romances rather than historical novels. Gathering materials from history, the novelists with their imaginative faculty excessively keeping in mind their readers and the present day social orders. As a consequence historical facts submerge into the romantic flashes launched by the authors. Kalki became very popular among the reading public through historical romances like Sivakamiyin Sapatam, Parthipan Kanavu and Ponniyin Selvan. Chandilyan won a good name through Kadal Pura, Jala Deepam, Kannimadam and Cheran Selvi. K.V. Manisekaran's Kudavayil Kottam and Mayiliraku are to be considered as good historical romances.

Some novels carry regional scent in their language and contents. Thankam written by Chinnappa Bharathi is in Coimbatore dialect. The way of life lead by Hebzibai Jesudhasan shows the speech habits and life practices of the Christian Nadars in the western side of Kanyakumari District. Neela Padmanaban's Talaimuraikal, Rajanarayanan's Kopalle Kiramam are all regional novels.

Sujata writes novels with social themes and portrays the problems in impressive terms to attract the readers. Sivasankari, Indumathi and Kothi Nayaki are a few of the female novelists. The last one wrote more than 140 novels to her credit. Now a days novels become very popular and so they come out like a stream. The patronisation of the journals helps its growth very much.

## SHORT-STORY

There is an oral tradition of telling small stories which were attended with interest by the folks. Veerama Munivar wrote Paramartha Guru Kathikal which are the first to reach the press. But as a literature, short-story developed only in the later part of the nineteenth century. As a gain of English education Subramaniya

Bharathi, V.V.S. Aiyar and Madaviah are those who open first the gates for the entrance of short-stories into the field of Tamil literature.

Kulattankarai Araca Marattin Katai written by V. V. S. Aiyar earned great fame among the readers. He allowed a Peepal tree on the bank of a tank to tell its own experience of which were nothing but the day to day life of the people coming daily to the tank. The mode of presentation and the matter presented won the appreciation of the people. The writings of these authors made the people to wait for short-stories and with the help of journals they thrived well and easily reached the readers.

Short-story is a fine medium to touch the hearts of the people within a short period of time about the impending problems of the day. Social intrigues of various sorts, family problems in varieties, political problems and religious matters were discussed without disturbing the readers. With an amount of interest they participate with the author and there is ample chance of ratification and improvement.

Problems like child marriage, prohibition, superstitious beliefs, untouchability, castism, unity of labourers, educational reforms, social relations, religious fanaticism, conjugal fidelity, widow marriage, dowry system, tussles in the family, official problems, unemployment, labour problems and so on are being discussed on and again in short-stories.

Kuttikkataikal by Madaviah, Vedikkai Kataikal by Subramanya Bharathi, Urvalam by Chidambara Subramaniam, Pillaiyar Kappattinar by Rajaji, Vada Mallikai by K.V. Jeganathan, Sarathaiyin Tantiram by Kalki and Karchanai, Chattan Vedom Othukiratu, Ituthan Ponnakaram and Akaliyai by Putumaippittan are some of the famous short-stories of the early days.

At present the short-stories of Akilan, Naa. Parthasarathy, Pushpa Tankadurai, Sujata, Thamarai Manalan, Jeyakanthan, Pumani, Samuthiram, Mauli, Sundara Ramaswamy, Senthur Pandi, Azhagiriswamy, and Pichaimurthy have constantly contacting

people. They mainly deal with social problems and try to remind the people about their real position.

To make the short-stories more nearer to the people some of the writers use the spoken language as it is. But in the earlier days literary style was used. For propaganda purposes also short-stories are utilised. At the attainment of the purposes such stories fade into obliquion. Satirical comments are levelled against the wrong doers. They made people laugh and think simultaneously.

As a good piece of literature short-story is developing with full speed in Tamil. People eagerly read them. The increasing number of journals is a good chance for short-story to come in arrays. They are doing their good share of service in making the people understand their real position in the society.

## DRAMAS

Tamil has a dramatic tradition of its own which developed from Kuttu. It is a continuous dance to the tune of songs relating to the story. Till 1867 Tamil Drama retained that form with certain developments in the manner of performance. It was called Terukkuttu (street shows) since played in open streets. More worthily it may be called as Isai Nadakam because it has full of songs. The age of Modern Tamil Drama commenced when Gopalachar translated Shakespeares Merchant of Venice into Tamil prose.

English Education is the main cause for the transition of Tamil drama from street plays to the modern form of plays. In 1877 Pratapa Chandra Vilacam, originally written by Ramaswamy Raju has to be acclaimed as the first social play in the modern form with the good intention of saving the society from the evils of prostitution. No doubt even in 1857 Tampaccari Vilacam of Kasi Viswanata Mudaliar had began to serve in this direction but in the old form of Isai Nadakam.

The year 1891 is to be considered as very important when Sambanda Mudaliyar the well renowned father of Modern Drama

started his famous dramatic club called Sukuna Vilaca Sabah and staged Pushpavalli, which earned the loud applause of the audience. It is the year in which Manonmaniyam the celebrated verse play was first published with literary merits by Sundaram Pillai. From that onwards many experiments had been tried to make the Tamil stage a place of exuberance in art and culture.

The selfless services of erudite scholars have resurrected Tamil drama from the pits of negligence and withering. Modern drama emerged with high aims and aspirations. Sambanda Mudaliyar, Surianarayana Sastri, Sankaratas Swamigal, Krishna Swamy Pavalar, Ekai Sivashanmugam Pillai were those who served with determination for the development of Tamil drama.

Sambandha Mudaliar authored 94 plays and staged all except one. Western plays and Sanskrit plays were translated and modulated to suit the Tamil audience. Sankaratas Swamigal followed the old traditions with modern touches. Krishnaswamy Pavalar was a strong nationalist who wrote plays to rouse the people to dedicate themselves in the struggle for national freedom. Swaminata Sarma did the something as a playwright.

Tragedy was strange to Tamil audience. Sambanda Mudaliyar broke the tradition by bringing his tragic plays like Iru Nanparkal, Kalvar Talaivan and Unmaiya Cakotaran on the stage. Following his example Maran wrote Unchal Manam and Innasi produced Thesattiyaki and Nankodai. Now the Tamil stage is addicted to Tragedy.

Social problems are dealt with sarcastically and satirically. Political satires are quite common in the plays of the Ramaswamy. Aru Ramanathan's Raja Raja Cholan and Aru Azhappan's Thirumalai Nayakkar are historical in their contents. Maraimalai Adigal very aptly translated Sakuntalam into Tamil. On the basis of certain literary facts he wrote Ampikapathi Amaravathi in an impressive way.

Drama is a best media through which great revolution can be made in the society. Many playwrights attempted it with considerable amount of success. Verse dramas with useful

literary materials enriched Tamil language. Kalatter, Aniccha Adi, Paalmati, Kannaki, Panimozhi, Visvanatham, Pukalenti are a few among the important verse plays.

Recently experimental plays like Pariksha, Nijam, Kuttu Pattarai, Veeti Nadakam are practical as a revival of Therukkuttu with an intention of attracting the mass to give valid ideas of improvement. Narkkalikarar, Muddai, Porvai Porthiya Udampukal are some of the plays enacted in Pariksha style.

Tamil drama had its hey day during the time of Sambanda Mudaliyar and T.K. Shanmugam. They organised and struggled hard for establishing a place for Tamil drama. Annadurai used the stage for propagating his political and social ideas. He was success in achieving his object. With better understanding all have recognised Tamil Drama as a fine art both useful and recreative. Now it is honoured and respected by all.

To sum up, Modern Tamil is epoch making for its literary creations such as Poetry, Novels, Dramas and Short-stories written with multifarious themes to cater the taste of the people of the modern age according to their social set up.

# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND ALASINGA PERUMAL

-SHANKARI PRASAD BOSE

Even though many discussions have been held on Swamiji's multi-faceted reflections and works, as far as we can see, no discussion with independent consideration has been held on one special aspect - that of his contribution in the establishment of periodicals and journals. Even a little research reveals that this topic had occupied a larger part of his mind.

In a nutshell, Swamiji was the originator of three journals in India and within his life span, these journals had received great recognition. His disciples had tried to establish journals on a small scale not only in India but also outside India. Later excellent journals preaching the Vedantic ideas and supported by many great writers were published in the Western part. Some of these journals have survived for a great many years. At present, there are quite a few periodicals connected with the Ramakrishna Movement and they enjoy still a rich subscribership.<sup>1</sup>

It is not possible to obtain information as to when the desire to bring out a journal arose in Swamiji's mind but it can easily be understood that when he decided to spread the preachings and the incidents in the life of Sri Ramakrishna, the idea of a journal for preaching purposes rose in his mind. He had seen from his childhood the great role of the journals in the propaganda of the ideals of the various neo-sects coming up in India. He had also noticed the insincerity of these journals. He had noticed how the communal and self-centred

clamours of a few people, educated in the Western (European) technique and cause, were given importance in the journals, in which there was a want of inspiration but there was a great abundance of words and how these journals, which had no relation with the lives of the people, were falsely expressing the opinions of the people day after day. Vivekananda, the disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, looked down upon the bare clamours of these lifeless newspapers though at the same time he realised the great need for a new journal dedicated to truth and capable of portraying the authenticity of the Indian culture against the full or imperfect distortion. Even when he was in America, the need for a journal to justify the Vedantic revolution for the sake of India had been realised by him. The great felicitations he had received through the newspapers had also made him understand how his character and opinions can also be misrepresented. Though a few newspapers in India gave enormous publicity to his views Swamiji knew that the patronization of these newspapers could only be expected so long as he conformed to the inclinations of these newspapers, and there would always be a difference of opinions. In that case, to win the support of all these newspapers, he would have to put a check on the independent expression of his opinions.

Swamiji's active desire to publish journals started after he had established himself as the Acharya of Hinduism in Europe. His fame, reaching India through the medium of newspapers, created a great passion, which he had not wanted to exhaust itself in mere panegyry. He wanted it to flow through a specific channel. Hence, he was enthusiastic in establishing an Association and a journal for the Association. For this purpose, the first person he could remember was the face of that person who was responsible for his visit to America. What a great person was he! In the history of the Ramakrishna Movement he had won a permanent place. He was the primary instrument in Vivekananda's visit to the foreign countries and was the manager and editor of the best Vedanta-journal originated by Vivekananda. It is doubtful whether any other disciple of the



Swamiji except sister Nivedita, had such a great influence in the multifarious activities of Swamiji. Perhaps that is why Swamiji wrote to Sister Nivedita mentioning about Alasinga "No one like him, dear Alasinga !" (To Miss Macleod, letter dated 31st August, 1904.)

The whole of India is greatly indebted to Alasinga Perumal in another respect also. Most of the vehement letters of Swamiji were addressed to him—those letters from which India, during her struggle for independence, had injected the greatness of her wisdom and glory.

Alasinga Perumal, like Swamiji, had also felt the need for a journal. Perhaps it was Alasinga who had first mentioned his desire to publish a journal. Even though Swamiji accepted the sincerity of that desire, at first he wrote about the great importance of service to the humanity. On 28th May, 1894, he wrote to Alasinga Perumal stressing this point.

As far as we can see, Swamiji had already considered again (by then) about the scope of ability and the nature of Alasinga and the other Madarasi disciples. Perhaps they were not among these who answered Swamiji's dream of spreading education among the poor and serving the poor. Alasinga was no doubt enthusiastic about the preaching of Dharma. He was capable of working to the last drop of his blood. His dearest task was group-discussion, propaganda, mass-communication and public - relationship and publication of books and journals. Knowing this fully well, Swamiji appointed Alasinga to do the work he liked best. As can be seen, until his last breath, Alasinga was fully immersed in his "Swadharma".

Apart from this, based on the researches of Ms Luise Barc it can be mentioned that during the middle of 1894, there arose in the mind of Swamiji, the desire to elevate the Vedanta into a world - religion. With this in view, he realised the need for an Indian Journal to extol and explain the Vedanta to the world. Hence, he encouraged Alasinga in this venture.

Taking a little respite from the description about the journal, let us enter into the facts about the life of Alasinga. This will reveal why Swamiji was specially dependent upon him for the publication of the journal.

It is unfortunate that only scanty data can be culled about Alasinga. Those worth mentioning are :

1. The obituary which appeared in the "Brahmavadin" after his death.
2. An article published in the Annual edition of the "Dinamani" in 1738 (Translated in the December issue of the "Vedanta Kesari", 1941)
3. The article written by Mr. M. Srinivasan, the grandson of Alasinga in the August issue of the "Prabuddha Bharata", 1947.

Here is the gist of the education and work of Alasinga abridged from the article of Mr. Srinivasan :

"Alasinga was born in Chikkamagaluru of Mysore during 1865. His father Narasimhacharya was well off but not rich. He belonged to the sect of 'Sri Vishnava', originally belonging to the villages of Mandya in Mysore. His father was a clerk in the local Municipality. Then he obtained a job in Madras. Alasinga was first educated in the Madras Presidency College, where he was the most beloved student of the famous educationist Dr. William Miller. After winning a degree in Science in 1884, he studied law for sometime. For reasons unknown, he had to give up the study of law and to search for a job in his young years. He was a teacher in a school in Kumbakonam. Later in 1887 he became a science-teacher in Pachaappa's school in Chidambaram. There he gave such a good proof of his abilities that he became the Headmaster of Madras Pachaappa's School within three years. In the same post he worked with great success until the end of his short life. A little before his death, he was appointed as the Lecturer

in Physics and Chemistry for the Intermediate classes in Pachaiappa's College. With great devotion he had served in the "Pachaiappa's Trust" until his death. He had won the full affection and regard of his students and colleagues."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Srinivasan also informs that teaching science was not the main aim in life for Alasinga and neither did he dream of winning laurels in the political sphere for he had realised deeply that the life-harmony of India was resonant only in virtue and he was deeply hurt by the distorted and slanderous versions of the 'Bharattya Dharma'. When Alasinga was anxiously in search of a means of protest, he came into contact with the ascetic Swamiji.

The news about a convention on a large scale, the Congress of World Religions, excited Alasinga. Dr. Baros (Burroughs) wrote to Dr. William Miller about the congress. Pandit-Yogi Parthasarathi Iyengar, the uncle of Alasinga, associated with the 'Hindu League' in America, informed Alasinga about the Congress of Religions. Alasinga, ever anxious about the chance of elevating the Hindu religion, naturally realised the great importance of such a great convention on an international level. He became very enthusiastic about his idea of sending a suitable representative on behalf of the Hindu religion. He requested Professor M. Rangacharya to go to America but he did not accede to the request. Although Alasinga was thwarted in his efforts, he did not give up his search. One day he heard from his younger brother, M. C. Krishnamachar that "A young Sanyasi had come to Madras, who was staying in the house of Manmathanath Bhattacharya, the Assistant Accountant-General and who had extra-ordinary mastery over the English language and the Hindu Scriptures." The curious Alasinga, along with G.G. Narasimha-char, R. A. Krishnamachar and others went to meet him.

"If you can publish a journal on the Vedantic concepts, it will help our work to progress. Start working. Do not criticise others. If you can offer useful advice, offer them. If there is really something to be taught, then teach it. Nothing else is

needed. Do something constructive to show me. Build a temple, a printing press, a newspaper or a house to live to show it to me." (1894)

It can be seen from the excerpts of Swamiji's letters that he had handed over the full responsibility of the journal to Alasinga and had kept the monetary responsibility to himself. It can also be noted that Swamiji had thought of an Association, a temple along with the journal. He had named the Association. "Prabuddha Bharata" explaining his reason for selecting such a name. He had not clearly advised the journal to be named "Prabuddha Bharata" but his intention was perhaps that. Later it will be seen that his second journal was given this name.

Another fact that can be noticed is Swamiji's wish to publish along with the journal, a newspaper too. But his wish was not fulfilled ever.

His plans did not end there. As in English, he wanted a journal in the native language also. On 3rd January, 1895, he wrote to Justice Subramaniya Iyer,

"First a school in Madras to teach theology must be established. And gradually other parts will be added to it..... As a mouthpiece to the school a newspaper in English as well as in the native language must be started."

From Swamiji's letter dated 11th July, 1894, it can be noted that Swamiji first requested Alasinga to try to start a journal, though Alasinga had already such an idea in his mind. Even after getting the instructions from Swamiji, it took nearly a year to get things started. From Swamiji's letter dated 5th May, 1895 to Alasinga, he seems to have known that Alasinga had progressed in the publication of a journal. In this letter Swamiji elaborately explains his views about the nature of the journal.

“I have a great inclination to bring out a paper somehow. Let the grave theme of this Paper be not lightly discussed, for the tone of this journal shall be based on a highly grave pitch. I shall try to get you a lot of subscribers. I shall also write articles for it and occasionally I shall get the American writers to write for it. You, too, must get hold of a group of experienced and regular writers. Your brother-in-law, Professor Rangacharya is a very good writers. Then I shall also give you introductions to Haridas Bhai, the Dewan of Junagarh, the king of Khetri and the Thakur Saheb of Limri etc., so that they all will become subscribers—which will be sufficient. Be completely unselfish and firm of mind and continue to do the work. We shall do a great job, do not fear. Make it a point that in every issue of the journal, there shall be a passage translated from the previously mentioned Bhashyas ‘Dwaita, Vishishtadvaita, and Advaita’ Let the first issue of the journal have an attractive jacket. I shall write an article for it. Collect good essays on various themes from the good writers of India. On the jacket of the journal, the titles of the articles and the names of the authors should be given. Within the next month I shall send my article and some money.”

That Swamiji had accepted fully the monetary responsibility of the journal upon himself is borne out from the same letter :

“Now engage yourself in work; get fully immersed in it I have sent a little money to Calcutta and within a month I shall be able to send you also some money. I shall, of course, send only a small amount now. Later I shall send regularly something. Start working. Do not beg from the ‘Hindu Beggars’. I shall do everything with the help of my mind and my efficient right arm. Either here or in India, I do not want the help of any one. Whatever money is needed at Calcutta and Madras for this work, I shall earn it myself.”

At first Swamiji sent 100 Dollars (28-5-1895). He wrote after a month that he was sending some more money (1-7-1895) and along with it a reminder about the publication of the journal. After a month again, he approved of the title and the motto of the journal (30-7-1894). The title was "The Brahmavadin" and the motto was "Ekam Sadvipra Bahudha Vadanti" (The Enlightened express the One in Many Ways). With enthusiasm, he wrote—

"The Song of the Ascetic" — this is my first article for your journal. Do not be disheartened. As long as you have enthusiasm and regard for the Preceptor and God — these three things then nothing shall be able to suppress you."

But when one more month had passed and the journal did not come out, Swamiji was very much annoyed. In the meantime letters were written to him explaining the need for more money. Apart from this, Alasinga and others had written at this time expressing their anxiety about the calumnious propoganda of the missionaries like Mordox etc., in India. Swamiji wrote on 9th September to Alasinga, seriously admonishing him for listening to such spurious propoganda of the missionaries. In the last part of the letter he wrote about the journal :

"I am thinking of bringing out a Paper in England and in America. Therefore, if you depend upon me completely for the publication of the journal, it will not do. I have to look after many other things, apart from you."

At last "The Brahmavadin" was published on 14th September, 1895. It was a fortnightly. Until 4th October Swamiji did not receive any information regarding the inauguration of the journal. On the same day, Swamiji wrote disconsolately to Swami Brahmananda at Calcutta :

"These Madrasis, I see, could not bring out the Journal. These Hindus have absolutely no idea of matters about Management. When you have promised to do a job,

then it must be done certainly within that time; otherwise trust is lost."

Within a few days of writing this letter i.e., before 24th October, Swamiji received two issues of the *Brahmavadin*. What he has commented upon these two issues in a nutshell, is his firm criticism upon the *Brahmavadin*. He wrote on 24th October:

"I received the two issues of the *Brahmavadin* — they are very good — Continue like this. Try to make the jacket a little nicer and simplify the language of the short editorial a little more but try to brighten up the mood. Keep the serious and grave manner in language and style for the more important articles."

In the same letter he advises to "keep a steady eye on the paper" and informs that as he did not have money at hand, it would not be possible for him to send more money.

In many of his later letters, a greater part dealt with his attempts about collecting money for the *Brahmavadin*. Swamiji requested many of his friends and acquaintances to subscribe to *Brahmavadin*. Promising to send as much money as possible, he wrote to Alasinga to procure more advertisements, for "A magazine survives by its advertisements."

Swamiji wrote on 18th, November about what type of articles must be published in the *Brahmavadin*.

"In every issue of the *Brahmavadin*, articles on Bhakti, Yoga and Enlightenment must be published. Secondly, the style is quite dubious. Try to be a little lucid, simple and refined. In the last issue there was an exaggeration of the Kshatriyas. In the next, praise the Brahmins a lot and in the following issue, praise the Vysyas. Keep everyone happy by avoiding hypocrisy and cowardice. Be adamant in defending your ideas with trust in purity and steadfastness. Whatever

obstructions you may face now, the world will listen to your voice one day."

The last part of this letter is an example of Swamiji's concern about what was written in each page of this journal :

"There must be a special column for the various kinds of information in the Brahnavadin. Do not write in the style of "A devout ascetic shuffled off his mortal coil," Such a line about the death of a devout Ascetic will be laughed at."

Based on this journal. Swamiji's many dreams took life. With what passion and enthusiasm he had observed the progress of the journal can be understood from his letter to Alasinga, dated the 20th December, 1895. The whole letter is about the Brahnavadin, a greater part of which is given below :

"I am sending a few copies on the "Bhakti-yoga" and a lecture on duty. They have appointed a stenographer now and he takes down whatever I say in the class. Therefore you will get a lot of material for your paper. Progress now!. Sturdy will write again. They are thinking of starting a new paper in England hence I could not do much for the Brahnavadin. Tell me, what do you mean by not using a worthy jacket for the journal? Put your whole effort in the journal. Let the journal survive, I am determined to see to it. Be patient and be trusting until death. Do not quarrel among yourselves. Be uncorrupted in matters of money. Do not be in a great hurry to earn quick money. That will come later. Know that we are going to do great work !"

" While translating the verses of the Veda, keep an eye upon the works of the commentators. Do not attach much importance to the commentaries of the European Commentators on Orientalism. They do not understand about our Scriptures. For example, the word from the Rig Veda, "Anidavatam" has been translated as "he continued to exist without doing the acts of inhalation and



exhalation. Actually here the reference is to "Mukhya Pran" and the natural meaning of "Avatam"—unshaken, unmoved, i. e., motionless. Before the onset of the Kalpa (Holy Time) the life and the condition in which the Supreme Omniscient Energy existed has been described here. (See the Commentaries). Annotate while keeping in mind the concepts of the Seers and not according to the commentaries of the so-called Western scholars. What do they know? "

"Your articles on the Bhakti-yoga are quite in the traditional form. Whatever is uttered in the class is generally not so well-arranged. Therefore it should only be printed after careful scrutiny. But do not use your pen unkindly upon my ideas. My "Bhakti-yoga" will continue to cover enough space in your paper. Later perhaps you can publish it as a book which will sell well in India, America and England. Remember, do not maintain any kind of relationship with the Theosophists. If all of you do not abandon me and give me a steady support without losing patience, then I can tell you with certainty that we all will achieve much finer and greater work, My Son. There will be a great job in England presently. I can understand you are all becoming a little disinterested sometimes in your work. But keep in mind this truth—the unshakeable proof of History—the true devotee shall win against all obstacles. "

"The letter from G.G. has made me very happy. Only trust helps man to be brave like a lion. Imagine the amount of work I have to do. Sometimes I have to deliver two or three lectures. I am getting rid of the obstacles in my own way—a difficult job. A weaker man would perhaps have dropped dead. Have you published Sturdy's essay? Work with trust and steadfastness. Be sincerely truthful, be good and pure. Do not argue among yourselves."

The great hope and enthusiasm of Swamiji suffered a great shock in one respect. He noticed the influx of the influence of theosophy in the Brahmavadin.

How much the disciple was hurt by the harsh repudiation of the master can easily be guessed perhaps he was also ashamed.

He replied soon clearly expressing his desire to dissociate himself from the personal responsibility in the publication of the journal. Swamiji was hurt by the unhappy feelings of his dear disciple. Admitting that he had committed a mistake, Swamiji immediately wrote feeling sorry, apologising and explaining his point of view (Swamiji was half 'Rudra' and half 'Asutosh')

"Just now I have received your letter and am happy to know that all of you are steadfast in your determination. I have used harsh words in my letters please do not mind them, as you certainly know I become moody at times. The work here is quite tough and is becoming tougher with the increase in the amount of work. I need a long rest, yet there is a huge amount of work before me in England. I am sorry to know you are forced to work hard.

Son, be patient, You can not imagine how much this work is going to increase. I hope to gather quite a good number of subscribers very soon and shall get more when I go to England. For the "Brahmavadin" Mr. Sturdy is making arrangements. Everything is going on nicely, everything is fine!

"I do not approve at all of your decision to handover the Journal to a committee. Do not do like that. Keep the full responsibility of the journal in your own hands and you yourself be the sole authority. Let us see what can be done. Do not fear. I promise you that I shall arrange for the expenses somehow. If you conceive of a committee, then people of different points of view will enter it to preach different ideas and all our efforts will be in vain. Your brother-in-law is editing the journal very capably. He is a great scholar and an enthusiastic worker. Convey my great regards to him and to all my friends. Before we succeed in any work, we must face many obstructions. Those who persist will sooner or later get enlightenment"

(17th February, 1986)

From this letter it can be understood that Swamiji was more certain about the capability of Alasingaperumal than

others. Following Swamiji's instructions Alsinga become the sole authority for the Journal.

To alleviate the suspicion about the love for theosophy in the Brahnavadin Alasmger published a letter of Kripananda sent from America in the issue of 15th February, 1986. Which described the precarious condition of Theosophy - Mysticism in America. On the 14th March he published the letter of Mr. Maxmuller which clarified the stand of the learned men against the Theosophy movement.

"I have read with great pleasure the numbers of the Brahnavadin which you have kindly sent me. What I like is the spirit of pure Hinduism, more particularly Vedantism unadulterated by the so-called Theosophy."

Just next to the letter was the re-announcement of the motto of the Brahnavadin published by the editor, mainly with an aim to pacify the Swamiji and to inform Maxmuller :

"We heartily thank the Professor (Maxmuller) for the advice he has given us and wish to assure him that although we have no kind of quarrel with the 'so called Theosophy' and the Theosophists we find both it and them to be too occult for our understanding. It is our declared policy to propogate "the spirit of pure Hinduism" in open day light without any resort to the more or less dark shadows of occultism and mystic magnetism; and in the editorial columns of the very first number of the Brahnavadin may be found the following statement of our view in regard to the matter.

The sublime rationality of the Vedanta can allow the roughest handling of it, without the slightest injury to itself, and although it is sometimes spoken as **Rahasya Guhya**, as, something secret and hidden it stands in need of mystic justifications".

Swamiji was pacified. He gave alteration again to the monetary side of the publication of the Journal. He sent money<sup>3</sup> and requested everyone to collect subscribers for the Brahnavadin and even after that when difficulties could not be overcome. he wrote again on 06-08-1896 from Switzerland :

“I realised from your letter how the economic condition of the Bramavadin has deteriorated. When I return to London, I shall try to help you. Do not be disheartened. Continue with your work. Very soon I shall be able to help you so much that you will get relief from the dull profession of teaching. Do not be frightened. Son, there will be very great work. Be brave. The Brahnavadin is a gem of a Journal which should always be protected and preserved by individual or private munificence. And we shall just do that”.

Within two days Swamiji wrote again:-

“I am happy to inform you that for the Brahnavadin I shall be able to send you Rs. 100/- monthly for a couple of years i.e. 60 to 70 pounds per year, which will help you to work independently for the sake of the Brahnavadin and help to establish the Journal properly. Mr. Mani Iyer and other friends can help by collecting a small amount to help the cost of publishing this Journal. How much subscription money do you get? There can you not spend some money and get hold of a few good articles from renowned writers? Whatever is published in the Brahnavadin there is no need to feel that every one should understand it. But every one should become a subscriber of this journal if one wants to be patriotic and wishes to collect some ‘Punya’. Of course, I am saying this to the Hindus only. Go forward with the idea that our emancipation (freedom) depends upon the proper establishment of the Brahnavadin. There is a great need for complete concentration in the attainment of the desired effect. May this Journal be your dearest Goddess. As soon as you receive this letter, please send me a clear account of the full

expenses of the Brahnavadin-from which I can guess what more should be done. Remember! Attainment of the Divine Grace Self Realization is possible only through unblemished purity and the unselfish-implicit obedience to the protector”.

“Within two years I shall establish the Brahnavadin in such a way that from the income of the Journal not only the expenses of publication be borne, but also an independent income could be made possible. Huge sale of religious magazines and Journals is impossible in foreign countries. Therefore, if there is still any sense of gratitude or any feeling for Dharma is left in the minds of the Hindus, then they must be made to be the patrons of this Journal”.

Swamiji had his eyes not only on money but also on anything connected with Brahnavadin. He often objected to the incomprehensible philosophical theories or the use of technical words in the articles or in the editorials, for, in his opinion, the responsibility of the Brahnavadin was to address and speak to every one in the world.

Alsinga wanted to transform the Fortnightly Brahnavadin into a monthly issue. When Swamiji wrote from England on the 22nd September, 1896 to Alasingar he discussed again seriously about the Brahnavadin. In the last part of his letter he mentioned about the problem raised earlier and justified the main aim of the Journal.

“If you are not confident that you can enlarge the size of the Journal by introducing a good number of articles then I think it is not suitable to change the journal into a monthly issue. Until now the articles and the format are not upto our satisfaction. There is still a vast domain which we are yet to tap, such as Tulsidas, Kabir, Nanak and the Saints from the South India and their message to the world. These topics must not be attempted carelessly but must be written with great care and with a scholastic point of view. The aim of this Journal is certainly the propaganda of the Vedanta apart from that, this will also be an introduction to the discovery

of the genius of India. Of course, all these discoveries will certainly be on the religious level. You must get in touch with the best writers of Calcutta and Bombay and collect their carefully written articles”.

A few months later on the 20th November 1896, Swamiji, pleased with the gradual progress of the *Brahmavadin* wrote with satisfaction.

“Now that our English Journal is well established we can start one in various Indian languages.”

Working hard and worrying about the Journal for nearly more than a year, Swamiji could write: “The journal now is well established” but the Journal was not still-well established on firm economic foundation. With the continued help and inspiration of Swamiji and Alasinga’s untiring hard work straining his reserve energy, the Journal was published until the time before his death. But later, eventhough his successors tried their best, it could be published only for a couple of years. In 1914, the publication of the Journal was discontinued.

In the November issue of the *Brahmavadin*, a year after Alasinga’s death, an article was published about the contributions of Swamiji and Alasingar :

“The *Brahmavadin* had taken shape from the enthusiasm of late Swamiji who had breathed life into it. It had survived for five years with the nectar of Swamiji’s support. It had gained a regal appearance. For the next ten years it (the Journal) had the life of a servant working hard, fighting for its mere existence. Swamiji the inspiring soul and the founder of the Journal is dead. Our genius and the sincere editor M. C. Alasingaperumal is also no more. But the Journal is yet alive. This has been possible as it received the blessing and the saintly touch of the great men at the time of its birth. Eventhough the Journal had not been economically successful it had tried hard to work for the welfare of the people. The

great ideal that our great preceptor had fixed for the Journal has been fully adhered to by the Journal”.

Returning to Alasingaperumal : If there was a symbol of selfless service., it was Alasingaperumal. After his death the Madras Mail praised his contribution to the Development of the Religious Awakening of India.

“Coming into contact with Swamy and his ideal in life, Mr. Alasingaperumal has contributed in an exceptional manner to the modern religious awakening of this country. In fact, when Swamiji was (in Madras) an unknown ascetic while touring South India during 1893, it was Alasinga’s intuition which recognised the greatness of Swamiji and it was he who introduced him to the people of his nations. Swamiji was able to attend the Chicago Conference in 1893 owing to the tremendous effort of this person. After Swamiji’s return when there were great felicitations from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas, it was his adoration and inspiration that were the foundations for Swamiji and his service. By nature he was a very friendly and hearty person and had a great circle of friends. As he was closely connected with the Vivekananda Mission he came into contact with many other disciples. He could establish friendly relationship with all of them (some coming from Europe and America and connected with the movement of the Vedanta) and he had won from them the highest regard and affection. Accepting his role as the modern exponent of the Vedanta, Swamiji felt the need of a journal in English through which the Hindu religion could be presented in Europe and America in its most lucid and universal form. When he mentioned this to his most efficient disciple and staunch supporter of his work, Alasinga, he immediately accepted the idea and the work. With the active co-operation of many of his educated Indian friends, in 1895, he brought out the Journal and named it the Brahmadin acting on the instructions of Swamiji. The Journal has been thriving for 15 years. In every page of the Journal which he started out of his extreme regard and adoration for Swamiji, there is the proof of his unquestionable enthusiasm and high ideas. The publication of

the Brahnavadin was the centre of his work, and his life work. He had never let the high standard of the Journal slip down though he had to confront many difficulties. In fact, he had to sacrifice himself for it. He was capable of doing many such great tasks. His untimely death is a great loss to the country. His penance was "Service". In difficulty and in need when a man came to him, he had given heartily. He left behind his widowed mother, four sons and a daughter. The news of his death will leave a great shadow of grief in the hearts of his country men, his friends and his students who all adored him greatly. Eventhough the Brahnavadin<sup>3</sup> demanded a great part of his energy he had also contributed to other fields". An excerpt from the Dinamani Patrikai bears testimony to this :

"In 1909 Thirumalachariyar worked along with Alasingar to help in his management of the Brahnavadin. Since Thirumalacharyar was the ultimate authority in politics he was afraid the Government would destroy or confiscate the Journal if politics was introduced. Thirumalachariyar started another Journal called "India" from the same press. After sometime "India" was published from its own press. Alasinga wanted power and vigour, therefore he brought in Subramania Bharahi for "India". Bharahi was then working for the Swadesamitran.<sup>4</sup>

(The Vedanta Kesari Dec., 1981)

Subramania Bharathi writes :

"There are two kinds of patriots, those who enter the stage and those who stay behind the curtain and have no desire for fame. Alasinga belonged to the latter category. He was the Headmaster for a long time in Pachaiappa's College. He had done other work also. The fire of patriotism burned bright in his heart which was evident in all his work. He had helped me in many ways. I had always received the support of his rich experience and friendly help. He is the main force among those who endeavoured to publish "India". When I asked Sister Nivedita at Calcutta "There are no patriot leaders in Madras to guide and control youngmen like me what shall we do?" She



replied - "why? there is Alasinga! If you have any problem about human existence, you can get it clarified from him" !

Srinivasan writes about the sacrifice and the independent outlook of Alasinga "Even when there was a continuous need for money, Alasingar was satisfied with whatever little he earned. He never had any desire for money nor greed for ability. Taking pity upon the financial strains of Alasinga once a rich American disciple of Swami Vivekananda told Sister Nivedita that he would give Alasinga a lakh rupee so that he would be free from his continuous want of money. When Sister Nivedita informed him of this offer, then he thought for a while and replied "please convey my gratitude to this generous offer of this foreign brother. But I cannot take his money". Later he informed his friends that he did not want to give up his personal freedom for the sake of his personal gain.

Apart from all this, there is the wonderful relationship between the preceptor and his disciple. What that relationship is, Alasinga has proved in his life. Swamiji had once teasingly described his dear disciples activities, which expresses his great regard and affection for Alasinga.

"Alasinga bought a ticket quickly and got into the ship bare foot. Alasinga says he does not wear shoes sometimes. This Alasingaperumal, the editor of the Brahnavadin, the Brahmin who is fond of drinking Mysore Ramanuja Rasam, his "Tenkalai namam" smeared from to wide forehead to his bold head, has carefully brought with him two bundles. One contained fried husked rice and the other had puffed rice and dry peas. He wants to go to Ceylon and yet preserve his "Jati" by eating this "puffed rice and peas". He had been to Ceylon once. His kinsmen tried to annoy him, but could not. Were these "self preserving kinsmen" to say 'no', none can argue with them ! These South Indian Kinsmen-some 500 here, 700 there and about 1000 some where-those who marry their own sisters for want of a bride ! when the first train came to Mysore these Brahmins who came from a far to see it were all ex-communicated ! But there are very few persons in

this world like Alasinga-very few disciples, so dedicated, ever ready to work with all his heart, so obedient and so respectful like him.

What a great affection Swamiji had for him !

“Poor Alasinga ! I am very sorry for him. I can do this much that for at least a year he will be free from domestic worries, so that he can devote all his time to the Brahmadavin. Tell him not to worry. I think of him constantly. I shall never be able to return in any manner his sincere adoration. Keep an eye on him. I feel that Alasinga is neglecting his health, being ever immersed in his work. Tell him “rest after work, and work after rest” will be the best method for good work. Convey my love to him.

(To Swami Ramakrishnananda-March, 1898)

No, even this is not enough. An unforgettable incident describes the place Swamiji had allotted to him in the depth of his heart. Miss. Macleod describes in her autobiography.

“After Swamiji returned to India I did not write any letters. I waited for news from him. At last I received a letter, “why have you not written?” In reply I wrote “May I come to India?” The reply came : “yes, you may. If you want to witness misery, downfall and poverty. Along with it the scene of half clad men preaching the Dharma. If you expect any thing else do not come. Not a single extra criticism would be tolerated.” “Naturally I caught the first ship and reached Bombay on 12th February, 1898. Mr. Alasinga came to see me there. He was wearing a Vaishnava Red Tilaka on his fore head. Later, on our way to Kashmir, while sitting near Swamiji I told him” wonderful! Mr. Alasinga wears that Vaishnava symbol on his fore head !”, Immediately turning, Swamiji replied in a harsh tone “Stop it! what have you done until now ?” I could not understand then the blunder I had committed. Of course I did not reply. My eyes filled with tears and I waited. Later I came to know that Mr. Alasingaperumal was a young Brahmin, who was teaching Philosophy or Science at

a College in Madras earning a Salary of Rs. 100/-per month with which he was supporting a family consisting of his parents, his wife and his four children. It was he who had begged for money from house to house to send Vivekananda to America! were it not for him, perhaps we would never have set eyes on Vivekananda! After hearing about this I realised why Swamiji was so angry at the mild criticism of his Alasinga!"

(Reminiscences-239-40)

### Foot note

- 1 Those journals connected with the centres of the Ramakrishna mission inside and outside India still being published are :

Prabuddha Bharata (1896 ; English Monthly published from Mayavati) Utbodhan (1899 ; Bengali Monthly, originally fortnightly, from Calcutta); The Vedanta Kesari (1914 ; English Monthly, from Madras); Vedanta for East and West (1952 ; English Bi-monthly, from London); Vedanta (1962; French Tri-monthly, from Paris); The Bulletin of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture (1950; English Monthly from Calcutta); Prabuddha Keralam (1916; Malayalam Monthly, from Trichur); Jivan Vikas (1959; Marathi Monthly, from Nagpur); Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam (1921; Tamil Monthly, from Madras); Sri Ramakrishna Prabha (1944; Telugu Monthly, from Madras); The Vivek Jyoti (1963; Hindi Tri-monthly, from Raipur); Samaj Siksha (1957 ; Bengali Monthly, from Narendrapur, Calcutta).

Those which have stopped publication :

The Brahmavadin (Madras); Morning Star (Patna); Samanvay (Hindi, from Mayavati; Swami Madhvananda and the famous Hindi poet 'Nirala' were the editors); The Message of the East (first Boston, later La Kresenta, California; English ; This centre was not under the Ramakrishna Mission later); The Voice of Freedom (1909; English, from San Fransisco. Edited by Swami Trigunatita; from 1916 it was not published) The Voice of India (1931; English Monthly from San Fransisco); The Vedanta and the West (1962;

Famous writers like Christopher Isherwood were connected with it, English, Bi-Monthly); The Vedanta Pacific; Shooting Star (English Monthly from Bombay, Editor Jagtiani) Those magazines which were published not by the Ramakrishna Mission but by other agencies and still existing are those brought out by Swami Abhedananda such as Biswabani, (1926; Bengali Monthly); Dharmachakram (popular Tamil Monthly, published by Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam Thirupparaikkatturai); Tulasi Sugandham (Malayalam Monthly published from Ottappalam, Kerala); Viveka Deep, Bengali Tri-Monthly, by Vivekananda Society, Calcutta); Ashram, (Bengali Weekly, Calcutta); Viveka Bharati (Bengali Tri-Monthly, Itanagar Hooghly; Bhavamukhe (published by the Ramakrishna Sevayatan, Baranagar); Sri Ma Sharada (Sri Yogeshwari Ramakrishna Mutt, Liluah); The Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, is publishing a few journals.

Viveka jivan is published by Vivekananda Yuva Mandal Calcutta: Vivekananda kendra has started re-publishing the Brahmavadin from Bangalore as an English Journal; It is also publishing Yuvabharati (English Monthly, Madras) and Kendra Bharathi (Hindi Monthly from New Delhi.)

There is a journal in Japanese also from 1959 the publishers are the Vedanta Kyokai (Vedanta Society of Japan) Juci, near Tokyo. The name of the journal is Fumetsu no Kotoba (The Universal Gospel).

This list is certainly not complete. Those institutions following and adhering to the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and contributing towards education and culture are also publishing six-monthly, yearly or special journals which cannot be mentioned. There are also weekly and fortnightly Small magazines, which live for short while. (List of journals & Courtesy-Brahmachari Shankar, Ramakrishna Mission).

2. Alasinga died on 11th May, 1909. He was 44 at that time. A few months before his death, he had cancer in the lower jaw and he died of it. His wife preceded him four years earlier.

- 3 "Along with this letter I am sending you \$ 160 : I have requested my disciples to find out subscribers for you"  
(March, 1896)
- 4 From Srinivasan's article it is well known that apart from "India" Alasinga was connected directly or indirectly with "Weekly Review" and the "Native State".

# **BHARATHI AND SRI AUROBINDO**

**M. SRINIVASAN**

In the early years of the 20th century and before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi nationalism was not a full force but was just catching up with the masses. The pioneers in this field were Surendranath Banerji, Bepin Chandra Pal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo Ghosh in the north and G. Subramania Iyer, Subramania Bharathi, V. O. Chidambaram and Subramania Siva in the south. As Rajaji would put it the body of national thought that Bharathi wove into song was that which preceded Gandhi, it was Vivekananda's and Dadabhai Naoroji's and Tilak's India that form the material of Bharathi's poetry'.

Bharathi had contacts with many of the leaders of his time. He called Tilak his Guru or master. His association with Sri Aurobindo was intimate, long and fruitful.

Aurobindo Ghosh was born on 15-8-1872, the son of Krishnadan Ghosh, who sent him to England at the tender age of eight. He was educated at Manchester and later at St. Paul's College, Cambridge, where he got his Hons. in 1892. He also passed the I. C. S. examination in 1893 but was later disqualified at the riding test. He learnt Latin and Greek in which he excelled. He also knew enough German and Italian. While he mastered the languages and culture of the West, he hardly learnt any Indian language including the mother-tongue Bengali till he returned to India in 1893. He worked for the ruler of Baroda and then was teaching in Baroda College till 1906, It was then that he employed a private tutor to learn Bengali. He also learnt some Marati Gujarati and Hindi.

Subramania Bharathi, who was 13 years younger, lost his father in early life and went to live with his aunt in Varanasi, where he passed his Entrance Examination. There he also learnt Hindi and Sanskrit. At twenty Bharathi was back in Ettayapuram to serve the Zamindar as his Court-Poet. He left it soon to become a Tamil teacher in the Sethupathi High School, Madurai. He was there only for a few months and then came to Madras and joined the Swadesamitran as a sub-editor.

Though Sri Aurobindo started writing some letters in the Indu Prakash from 1893 on Indian political situation, it was really not till 1902 that he took to active politics. And the real event that brought Indian political tension to a boiling point was the Partition of Bengal in September, 1905 by Lord Curzon. This unified the masses all over India in their determination to fight the alien rulers and signalled them to great acts of patriotism. Bharathi and Aurobindo too were carried away by this flood-tide of Indian nationalism. The Hindus and Muslims took vows of fraternity. Bharathi attended the Congress Session at Kasi in December, 1905. Resolutions were passed against Partition and the repressive measures adopted by the British. Under the influence of Tilak, Bharathi became an extremist. On his way back from Kasi, he met Sister Nivedita from whom he learnt the message of equality of men and women. Bharathi's extreme political views made it necessary for him to leave the Swadesamitran and in April, 1906 he joined the 'India' weekly and launched his bold attack on the British rulers.

As for Sri Aurobindo he returned to Calcutta and joined the National Council of Education (now called the Jadavpur University) but later on left it to join the 'Bande Mataram' a journal started by Bepin Chandra Pal. In 1906 the Calcutta Congress met under the Chairmanship of Dadhabhai Naoroji and passed resolutions of great importance on National Education and boycott of foreign goods. 1907 was the year of the

Surat Congress when the extremists led by Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, Lala Lajapat Rai and Bepin Pal came out of the Congress. Bharathi with V.O.C. attended the Surat session, an account of which he wrote and published. It was in Surat that Bharathi probably first met Sri Aurobindo. He was immediately drawn to him and from then on all the doings of Sri Aurobindo were reported by Bharathi in 'India'.

The British rulers were after Bharathi and also after Sri Aurobindo. The editor of 'India' was arrested and Bharathi's arrest was eminent and on the advice of his friends Bharathi escaped to Pondicherry in 1908.

Aurobindo Ghose was implicated in a sedition case but was acquitted. The Government was looking for a chance to arrest him. It was then that an unfortunate incident happened. Two young men Khudiram Bose and Profulla Chaki, hurled a bomb at a carriage supposed to be carrying Mr. Kingsford, the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta, an arch-enemy of freedom fighters. But he was not in the carriage and two innocent women Mrs. Kennedy and Miss Kennedy were killed. Chaki shot himself but Khudiram was tried and hanged. The Government also wanted to uncover the conspiracy behind this. In this connection, twenty-six members of the Jugantar party, a revolutionary party, were arrested and later Aurobindo Ghose was also taken into custody and he was charged with sedition and attempt to murder Mr. Kingsford. This was the famous Alipore Bomb Conspiracy Case. A penniless Aurobindo was defended by another great patriot Chittaranjan Das. After 126 days of trial and examination of over two hundred witnesses and 4000 paper exhibits and about 500 material exhibits like bombs and explosives etc. judgment was delivered. While Aurobindo's brother and another were sentenced to death, Aurobindo Ghose was acquitted. It was during his detention in Alipore Jail that Aurobindo had the vision of God.

When he came out of Jail, Sri Aurobindo found that the situation had changed and again spoke to the people. But now



being a God-realised soul, he was advocating a different type of struggle even for national liberation. However, even his innocent utterances were deliberately misinterpreted by the Government and they were on his trail to arrest him. It was then that Sri Aurobindo escaped to Chandernagore and from there to Pondicherry in April, 1910 to continue his spiritual quest. It was Bharathi and his friends who received him on his arrival and arranged for his stay.

It was thus that Bharathi and Sri Aurobindo again met both in exile at Pondicherry and they were together till 1918 when Bharathi chose to return to British India.

About their years in Pondicherry and their close association and their doings, admirers and friends have recorded in detail. Amrita, a former manager of the Aurobindo Ashram and a great admirer of Bharathi writes:

“The arrest of Sri Aurobindo, the proceedings of the Alipore Conspiracy Case—all were reported by Bharathi in ‘India’. Bharathi paid a tribute to Sri Aurobindo for his sacrifices in the cause of freedom and wrote an appreciative life-sketch of him. The speeches of Sri Aurobindo, the important articles in Karma Yogin—all were extracted and published in ‘India’. Bharathi even arranged for a Tamil edition of ‘Karma Yogin’ Sri Aurobindo arrived in Pondicherry on 4-4-1910. The fruitful association between the two led to a veritable renaissance in letters.”

On Sri Aurobindo's arrival at Pondicherry, Amrita records the following:

“Sri Aurobindo reached the shore of Pondicherry on board the ‘Dupleix’ at 4 P.M. on April 4, 1910, got down with Bejoy Kanta and made straight for Sankara Chetty's house in Comutty Street.

The persons, who escorted Sri Aurobindo were Srinivasachari Bharathi, Suresh Chandra Chakravarthi and Shankar Chetty.”

In fact, Maharshi Suddhananda Bharathi, also once an inmate of Aurobindo's Ashram and a great poet and Tamil writer

says that a friend of Bharathi visited Sri Aurobindo at Calcutta and made arrangements for him to come to Pondicherry.

Amrita also recounts the daily meeting between the two. He says :

“Prior to my surrender to Sri Aurobindo, Bharathi helped me a great deal to attain wideness of heart, to loosen the ties of old Samskaras and the like, to impart purity and newness to my thoughts by means of his words, his deeds and his way of living.

Because of Bharathi's association with Sri Aurobindo and his immense respect and devotion to him, I felt in me a great inexplicable attraction to Bharathi.

Every evening, a little after dark, Bharathi would go to Sri Aurobindo's house. He chose that time not with the purpose of avoiding people who would want to make a note of his visit. It was because Sri Aurobindo used to come out of his room and receive his friends only after seven in the evening. An exception however, was made for close friends like Bharathi and Srinivasachari, who at a very urgent need, could see him at any time of the day. Their visits to Sri Aurobindo's house after seven had become a regular affair. Bharathi would visit without fail. It was not so with Srinivasachari, however.

There was hardly any subject which they did not talk about in their meetings at night. They discussed literature, society, politics, the various arts; they exchanged stories, even cracked jokes, laughed and had a lot of fun.

As I said, not a single evening would pass without Bharathi's calling on Sri Aurobindo. Bharathi delighted in pouring out to Sri Aurobindo all about local affairs and happenings in the suburbs.

Whether in Bharathi's house, or by the tanks, or beside the big lake, at the time of collective dinning, the so-called pariahs, shudras and Brahmins would all sit together comfortably without

any distinction of caste or creed and take their meals. Today it may appear to be quite common. But in those days, many of us would not dare to disclose such conduct at home. Along with Bharathi, we would make fun of caste distinctions. Bharathi was very helpful in effecting my inner nearness to Sri Aurobindo.

At times, Bharathi made us hear what Sri Aurobindo told him on the Shakti cult".

Poet Bharathi's wife Chellamma Bharathi says—

"Bharathi would miss a day's meals but would not miss visiting Sri Aurobindo."

Apart from the regularity of these visits, Va. Ra., a noted scholar, novelist and biographer of Bharathi has this to say about the quality of their meetings :-

"When Aurobindo arrived at Pondicherry, he did not have his own bungalow. He, with his friends lived on the third floor of Sankara Chettiar's house. In the evenings Bharathi and a few selected friends used to visit him for talks.

I used to know almost all the national leaders of those days and so too I knew the leaders of the Satyagraha Movement. I knew Gandhiji too. But for sheer majesty and joy of conversation, none can compare with Bharathi and Aurobindo.

In their dialogues with each other, one could find the *navarasas*. Poetry, History, Philosophy, memoirs, imagery, humour, satire, the deep yearning for Truth, exceeding literary refinement etc. would fill their conversation. I only regret that I had not learnt short-hand in those days."

Va. Ra adds :-

- "Bharati was physically big while Aurobindo was small. Bharati was shy and so too was Aurobindo. Bharati's words had the over-powering fragrance of the *Mullai* flowers: Sri Aurobindo's had the detailed beauty of a full-blown lotus. To both would come newer and newer ideas and imageries. Their

words would be full of poetic grandeur. Both Aurobindo and Bharati had a guileless laughter”.

Later on, it appears that these meetings also served as joint study-classes for a systematic study of the Vedas and the Upanishads :-

Yadugiri, the daughter of Bharathi's friend Srinivasachariar who was then a young girl and greatly loved by the poet, writes :-

“They (Bharati, my father and V. V. S. Aiyar) used to go to Aurobindo's house around 4 in the evening to study Vedas and Upanishads. They normally returned around 10 or 11 in the night.”

Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta, one of the first disciples and a long-time associate of Sri Aurobindo writes :-

“At one time one of our main subjects of study was the Veda, This went on for several months, for about an hour every evening at the Guest House. Sri Aurobindo came and took his seat at the table and we sat round. Subramania Bharati, the Tamil Poet and myself were the two, who showed the keenest interest”.

It is suggested that for some of his poems on ‘Agni’ and ‘Sacrifice’, Bharathi owes his inspiration to Sri Aurobindo. It is quite likely as Bharathi, himself, has acknowledged Sri Aurobindo's mastery over the Vedas. In a review on the ‘Ahana’ a book of poems by Sri Aurobindo, Bharathi says :-

“Shri Ghosh's poetry is, of course, deeply affected by his profound study of the Vedas and his seer-like insight into the true Adhyatmic (spiritual) meaning of Ancient Record of God experiences”.

Kapali Sastri, a disciple of Sri Aurobindo writing about his first meeting with him, which was arranged by Bharathi recalls that he was surprised at the deep Vedic scholarship of

Bharathi and on enquiry Bharathi told him that he learnt 200 Suktas (or Riks ?) from Sri Aurobindo. Bharathi was reported to have confessed to Kapali Sastri that he got his intimate knowledge of the Vedic gods and the Suktas from Sri Aurobindo.

Thangamma, the elder daughter of the poet says that everyday Bharathi used to read out his new poems first to his wife and then to his dear friends Aiyar, Srinivasachari and Sri Aurobindo.

To the exiled Swadeshis (as the Indian patriots were called) at Pondicherry life was fully of suffering. Many were the days when Bharathi and his family and Sri Aurobindo had no food to eat. In one of his early letters written in 1912 to Motilal Roy, Sri Aurobindo refers to this utter poverty and more so with bitter humour to how Bharathi had learnt the art of living on nothing. He says :

“The situation just now is that we have Rs. 1-1/2 or so in hand. Srinivasa is also without money. As to Bharati living on nothing means an uncertain quantity. The only other man in Pondicherry whom I could at present ask for help is absent sine die and my messenger to the South not returned.....No doubt, God will provide but. He has contracted a bad habit of waiting till the last moment. I only hope He does not wish us to learn how to live on a minus quantity like Bharati”.

In yet another letter written in May 1914, Sri Aurobindo writes of their plight in the following telling words :

“I am also in need of a pair of shoes as Bharati has bagged the pair I had”.

That was how close Bharathi and Sri Aurobindo were that one could pinch the others' shoes. Also that was how two great patriots of the highest order suffered in those days.

The Swadeshis were always under the eyes of the British spies, who tried to lure them away to British Indian soil so

that they could arrest them. They stopped their mail and Money Orders and threatened their relentless persecution became more severe after the shooting of Ashe, the Collector of Tirunelveli by Vanchi Iyer. The Government tried its best to put the blame on Bharathi and others at Pondicherry. A few attempts were made and some of them quite serious to smuggle incriminating evidence into the houses of the patriots and then make Police search. Only by God's grace and the eternal vigilance of these great men, that they escaped unscathed from such vile attempts of the ruthless rulers. During the French elections at Pondicherry. Aiyar, Acharya and Bharathi decided that their women-folk should spend the nights at the house of Ponnu Murugesam Pillai and the men at the house of Babu Aurobindo Ghose and it was done accordingly till the elections were over.

Bharathi and Sri Aurobindo both were editing journals through which they gave vent to their feelings against British repression. Sri Aurobindo was writing in 'Jugantar' and 'Bande Mataram' and he started his own monthly the 'Karma Yogi' in 1909. Bharathi edited 'India' from Madras and the from Pondicherry. However, due to intimidation of subscribers and by interrupting subscriptions from British India, the Government effectively starved the journal and Bharathi had to stop publication in April, 1910. Bharathi also edited 'Chakravartini' and 'Vijaya' both of which had also to be stopped. Bharathi's closeness to Sri Aurobindo can be gauged from the fact that he started a 'Karma Yogi' in Tamil to carry translations of Aurobindo's articles from English 'Karma Yogi'. While copies of Bharathi's Karma Yogi are not available now, yet we know this from advertisement, which appeared in 'India' on 4-2-1909, which carried the following advertisement :-

"Karma Yogi" — A Tamil monthly. This will carry the Tamil translations of the marvellous essays, commentaries, teachings contained in the Karma Yogi (English) edited by Sri Aurobindo Ghose. Its aim is to revive the Philosophy, Dharma, self-rule etc. of India. Translators include Sri. C. Subrahmanya Bharati. Only 1000 copies are to be printed and so interested persons may write immediately to the Manager, 'India' office".

Having failed in its attempts to hook them, an enraged British Government tried its best to persuade the French Government to throw the Swadeshis out. The French too passed an act to the effect that foreigners settled in Pondicherry for over a year should get registered with the local authorities by getting signatures from five honorary Magistrates. The British authorities had done their job well and spoke to most of the Hony. Magistrates too. They felt that the Swadeshis were caught. The Swadeshis met at Sri Aurobindo's bungalow, but dispersed without finding any solution. It was Bharathi who solved the problem by getting the much needed signatures through Sankara Chetty within the course of a single day. This is narrated in detail by Va. Ra. in his biography of Bharathi.

The British went a step further and engaged in talks with the French Government to exchange the French India possessions for other areas in the West Indies. This naturally caused considerable alarm to the Swadeshis but fortunately this scheme did not materialise much to the relief of the Indian exiles.

Writing on these incidents and especially on the first incident, Va. Ra who was then living in Pondicherry and went with Bharathi to get the signatures writes:

"From the time there was a talk of this bill being taken up for discussion in the Pondicherry Assembly, and till it was enacted, the Swadeshis were deeply worried. Even Sri Aurobindo showed it. V. V. S. Aiyar was the one most disturbed.

But Bharathi alone was his usual self singing like a spring-time nightingale. Somehow he seemed to hope that the danger would pass away.

Those whom I thought were absolutely courageous and could face any situation calmly, fell in my esteem and the poet, generally considered a never-do-well in worldly matters, came out brilliantly".

When such are the facts, it is regrettable that Navajata, who went to Pondicherry many decades after the memorable events, thought it fit to write as follows in his life of Sri Aurobindo :

“In 1912, the British Government, pressurised in French to hand over the Indian patriots in Pondicherry. The Swadeshis were all alarmed. Subramania Bharati, a man of excitable nature asked Sri Aurobindo what he would do if the French Government withdrew their support. Sri Aurobindo told him : ‘Mr. Bharati, I am not going to budge an inch from Pondicherry. I know nothing will happen to me. As for you, you may do what you want’. On the strength of this, Subramania Bharati decided to remain in Pondicherry”.

It is unfortunate that some biographers of Sri Aurobindo have tried to extoll him at the expense of Bharathi. There is a suggestion that Bharathi owes all the Vedic themes and ideas found in his poems to Sri Aurobindo. Similarly, Bharathi’s ‘Introduction to Bhagavad Gita’, his poems on Sakti and even some of his English translations of Alwars’ hymns, suffer from this criticism. But Bharathi was a poet and a poet *per excellence*. He himself has discussed the characteristics of Poetry while reviewing Sri Aurobindo’s book of poems. Bharathi says :

“Truth is to poetry what fact is to science. And whatever aspect of the poetic art may appeal most to the mind of the lay reader, the poets themselves have always regarded true poetry as the right expression of the soul-truth of things. The Vedic name for the poet Kavi, means a seer”.

And Bharathi was a poet and hence a seer. He could get at the soul truth of things, which he did in his poetry.

Amrita, himself has settled some of the points for us. He raises the question if Bharathi owed to Sri Aurobindo his Sakti cult and says in reply :

“Shakti worship is very ancient in Tamilnadu. Yadugiri says Bharati offered worship to the Divine Shakti on all



festive occasions and sang poems in praise of Shakti. whenever his wife grumbled about their poverty and misery, he always advised her to have complete faith in the Divine Grace and to surrender to Her completely. Some of his best lyrics on Mahasakti, Mahakali and Mahasaraswati appeared in a book published in 1910. It may also be noted that the book 'The Mother' by Sri Aurobindo, which is a brilliant exposition of the Four Powers and Personalities of the Divine Mother was written only in 1928, when Bharathi was already dead and gone".

Again Sri Aurobindo's detailed work on the Bhagavad Gita was published years after Bharathi wrote his introduction.

As regards Bharathi's commentary on the Patanjali Yoga Sutras, it is said that Sri Aurobindo himself rated it better than the commentary by Swami Vivekananda.

A few English translations from the Divya Prabandam appeared in Aurobindo's 'Arya' and now are included in Bharathi's English writings. The reason for attributing these to Aurobindo is that the translator's name was not published. It is true that Bharathi taught the hymns of the Alvars to Sri Aurobindo. It is probable that the translations might have been done jointly too. It is worth mentioning that Bharathi's English style was very good, as can be seen from his other writings.

In a lighter vein, we learn from the memoirs written by Sakuntala Bharathi, the younger daughter of Bharathi that Sri Aurobindo liked South Indian dishes, especially *Sambar* and *appalams*.

The last years of the Poet at Pondicherry were not very happy. He was under extreme poverty and life almost became a burden. He used to escape to the seclusion of the mango groves and the lonely sands of the sea shore. Sri Aurobindo was spending all his time in Sadhana and the meetings between them, too became rare. But their deep affection and respect for each other remained as ever.

Sakuntala describes the last meeting between the two, before Bharathi returned to Madras. She says ;—

“When my father went to take leave of Sri Aurobindo finally, they conversed behind closed doors and so I did not know the details. But while returning, I found Sri Aurobindo’s eyes, normally full of wisdom and peace, were dimmed with tears. My father’s powerful eyes too were brimming with tears”.

I would like to conclude this article by listing the available writings of Bharathi on and relating to Sri Aurobindo.

1. A brief news-item on the acquittal of Sri Aurobindo Ghose in the Manicktolla Bomb Case appeared in ‘India’ dated 8-5-1909.
2. An editorial entitled ‘The Glory of Sri Aurobindo’ with a cartoon appeared in ‘India’ issue dated 15-5-1909. It is a fairly long article giving in detail the concluding parts of the long trial with excerpts from the arguments of Sri C. R. Das.
3. ‘Deficiency in Tamil alphabets’ being an incident narrated by Sri Aurobindo to Bharathi regarding his problems in learning Tamil.
4. A translation by Bharathi of Sri Aurobindo’s poem on sea. (India dated 12-6-1909).
5. The ‘Ahana’ of Sri Aurobindo Ghose —A review in English of Sri Aurobindo’s book of poems, published in the ‘Commonweal’, Madras dated 16-7-1915.
6. A poem on Sri Aurobindo quoted by Maharshi Subbhanda Bharathi in his biography of Bharathi but not included in any collection of Bharati but not included in any collection of Bharathi’s writings.
7. ‘Dawn’—an essay in English where Bharati refers to the inspired nature of Sri Aurobindo’s poetry.

8. A reference to Sri Aurobindo's praise for Carnatic music especially for the excellent compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar.
9. 'Our Congress Tour' — a detailed eye-witness account of the Surat Session of the Indian National Congress held in December, 1907.
10. 'The New Shrines of India' in India dated 8-1-1910 where he refers to Alipore Jail, where Sri Aurobindo was detained.

Besides those mentioned above, Bharathi himself says he published a life sketch of Sri Aurobindo and detailed accounts of the Alipore Bomb Case and Sri Aurobindo's trial. He had published in 'Karma Yogi' Tamil translations of Aurobindo's essays and poems. Unfortunately, none of these have so far been traced.

What Sri Aurobindo wrote on Bharathi is very meagre. As earlier mentioned he has referred to Bharathi in some of his early letters to Motilal Roy.

Bharathi reviewed Sri Aurobindo's poems and also referred to the poet's uniform adherence to Truth. In his essay on 'Dawn' he says:—"It is a common experience with poets that they receive their best songs from Above. A few days ago, I asked Sri Aurobindo Ghose how he got his new and marvellous theory of Vedic interpretation. "It was shown me" he said and I know he meant it in a very literal sense"

While we thus know his esteem and assessment of Sri Aurobindo, it is unfortunate we have no record of Sri Aurobindo's impressions of Bharathi. Having lived so closely for eight years and having listened to Bharathi's poems read out to him regularly by the poet himself with all the creator's pride, surely Sri Aurobindo himself a poet, could have said much on Bharathi. It is a pity that such an evaluation of Bharathi has been lost to us.

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# **THE CONTRIBUTION OF TAMIL NADU TO THE EMERGENCE OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT**

—Pe. Su. MANI

The Cultural ties between Bengal and Tamil Nadu have a hoary history. Many religious and cultural movements which had their origin in Bengal had spread to Tamil Nadu and cast a spell over the intellectual of Tamil Nadu. The Ramakrishna Movement in the first half of this century was the most influential and powerful movement of these. But earlier to this, there had been two movements of note namely Sri Chaithanya's Radha Krishna cult and the Brahmo Samaj. A brief study of these two movements would help to provide a historical background to the subject of this essay.

Sri Chaitanya was born in 1486 and lived till 1533. In 1510, he undertook a pilgrimage to South India.<sup>1</sup> He travelled upto Kanyakumri, visiting various sacred places of worship enroute, such as Kanchi, Tirukazhukundram, Vriddachalam, Chidambaram, Sirkazhi and Kumbakonam. At the end of his spiritual pilgrimage, he stayed in Sri Rangam for four months to perform the Chaturmasya—Vrata ritual there. It was at Sri Rangam that Sri Ramanuja had founded his school of Vaishnavism.

Sri Chaitanya stayed with one Venkata Bhatta during the Chatur-Masya Vrata. Bhatta's whole family became followers of Chaitanya.

Sri Chaitanya had been earlier converted by an advaitic Sanyasin, to adopt the Ekdandin way of renunciation. His coming into contact with Tridandi Swami Prakasananda Saraswati, a brother of Venkat Bhatta and a monk of the Ramanuja School, made him a convert to the Tridandin way of Sanyasa<sup>3</sup>. The triple staff carried by the Vaishnavite monks signifies the three fold control of thought word and act, as also the Concept of Chit, Achit and Eswara.

We find references to the Mukol (Triple staff) in the well known book of grammar in Tamil literature Tolkappiyam. We find many other references in the Tamil works of the paper Sangam period like Kalithogai. It is possible that these Mukkol Bhagvars (Saints with triple staff) were the fore runners of the Tridandid Vaishnavite monk.

Sri Chaitanya also accepted the Panchratra way of worship of Tamil Nadu Sri Vaishnavites.

During his South Indian Pilgrimage Sri Chaitanya acquired two treasures, Sri Brahma Sam hita and Bilvaangala's Sri Krishna Karnamrutam. These books greatly influenced him.<sup>4</sup> Krishna Karnamruta became one of the cherished sacred texts of the Chaithanya School.

At Sri Rangam, Sri Chaitanya had stayed with a Sri Vaishnava family, who belonged to Sree Sampradaya-i.e. who worshipped Sriman Narayana and his consort Lakshmi. He Converted them to the Chaitanya cult i. e. the worship of Krishna, the beloved of Radha. Venkata Bhatta, at whose house Sri Chaitanya stayed changed to Gaudia Vaishnavism along with his brothers, Thirumala and Swami Prakasan and Saraswati and his son Gopala Bhatt. Swami Prakasananda came to be known as Prabodhaananda Saraswati. These were the upholders of the Gaudia Vaishnavite cult in Tamil Nadu, Prabodhananda and Gopala Bhatta settled in Vrindavan<sup>5</sup> Gopala became one of the Famous Goswamis of the Chaianya school.

Prabodhananda composed the song "Radharasa Katha Nidhi" in which is enshrined the worship method of the Gaudiya

Vaishnavites by "Name Sankirtana" Prabodhananda played an important role in spreading Sri Chaitanya's message. He sang of the divine nature of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Gopala Bhatta, along with the other famous Goswamis of the Gaudiya Vaishnavite cult. Sri Rup Goswami, Sanatana, Srivar, Raghunatha Bhatta and Raghunatha Das, were sent to Brindavan at the instance of Sri Chaitanya to spread the message of Chaitanya.

There is much evidence to show that Prabodhananda and the other Goswamis were well learned in teachings of the Vaishnavite teachers of Tamil Nadu.

The book "Sat Sandharbam" which explains in detail the philosophy of the Goudiya Vaishnavite doctrine, was written by Sri Var Goswami. It is said to be the first book of its kind. In it Sri Srivar has declared that he gathered material from the South Indian Acharyas<sup>6</sup> Sri Bhakti Vilasa Thirtha Goswami of Gowdiya Mutt has traced some of the influences of Sri Ramanuja on Sri Chaitanya<sup>2</sup>

Sri Rup Goswami has taken many stanzas from Kula Sekara Alwar's Mukundamala and Yamunacharia's "Stotra Ratna" to explain the philosophy of Vaishnavism<sup>7</sup>

In short, the first teachers of the Gaudiya Vaishnava cult, made great use of Tamil Vaishnavite literature to elucidate and enunciate their philosophy.

To commemorate the visit of Sri Chaitanya to Sri Rangam a mandapam was built inside the Ranganatha Swami temple at Sri Rangam. Recently a plaque with an inscription in memory has been placed there.

At the Headquarters ashram of the Gaudiya Mutt at Mayapur Calcutta, an idol of Sri Ramanuja has been installed in the premises of Sri Chaitanya Temple complex.

This temple was built in recent years by Sri Sarasvathi Goswami Takur.

All these memorials remind us of the spiritual and cultural ties between Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

But the Chaitanya Movement had little following in Tamil Nadu. The Madhura Bhava preached by the Chaitanya cult was nothing new to the Tamils. Some of the Alwars, the supreme devotees of Lord Narayana had described the soul's longing for union with God, as the beloved's yearning for her lover. Sri Andal wished to marry Lord Krishna and this yearning runs through all her songs. So, the people were familiar with Madhurya Bhakthi. The philosophy and doctrines of Ramanuja, which Chaitanya followed were also well known in Tamil Nadu. This is why the Chaitanya Movement had little impact on the people of Tamil Nadu.

## TAMIL NADU AND THE BRAHMOSAMAJ

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who worked for the renaissance of India in many fields, was called the "Morning Star of Indian Renaissance". When he founded the Brahmosamaj on 20th August 1828 he became well known among the intellectuals of Tamil Nadu. His interpretation of the tenets of Hinduism, and his usage of those interpretations to support his reformist ideas roused great opposition among orthodox Hindus.

In 1815 he founded the "Atmiya Sabha", an association for the dissemination of religious truth and promotion of free discussions on theological subjects".<sup>8</sup> His translation of Vedanta' also appeared at the same time. Ram Mohan Roy's activities included opposition to rituals, to casteism and to image worship. He used his new interpretation of the Shastras to Subramania Sastri from Madras left for Calcutta in 1814 to argue with Ram Mohan Roy and refute his interpretation.

## RAM MOHAN ROY—SUBRAMANIA SASTRI DISCUSSION

Subramania Sastri was the first Vedanta scholar to go to Bengal in the 19th century to argue with Ram Mohan Roy. Fortunately for historians, Ram Mohan Roy himself has published



in 1820 the details of the discussions in four languages, in Hindi English, Bengali and Sanskrit.

It is notable that the Bengali publication was named after Subramania Sastri. It was called "Subramania Sastri Sabit Bichar"<sup>9</sup>.

The English publication was titled "An apology for the pursuit of Final Beatitude", It begins with a sketch of Subramania Sastri and his arguments. The passage given below is taken from that book.

"Soobrahmanya Shastree, a diligent observer of Brahminica tenets, wishing to prove that those Brahmins who do not study Vedas with their subordinate sciences are degraded from the rank of Brahminism, prepared and offered an Essay on that subject to the Brahmins of the Province of Bengal, who are generally deficient in those studies. In this, he has advanced three assertions; which have, however no tendency to establish his position. He alleges (1) that to a person not acquainted with the Vedas neither temporary heavenly enjoyment, nor eternal beatitude can be allowed" (2) that he only who has studied the Vedas is authorised to seek the knowledge to God (3) thirdly that men must perform without omission "all the rites and duties prescribed in the Vedas and Smritis before acquiring a thorough knowledge of God. On those positions he attempted to establish that the performance of the duties and rites prescribed by the Shastras for each class, according to their religious order, such as the studies of the Vedas and the offering of sacrifices etc., is absolutely necessary towards the acquisition of a knowledge of God, We consequently take upon ourselves to those assertions."<sup>10</sup>

Ram Mohan Roy refuted the arguments of Subrahmanya Sastri one after another quoting extensively from the Smritis, the Agama Shastras, Puranas and from Vyasa and Shankara".<sup>11</sup>

The debate held with Subramaneya Sastri is mentioned in the Tamil book "Rajah Ram Mohan Roy Charitra Sangraham (a short biography of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy) published in the year 1886. The following passage is taken from that book.

Sri Subramania Sastri, a renowned Vidwan of Madras, has written that only a person who has studied the scriptures (done Vedadyayana) and performed all the Karmas like yagas enjoined in the Shastras, can aspire to study Brahma Vidya. In answer to this, we present two sutras from Vyasa's Vedantha Sutra to prove that one can attain Brahma Gnana without performing the Karmas enjoined by the Kuladharma. Also we have proved that even those who were forbidden study of scriptures attained Brahma Vidya. We cited as examples Dharma Vyada, who was not a dovija (Twice born i.e who did not receive upanayana) Vidura, the women Maitreyi and Sulabha <sup>12</sup>

This debate was conducted by the Atmiya Sabha of Ram Mohan Roy. The office of the Atmiya Sabha was at the house of Behari Lal Chaubay in Bow Bazaar of Calcutta. Radh Kant Deb, the leader of the orthodox Hindus of Calcutta was present along with many other religious minded people and intellectuals.

"In this debate, by a rare display of erudition and forensic skill, Ram Mohan Roy is said to have vanquished his adversary." says a news item of that period <sup>13</sup>

During the debate Ram Mohan Roy referred to Subramania Sastri as the "Learned Shastree". If more details can be had of this meeting between the two scholars, they will throw more light on the relations between Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

## KESHAB CHANDRA SEN'S VISIT TO MADRAS

In 1864 the President of the Brahmosamaj, Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884) came to Madras on a lecture tour. Bipin Chandra Pal wrote in his memoirs that Keshab Chandra Sen was the first educated Bengali to visit to Madras.

In a lecture at Madras Keshab Chandra Sen exhorted the educated Hindus to remove "the gigantic evil" of caste, promote women's education and to form associations to give direction to reformist activity <sup>14</sup>.

The educated Hindus of Madras were greatly impressed by his mastery of the English language, and his thought provoking rhetoric. Two lawyers of the Madras High Court. V. Rajagopalacharlu and Salem B. Subba Rayalu Chettiar. were so moved that they formed an association called the "Ved Samajam" on 7th April 1864. As the orthodox Hindus of Madras thought that the name 'Brahmosamaj' had too many implications they adopted the name "Ved Samajam". Mr. V. Rajagopalacharlu was the President and B. S. Subba Rayalu Chettiar was the Secretary.

Kajulu Lakshmi Narasu Chetti founded the first political association in Madras. He wrote a letter to Keshab Chandra Sen in which he stated that he was for "long time a zealous admirer of the Brahmosamaj". In 1851 Debendranath Tagore wrote to Lakshmi Narasu Chetti exhorting him to form a political association as in Calcutta.

So, Tamil Nad's first political link with Bengal was in 1851 followed by the spiritual link inaugurated by Keshab Chandra Sen.

## TATVA BODHINI PATRIKA

The press played an important role in the socio-political renaissance of Bengal. In 1839 Debendranath Tagore of the Brahmosamaj, along with some members of his family, founded the Tatva Bodhini Saba. To propagate the ideals of the Sabha he started the Tatva-Bodhini Patrika in 1843.

The Tatva Bodhini Patrtika had a distinguished editorial board, consisting of great scholars like Isvar Chandra Vidya Sagar, Devendranath Tagore. Akshaya Kumar Dutt, Raj Narayan Bose, Rajendra Lal Mitra<sup>17</sup>

Amiya Kumar Sen has written a rare book "Tatva Bodhini Sabha and Bengal Renaissance", where he says "For atleast a quarter of century it guided the intelligentsia of Bengal". This magazine had the privilege of spreading Brahmosamaj ideals.

So, it is not surprising that when the Madras Ved Samaj thought of starting a journal to explain the Brahmo Ideals to

the people, they immediately thought of the Bengali magazine. So, they started the journal "Tatva Bodhini" in imitation of the Calcutta Samaj journal of that name"<sup>18</sup>, writes Sivanath Sastri. The first issue was printed and published from the Madras Mylapore Tatva Bodhini Press on 7th May 1864.

This was the first journal to appear in Tamil to preach the Brahmo doctrine. A sister magazine "Viveka Vilakṣam" was also published.

### SRIDHARALU NAIDU (1840—1874)

In 1867 Salem Subbarayalu Chetti died and Sridharalu Naidu took charge of the Samaj, Sridharalu Naidu was born in Cuddalore and in 1865 he went to Calcutta after experiencing many difficulties. He had neither wealth nor influence, was born in an ordinary middle class family and had not received higher education. He had read the Tatva Bodhini and other Brahmo literature and had imbibed its ideals. He went to Calcutta to learn more about the Brahmosamaj.

He did not know any one in Calcutta. He carried no introductory letter or letters of recommendation. He only knew two words. in Bengali The name Brahmosamaj, and the name of the place where the Samaj had its Head office 'Joru Sonko'. But the tenacious spirited boy arrived at Calcutta atlast and was welcomed by Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen with open arms. He became one of the ardent pupils of Keshab Chandra Sen.

Sivanath Sastri writes about Sridharalu in the following words.

"He found shelter among the rising class of Sen's missionaries. He began to share with them their poverty and privations. All this happened in 1865. He spent about a year in learning Bengali, in receiving instruction from Mr. Sen and his friends, and in mastering new problems. In the beginning of 1866 he returned to his native town and began to preach Brahmoism".<sup>14</sup>

Ramalingaswamikal was considered the pioneer of the Tamil Renaissance Movement in the 19th century by the great

Tamil poet Subramania Bharathi. Sridharalu Naidu met Ramalingaswamigal on 16th January 1867 and discussed with him many things. During his discussion he opposed image worship. Ramalingaswamigal preached a spiritual way of life, that was beyond all castes or religions. Sridharalu accepted defeat and retreated, saying he would continue the discussions through letters.

After the debate Ramalingaswamigal had this to say about the Brahmosamajam.

Brahmosamajists do not accept idol worship. But we can, each, according to his level of spiritual development, worship images, attain grace and with enlightened mind enjoy Brahmagnanam.

Ramalingaswami's Suddha Samarasa Sanmargha Sangham was a Spiritual Movement with revolutionary ideals, such as anti-caste, anti-ritual. It completely apposed irrational beliefs. He has given expression to his clear views on these subjects in 6178 verses. His prose writings also are extraordinary expressions of Tamil thinking.

## THE BRAHMOSAMAJ LITERATURE

Sridharalu Naidu published in 1870 his own translations of Devendranath Tagore's "Brahmo Dharma" in both Tamil and Telugu. He also published a Translation of "Model Form of Divine Worship" by Keshap Chandra Sen.

He wished to build a mandapam for the Brahmosamaj. He thought Chidambaram Temple Mandapam should be the model for the proposed building. But while on a visit to Chidambaram he had an accident and died in 1874 at the Pondicherry hospital.

He was the first to nurture the spiritual and cultural contact between Bengal and Tamil Nad through the Brahmo Samaj Movement.

## DORAISAMI IYENGAR

Doraisami Iyengar was a great friend of Sridharalu Naidu. He was in charge of the Purasavakkam branch of the Brahmo-samaj. He was a good orator and a good writer in Tamil. He also composed verses in praise of Brahmo ideals. When the Tatva Bodhini was revived by Sridharulu Naidu, he ran the journal in a very efficient manner. In accordance with the anti-caste principles of the Brahmosamaj, he renounced his sacred thread. "He was the first man in Madras to discard the sacred Brahmanical thread, the badge of caste, and expose himself to terrible privations".

## WRITER SIVANATHA SASTRI

Devendranath Tagore gave a lot of help to Doraisami Iyengar. Doraiswami Iyengar travelled to many towns to spread the message of Brahmosamaj. He passed away in 1187.

## KASHI VISWANATHA MUDALIAR (1806-1871)

When the Ved Samajam and Tatva Bodhini were in a state of decline, Kashi Visvanatha Mudaliar, took them over and revived their original missionary spirit.

He was a retired District Munsif. On August 15, 1870 he inaugurated an association by name "Brashmosamajam" at his house in Mint Street. In stead of Tatva Bodhini he started the monthly "Brahmadeepika"

An advertisement regarding this appeared in 26th December 1870. Under his management both the Brahmasamajam and the Brahmadeepika flourished. During this period he published the Prayer songs of Brahmosamajam.

In 1871, he wrote a rare dramatic piece entitled "Brahma-samaja Natakam". It ran to 400 pages and was mainly meant to be read. In the preface to the play he states at the end

"In this play the true path of Brahma Upasana and the programme to be followed by the Brahmasamaja Sabha will be clearly stated.

He also wrote a play called "Punarvivaka Deepikai" to propagate the social reformist ideas in accordance with Brahma Ideals. He also wrote various other plays. Among them were 'Tahsildar' and Dambachari meant to be acted on the stage.

"He threw himself into the work with great enthusiasm a number of prayer meetings were organised in different parts of the city. Sivanath Sastri has written in praise of him.

It is worth repeating that Kashi Visvanatha Mudaliar wrote the first play to spread Brahma Samaja ideals.

## S.P. NARASIMHALU NAIDU

Among those who spread the message of Brahmosamaj in Tamil Nadu was the famous Newspaper Editor and patriot, Salem Pagadala Narsimhalu Naidu. He was the editor of the Salem Sudesabhimani started in 1878. He gave publicity to the Brahma Samajam ideals in the paper "Coimbatore Kala nidhi" also.

The Brahma catechism (question-answer (1882) Brahmopasana paddhati (1884) Brahmopasana paddhati and prayer (1892) were all written by him for spreading the Brahma religion.

When Shiv Natha Shastri toured Tamil Nadu in 1878, Narasimhalu Naidu accompanied him and rendered service.

## SIVANATHA SASTRI (1847-1919)

After Keshab Chandra Sen and Pratab Chandra Majumdar, it was Shivanatha Shastri who visited Tamil Nadu. He has described his tour in great detail in his book "History of the Brahmosamaj". He was in Tamil Nadu during the years 1879 and 1881.

## SOME PUBLICATIONS OF THE SOUTH INDIAN BRAHMOSAMAJ

1. Manidar Kadamai: The duties of man (1893). Hindu Customs like idol worship, religious rites are condemned in this book.

2) Veda (1894). In this book it is stated that even Non-Brahmins have a right to read the scriptures and that Brahmins have been cheating other people and monopolising the right to read the scriptures.

3) Parisuddha Asthika Madam (1897) this book condemns superstition, idol worship and pilgrimages to sacred places of worship.

4) Deeksha (1898) This book speaks of the vows to be undertaken by a person who wishes to join the Brahmosamaj.

## THE BRANCHES OF THE BRAHMOSAMAJ

In 1877 there were branches in Madras and Salem. In 1892 there were four branches in Madras three in Coimbatore. In North Arcot district there was one in Vellore and one in Vandavasi in 1892. In 1911 there were on association each in Madras, Cuddalore, Coimbatore and Thirunelveli.

## BHARATHI'S VIEW ABOUT BRAHMOSAMAJAM

Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathi is the only person who has given expression to his views on Brahmosamajam, Aryasamaj Theosophical Society and the Ramakrishna order.

He compared the Brahmosamaj to a great tree spreading its branches all over India and giving the shade of peace and fruit of knowledge to all those who came under its influence.

He pointed out that Bengalis had failed to honour Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, should there not be a statue for him in every town? should not the story of his noble life be written in every language of our country and enshrined in every house in the land?" he asked.



In his two long sociological novelettes, "Swarna Kumari" and "One sixth Share" (Aril Oru Pangu) he has introduced some characters with Brahmosamajist connections.

Brahmosamajam did not take root in Tamil Nadu because of the deep rooted nature of casteism in the South and because of the ardent adherence of the orthodox Hindus to idol worship in the South.

The Non-Brahmin Brahmo converts would not eat along with Shivrathna Shastri, because by their sitting near him his purity would be in jeopardy. If even Brahmosamajists, initiated into its ideals, could continue to think in this way, what hope was there for others to understand anti-caste propaganda? In frustration, Shastri co-dined with Harijans.

The Brahmosamaj Movement attracted only a very tiny section of the Tamil intelligentsia. The casteist Tamil soil was not conducive to its growth. The Chaitanya Movement being a Bakthi Movement had a greater potential to become a mass movement but it did not have anything more to offer than the indigenous Vaishnavite Bakthi Movement of the Alwars.

The Ramakrishna Movement differed from these earlier Movements of Bengali origin in two respects. First, it was able to draw into its fold wider sections of the middle classes, and to establish a rapport with the common people of Tamil Nadu. Second, and the more important and fundamental, it was Tamil Nadu alone which had taken the first steps to found the Movement and make it known all over the world.

## RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT AND TAMIL NADU

The Ramakrishna order consists of the Ramakrishna mission the Ramakrishna Mutt and the numerous organisations bearing the names of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. It was in fact called the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Movement.

During the last days of Sri Ramakrishna a devotee called Gopal Da presented Ramakrishna with sets of Saffron robes

and requested that they be distributed among some monks. But Sri Ramakrishna distributed them to the disciples around him, saying "you won't find better monks than the boys here. You may give your clothes and rosaries to them". Thus, the devotees in the household of Sri Ramakrishna became monks and the Ramakrishna order was formed. There were eleven in number. Their names are given below.

Narendra, Rakhal, Bapuram, Niranjana, Yogin, Tarak, Kali, Shashi, Gopal Da, Latu, and Sharat.<sup>23</sup>

When the Master attained Maha Samadhi on August 16th 1886, few more disciples joined the order. On October 19th 1886, they started a monastery in an old dilapidated house in Baronagore. This Baronagore Mutt became the first headquarters of the Ramakrishna Order.

While brother monks of Narendra thought about the salvation of their individual selves Narendra wished to bring philosophical thought to the level of the down trodden masses. Swami Nikhilananda gives an account of the discussions.

"Narendra spoke to his brother disciples of the necessity of reaching the strength giving Vedanta Philosophy to one and all, especially to the down trodden masses. But the other monks were eager for their own salvation only and protested. Naren said to them angrily, "All are preaching what they do unconsciously, I will do consciously. Ay. even if you my brother monks stand in my way, I will go to the Pariahs and preach in the lowest slums."<sup>24</sup>

Here we perceive a Vivekananda who believed that the understanding of Vedanta would bring about enlightenment among the masses. Swami Vivekananda also wished to go out among them see for himself and understand the squalor of their lives, their sorrows, their burdens, and the oppression and exploitation which suffocated their inmate aspirations.

He started on a pilgrimage of India as a Parivrajaka in 1890. From time immemorial Parivrajakas have undertaken

pilgrimages to places of worship. But Vivekananda's tour of India was not to the spiritual centres alone. It was to the heart of India. He wished to understand and alleviate the sufferings of the people, and during this tour of Tamil Nadu the foundations were laid.

We find detail of such thoughts in the book "The Message of Kanyakumari".

## IN TAMIL NADU

Swami Vivekananda was at Kanyakumari in December 1892. He experienced a peace and lucidity of thought after his deep meditation at Kanyakumari.

He started his tour of Tamil Nadu and when he reached Madras he already had met situations which demanded solution and the evolution of the Ramakrishna order had taken shape in his mind.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA "DISCOVERED" BY MADRAS.

In 1905 Subrahmanya Bharathi the great poet of Tamil Nadu sang "Vangame Vazhiya" (Long live Bengal), He asserted that Tamil Nadu was the first to recognize Swami Vivekananda's greatness.<sup>25</sup> He wrote "only after Tamil Nadu accepted and honoured Swami Vivekananda did Bengal Maharashtra and other states realise his greatness".

Sri Ramakrishnananda, who was a fellow disciple and who was the first Head of the Madras Ramakrishna Mutt, has written on similar lines.

It is here by the intelligent and earnest citizens of the city of Madras that Swami Vivekananda's great intellectual and moral worth were first recognized openly.<sup>26</sup>

On July 15, 1906 Swami Subodhanda was presented a welcome address by the citizens of Madras, in which this fact was emphasized.

“And if we now take credit to ourselves as having been the discoverers of Vivekananda in that we had faith in him and encouraged him to go to the Chicago Parliament of Religions as the representative of Hinduism, it is not out of my feeling of egotism and self-satisfaction.

In his reply Subodhananda expressed his gratitude to the citizens of Madras.

“Not only the members of the Ramakrishna Mission but the members of the Vedanta Societies in Europe and America and the students of Vedanta all over the world are all indebted to the inhabitants of Madras for having discovered Swami Vivekananda, long before he was known to the public.”<sup>28</sup>

## THE FIRST DISCIPLES WERE ALSO FROM MADRAS

Swami Vivekananda's first band of disciples was from Madras. The great French intellectual Romain Rolland wrote.

“It was in Madras that he founded his first group of devoted disciples who dedicated themselves to the cause of service. After his departure, They continued to support him with their letters and their faith and he, from countries far away kept his direction over them”.<sup>29</sup>

Chief among these disciples was Mandayam Azhaga Singa Perumal (1863-1909), called “Alasinga” by Vivekananda. He wrote “One rarely finds men like our Alasinga in this world. One so unselfish, so hard working and devoted to his guru, and such an obedient disciple is very rare on earth.”<sup>30</sup>

Again in a letter to Swami Abedhananda in October 1895, Vivekananda writes :

“In effect Mr. Sterdy is my secretary in England Mahendra Bapu in Calcutta and Alasinga in Madras”.

When Swami Vivekananda was in America, among the many letters he wrote, forty of them were addressed to Alasinga.

When Azhagia Singa Perumal passed away in an article Subramania Bharathi wrote in memory of him he mentions that he was chief among the disciples.

"When in 1893, Vivekananda came to South India like any other Sanyasi on a pilgrimage, it was Azhagia Singa Perumal who discovered the splendour of Vivekananda and brought glory to the nation."<sup>31</sup>

Besides Alasinga there were other disciples also. There were Dr. M. C. Nanjunda Rao, and G. Venkata Rao, They were called "The Madras youngmen" by Vivekananda lovingly. He wrote to them expressing the in most feelings of his heart. Some of them helped to publish the English Journal of the Movement.

## THE MESSAGE OF KANYAKUMARI

Kanyakumari is the southern tip of India and Tamil Nadu. On the shore there is the Temple of Kanyakumari the Guardian Deity, washed by the waves of the ocean. There is a rock, a quarter of a mile away in the sea. Swami Vivekananda swam through the rough sea and reached the rock in the last week of December 1892. He stayed on the rock for three days in deep meditation. There he had a great vision of the future and came to certain conclusions of what he should do and how.

"For the first time in the history of religion, the subject of meditation of a great monk was man, the god sleeping in man, and not any far away deity".<sup>32</sup> writes Swami Ranganathananda. He adds,

"When in deep meditation, the whole history of India unfolded before his vision, and he became, identified, as it were, with the achievements and failures, sorrows and triumphs of his mother land, her past glory and continued existence through millenniums filled him with inspiration, but her present condition filled him with hope. With tears in his eyes and hope in his breast, he discovered his mission in life, which was to dedicate himself to the regeneration of India,

the Queen of his adoration, to reawaken her from her deep long sleep. Like a second Buddha, emerging from the seclusion of Buddha Gaya, Swami Vivekananda emerged from his meditations at Kanyakumari".<sup>33</sup>

Swami Vivekananda himself has said in his letter to Sri Ramakrishnananda, dated 19th March 1894.

"Sitting on the last bit of Indian Rock near Mother Kumari's Temple. I hit upon a plan".

The Kanyakumari meditation was the birth place of practical Vedanta. The Kanyakumari meditation was the source of the creation of a New India. Here took place a synthesis of Western thought and Eastern philosophy. Here, the Ramakrishna order came into being in the vision of Vivekananda, Kanyakumari meditation brought about a fusion of spiritual awakening with social reformation. Last but not least, it was the Kanyakumari meditation which gave him the courage and enthusiasm to go to the Chicago Parliament of religions and blazon forth the magnificent names of the Hindu scriptures.

Though Kanyakumari was, in those days part of the Travancore state, it is now part of Tamil Nadu, as per tradition. The Vivekananda Rock Memorial keeps the Kanyakumari meditation ever green in our memory.

The message of Kanyakumari is one of the contributions of Tamil Nadu towards the conception and spreading forth of the Ramakrishna order.

## CHICAGO PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

On September 11, 1893, Swami Vivekananda addressed the world parliament of Religions held in Chicago as a representative of Hinduism. He presented in a lucid manner the doctrines of Hinduism, the spiritual values of Vedanta, the eternal qualities of Indian philosophy and the appeal of Advaita. He took America by storm. They came to watch and were carried away by his rhetoric, by his sincerity and his striking personality.

The Chicago visit was a milestone in the spiritual history of India. Many have pointed out Tamil Nadu's contribution to this historic visit.

"It was Madras that had first recognized the greatness of Vivekananda and equipped him for the journey to Chicago". says Swami Nikhilananda.<sup>34</sup>

When Swami Vivekananda returned from the Chicago Conference in 1897. The Madras times pointed out "It was Madras that first recognized the superior merits of the Swami and equipped him for Chicago".<sup>35</sup>

The Maharajah of Mysore, the Maharajah of Ramanathapuram Bhaskara Sethupathi, Azhagia Singaperumal and others had taken all possible steps for his journey to Chicago. But the Swami himself felt undecided and confused.

But, several days later, one night as he lay half asleep, the command came to him in a symbolic dream. Swami Vivekananda saw the figure of his master. Sri Ramakrishna, walking from the sea shore into the waters of the ocean and beckoning to him to follow. He woke up. A great peace and joy filled his whole being, his mind seemed to have been impressed with the authoritative word 'go'. The vision sustained him. He thought it to be a direct command from above. All his doubts and misgivings were dispelled and his nervousness left him".<sup>36</sup>

After he had this vision, he obtained permission from Sarada Devi and her blessings and expressed his assent to his friends. It is note - worthy that this decision was taken in Madras.

A subscription committee was formed under the presidentship of Azhagia Singar to collect money for the Chicago tour. They went from door to door collecting money. Such a thing had never happened in Madras.

"If it is mother's will that I go, then let me receive the money from the people. Because it is for the people of India that I am going to the west for the people and the poor" said Swami Vivekananda and the people of Madras were the first to contribute. In his letter, he refers to His Madras disciples more than once.

"I now think it was foolish of me to go to the Parliament on the strength of the urging of our Madras boys".

"The Madras people have done for me more than I deserved and more than was in their power".

"My thanks eternal to the Madras youngmen - May the Lord Bless them for ever".

Again his Madras disciples were the first to spread the news of his resounding success at the Chicago World Parliament of Religions. Also they spread the news of his travel in the West and about the meetings he addressed there.<sup>37</sup>

A meeting was held to celebrate the Swami's proclamation of the greatness of Indian Philosophy at the Chicago Parliament on April 28, 1894. Calcutta celebrated the Swami's success only on 5th September 1894.

An account of the public meeting is given in the celebrated Tamil magazine of the period, "Viveka Chinthamani" as follows :

"A Public meeting was held at Pachaiappan House to felicitate Swami Vivekananda for his lucid exposition of Hindu Philosophy at the Chicago World Parliament of Religions and to express their appreciation of the friendly reception given to him by the American people".<sup>37</sup>

At this meeting eminent people like Savalai Ramaswami Mudaliar and Sri S. Subramania Iyer addressed the gathering. The felicitatory address was sent to Swami Vivekananda. The Madras address was published in all the newspapers and crea-



ted a sensation," writes Swami Vivekananda to one of his follow-disciples on 25th September 1894.

After his return from Chicago he first stepped on Tamil-Nadu soil at Pamban, where a commemorative pillar was built by the Raja of Ramnad, Bhaskara Sethupathi in 1897. The sacred slogan "Satyameva Jayate" was inscribed on the pillar. The complete inscription runs as follows :

"Satyameva Jayate. The monument erected by Bhaskara Sethupathī, the Raja of Ramnad marks the sacred spot where His Holiness Swami Vivekananda's blessed feet first trod on Indian Soil, together with the Swami's English disciples, on his Holiness's return from the Western hemisphere, where glorious and unprecedented success attended His Holiness's philanthropic labours to spread the religion of Vedanta".<sup>38</sup> (January 27 1897.)

## THE FIRST JOURNAL WAS PUBLISHED IN TAMIL NADU

In his letter to his disciples during his first American tour, Swami Vivekananda laid stress on the power of Journalism as well as the power of organisation.

In his letter from New York dated 25th September 1894, he wrote of starting a magazine in Sanskrit and Hindi and another magazine in English. But the idea was not given effect.

On July 27, 1895 a prospectus was published in the Calcutta Indian Mirror By B. Venkataranga Row, M.A., M.C. Nanjunda Row B.A., M.B.F.C.M. and M.C. Alasingaperumal, B.A., in response to Swami Vivekananda's desire. A part of the prospectus is given below :

"Under the advice and with the encouragement of Swami Vivekananda, it is proposed to start a weekly journal to be named the Brahnavadin. The main object of the journal

is to propagate the principles of the Vedantic religion of India, and to work towards the improvement of the social and moral conditions of man by speedily holding aloft, his sublime and universal ideal of Hinduism".

Brahmavadin did not appear as a weekly as noted in the prospectus, but as a fortnightly. The first issue came out on September 14th 1895 from Triplicane, Madras. It had fourteen pages. Its Editor was Azhagia Singaperumal.

Swami Vivekananda got many people to subscribe for the paper. He wrote articles for the paper and offered guidance and advice. In a letter to Azhagia Singaperumal, he gives advice on the style he must adopt.

"You must always remember that you are addressing the whole world not India alone, and that the same world is entirely ignorant of what you have got to tell them. Use the translations of every Sanskrit Poem carefully and make things as easy as possible".

The Prabuddha Bharata followed the Brahmavadin as the second organ of the Ramakrishna Order from Madras. It was a monthly.

The prospectus for Prabuddha Bharata was published in "Indian Mirror" of Calcutta on 14th June 1896. It was signed by the Madras disciples of Swami Vivekananda. They were P. Aiyasami, M.A., B.L., B.R. Rajam Iyer, B.A., P. T. Narasimhacharya, B.A., and B.V. Kamesvara Iyer, B.A., A part of it is given below :

"A monthly journal (devoted to religion and philosophy) in English from Madras under the title of the "Prabuddha Bharata" or "Awakened India"

will make its appearance on 1st July 1896. It will be a sort of supplement to the Brahmavadin, and seek to do for students, youngmen and others, what is already doing so successfully for the more advanced classes. It will, with that view, endea-

your to present the sacred of Hinduism and the sublime and beautiful ideal of the Vedanta in as simple, homely and interesting a manner as possible and amongst others, will contain the lives and teachings of great Sages and Bhakthas, irrespective of caste, creed, or nationality who are and ever will be the beaconlights of humanity.....The conductors of the magazine.....have secured the sympathy and support of some of the eminent thinkers of the day including Swami Vivekananda, now in America".<sup>39</sup>.

The first issue was published from Mylapore and had twelve pages. In the first page there is a foot-note as follows:

"A name suggested by Swami Vivekananda, which while it means "Awakened India," indicates the close relationship that exists between Hinduism and Buddha".

Its editor was the famous Tamil Novelist and philosopher B. R. Rajam Iyer. As an example of his powerful writing a part of the editorial in the first issue is given below.

"The awakening we speak of, of which there is an abundance of symptoms on every side, will however not be like that of an eagle, which rises from sleep with renewed vigour and strength to roam and to fight, but that of a nightingale melting the hearer's hearts with its soft sweet melodies".<sup>40</sup>.

Welcoming "Prabuddha Bharata" the "Indian Mirror" of Calcutta wrote on 14th, June 1896 the following note :

"We find that a new magazine is about to be published from Madras under the appropriate title "Awakened India." Madras has already got a very good religious journal, called the Brahma Vadin, which is a recognized organ of Swami Vivekananda and his party.....we believe, therefore, that the more we have such journals as the Brahma Vadin and the Awakened India, the better it will be for us".<sup>41</sup>.

B. R. Rajam Iyer passed away in May 1898, and Prabuddha Bharata stopped publication for three months. It was resumed in August 1898 from Almora and continues its good work.

In January 1899 a magazine in Bengali was started in Calcutta, under the name Udbodhan given by Swami Vivekananda. It was in the charge of Swami Trigunatithenanda, but guided by Swami Vivekananda. We may be proud of the fact that Tamil Nadu was the first contributor in the journalistic field to help and strengthen the Ramakrishna Order.

## VIVEKANANDA SOCIETIES

The Vivekananda Societies are a part of the Ramakrishna Movement. The first Vivekananda Society came into being in Tamil Nadu.

In 1897, while returning from Pamban to Madras Swami Vivekananda stayed at Tiruchi for a few hours. It was early morning 40' clock. But thousands of people had gathered to greet the Swamiji. The students of the National High School presented an address of welcome. So that all this ardour should not be frithened away, the Vivekananda Society was formed. A news item appeared in the Indian Mirror of Calcutta dated 21.2.1897 commenting on this.

"In honour of the visit of Swami Vivekananda to Tricchi-mopoly, an association has been started by the name of "The Swami Vivekananda Society for promoting knowledge. Mr. T. M. Manickam Pillai has been elected as Secretary and Mr. Singaravelu Mudaliar as Treasurer".<sup>42</sup>

It was only in November 1902 that a Vivekananda Society was started in Calcutta under the auspices of the Belur Ramakrishna Mutt. Long before this, Tamil Nadu had its second Vivekananda Society in Vaniyambadi-Pudur in 1897 with C. Venkataswami Naidu as President.<sup>43</sup>

C. Venkataswami Naidu wrote to Swami Vivekananda about the work done by the society. This letter should be included in the collection of Swami Vivekananda's letter. Swami Vivekananda's reply dated 23.1.1900 and written from Los Angeles was as follows : <sup>44</sup>

To

K. Venkataswamy Naidoo

President - Viv. Society

Dear Sir,

Many Thanks for your kind words for me. Accept my congratulations for your success informing a society for the propagation of Vedic religion.

May all success crown your efforts, with thanks and good wishes to all the members; Pranams.

Ever yours with the Lord

Vivekananda.

Mr. Naidu had won praise from the heads of the Ramakrishna Mutt like Swami Ramakrishnanda and Swami Sivananda. He had worked to organise a Ramakrishna Mutt at Nattarampalli. It is now known that he organised thirteen societies. Besides Tiruchi and Vaniyambadi, there were societies in Arasampatti, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Cuddalore, Tuticorin, and Porur. Research must be carried out among old Tamil News-papers for information about these.

The first newspaper carrying Vivekananda's name was started in Tamil Nadu. Venkataswami Naidu used to dress like Swami Vivekananda and standing at street corners make speeches. He was a good orator. If he had known English, he would have been a leading light in the movement. He started a paper in Tamil called Vivekanandam after Swami Vivekananda. He was its Editor also. It was a fortnightly and was printed at the Vaniyambadi, Amburpet, Mohamadiya Mitran Press and published in 1908. <sup>45</sup>

Thus, it appears as if the first paper in an Indian language to bear Swami Vivekananda's name is the Tamil paper "Vivekanandam". But unfortunately not even a single copy of the paper is available now.

I must be pointed out here that in Ceylon Swami Vipulananda became Editor of a paper "Vivekanandan", started in 1925 by the Vivekananda Society.

## THE FIRST TRANSLATION OF SWAMIJI'S LECTURES

In 1897 a Tamil book titled "Swami Vivekananda's discourses" was published. This was a translation of the Swami's speech on Theosophy, by Muthu Thambi of Jaffna.

V. Nataraja Iyer, one of the devotees of Swami Vivekananda, was the Editor of two magazines "Lokopahari" and "Gnana Chandrika". He translated some of Swamiji's speeches and published them in two volumes. The book was called "Gnana Thirattu".

The first part was published on 1st April 1898. It was of 100 pages and was dedicated to Swami Vivekananda. The life of Swami Vivekananda was given in the first three pages. The real and apparent man, the Chicago lecture. Hindu, Religion, Karmayoga, Aradhana (worship) Duty, Good and Evil-Mukthi and Bhakthi are some of the titles of the discourses which have been translated into Tamil.

The second part contains Swami Vivekananda's talk on Bhakthi Yoga and a part of Gnana Yoga.

These two volumes were published with the permission of the Ramakrishna Mission at Madras and a picture of Swami Vivekananda was given free along with the books.

V. Nataraja Iyer, Editor of 'Lokopahari' sent a copy of "Gnana Thirattu" to Swami Vivekananda, who was then in Darjeeling. Swamiji replied on 15.04.1908 as follows :

"I have much pleasure to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 7th instant together with a copy of a free rendering in lucid Tamil of some of my lectures. Indeed you have done a great service to the Tamil speaking people generally and to your anxious subscribers specially. It is

no doubt very desirable that there be a broadcast spreading of all that I have said amongst the people, and the best mode of doing it is to render it in all the vernaculars of the country, and you are to be congratulated for taking the lead in right earnest".

Wishing you all success in your laudable ventures and with blessings to you". <sup>46</sup>.

One must note that Swami Vivekananda appreciated the necessity of translating his works into the Indian languages and that he congratulated Nataraja Iyer for taking the lead. This letter must be included among the published letters of Swamiji.

Swamiji's discourses may have appeared in Tamil paper and papers in other Indian languages. The first book to appear in the Indian languages and win praise from Swami Vivekananda was without doubt, the book "Gnana Thirattu."

In 1897 Swamiji's discourses were published under the title "From Colombo to Almora". It was printed at the Vyjayanthi Press at Egmore, Madras. This was acknowledged as the only authorised edition of the lectures by a reader in Indian Mirror of Calcutta in a letter dated 22nd August 1897.<sup>47</sup>

Also it is worth remembering that Swami Vivekananda's "Song of the Sanyasin" was published in an Indian language for the first time in Madurai. In 1904 the General Secretary of Madurai Vivekananda Society, Mr. M. Gopalakrishna Iyer who was a great Tamil scholar, translated the Swami's work into Tamil and published it.

## VIVEKANANDA STHUTI MAA WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN TAMIL

The Sri Vivekananda Stotra Mala was composed by one of his contemporaries and was published in 1899 at the Madras Egmore Vyjayanthi Press at Egmore by its Proprietor Mahavidwan Ramaswami Naidu.

The book ran to eighteen pages and was in the form of verses. The verses were composed by Harihara Padi Chinnaiah Mudaliar, who called himself the servant of the Sadhus.

The verses are in the metrical form known as "Venba". in Tamil. They are emotionally evocative. In these verses, the poet recalls the rhetoric of Swami's discourses, the Chicago discourse, the visit to Madras, the discussions which took place at Castle Kernan, how the author was prevented from meeting Swami Vivekananda how he recognized the Swami as he was going towards the Madras Harbour and offered him his obeisances, and how he succeeded in meeting Vivekananda at the house where he was staying. The note of adoration in the verses is most moving.

Harihara Padi Chinnaiah Mudaliar organised a Sat-Sangha Salai at Vyasarpadi, in Madras.

Srimad Vivekananda Swamigal Stotramala was the first book to give several incidents in the Swami's life in book form.

No other book of this kind appeared in any of the other Indian languages.

This book which spreads the message of Swami Vivekananda was the first of its kind and deserves to be mentioned in the literature of the Ramakrishna Movement.

The history of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda Movement must be written in Tamil. Chinnaiah Mudaliar can be said to be the pioneer in such an effort.

## CONCLUSION :

The contribution of Tamil Nadu to the shaping of the Ramakrishna Movement has been briefly outlined above. It was not an accident that Tamil Nadu played this great role in the development of the Ramakrishna Movement. The contacts with Bengal through the Chaithanya and Brāhmosamaj Movements had helped to lay a basis for the creation of a suitable soil for the sprouting of a spiritual movement.



It might seem that the role played by Tamil intellectuals in the discovery of Vivekananda's potential greatness, the founding and development of the Ramakrishna Movement, and in the spreading of the gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda has been given too much stress in this paper. Such a stress, in the author's view, is justified in the light of the general neglect of regional studies of national movements in historical research.

It is the fervent wish of the author that the great project launched by Sri Ramakrishna Mission for an extensive research on the spread and influence of the Ramakrishna Movement in India and abroad would provide for in-depth regional studies on the involvement of the peoples of various states in the Ramakrishna Movement. Then only the truly national character of the movement and its contribution to national integration would be appreciated.

The author hopes to bring out soon a book on "The Ramakrishna Movement and Tamil Nadu" in which the various aspects of the relationship of Tamil Nadu to Ramakrishna Movement just touched upon in this paper, would be elaborated and elucidated.

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41. Swami Jyotir Mayananda; op. cit. p.544.
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43. The life sketch and teachings of Bhagwan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva - Tr. Maxmuller's English book - 1904 preface.
44. From the preserved Facsimile of the letter.
45. Madras Native Newspapers, report - 1902.
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47. Swami Jyotirmayananda; op.cit. P. 568.

# **TAMIL LITERARY & CULTURAL HERITAGE AND WEST BENGAL**

**SRI NRISINHA RAMANUJADAS**

To achieve emotional integration amongst different States in India, the most important element is to show respect and interest in each others, cultural and literary heritage and it becomes easier if literature of one state is translated into languages of other states. Bengal and Tamilnadu are having continued links since long past through pilgrimage between the Kaveri and the Ganga, trade relations etc. Moving Ambassadors like Sri Chaitanya, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Sri Subramania Bharathi etc. have largely contributed towards the integration of the two different cultural traditions and a large number of people of these two states feel at home when they have to reside in these places due to various circumstances even if their food and dress habits are different. In this short account, an attempt has been made to trace the Tamil literary and cultural heritage as studied and followed in West Bengal.

To practise the ways and means of life and to dive into the culture and literature of the Tamilians by the people of West Bengal arise mainly from two urges religious instinct and the thirst for literary knowledge; the latter until now was not so much significant in comparison to the former. We find from history that at the time of the upsurge of Saivism in Tamilnadu many Brahmins from Bengal were taken there and were appointed as Priests in Saiva temples and some sort of Tamil customs were brought by them to their homes. On the other hand, worship of Vishnu, flanked by Sridevi and Bhudevi,

prevalent amongst Shree Vaishnavas of the Deccan, spread to eastern India. It has now come to light that while touring East Bengal around 1503 A.D., Sri Chaitanya recovered an image of Basudeva with Sri and Bhu (people say Lakshmi and Saraswati, which is not according to Shastric instruction) from a pond in Magdoba village near Faridpur, where the image might have been kept immersed due to fear of desecration by the Muslims and he also reconsecrated its worship, giving charge to his cousin, Vishnudas. (Vide an Article by Sri Chapalakanta Bhattacharyya, Ex-M.P., and Ex-Editor of Ananda Bazar Patrika, published in Jugantar Patrika dated 6.8.1986). This means that Shree Vaishnavite mode of worship was in vogue in some parts of East Bengal as early as 15th century. Other examples can also be cited which prove the existence of Shree Vaishnavism in Bengal about four hundred years ago.

Late Rasikmohan Vidyabhusan, a centenarian Vidvan Acharyya of Gaudiya Vaishnavas and versatile writer of numerous religious books, wrote some sixty years back (vide introduction to his book 'Shree Vaishnava') that ten generations ago (i.e. about 350 years back) his forefather, Hari Narayan Chattoraj, a resident of Western Bengal, became initiated to Shree Vaishnavism. His son Kumud Behari, an ardent Shree Vaishnava, was given in marriage to the second daughter of Srinivas Acharyya, a famous Gaudiya Vaishnavite at that time.

Two of the oldest Shree Vaishnavite Mutts of Bengal are still in existence—one in Chandrakona town, Midnapore Dist., known as Nayagunj Achari Mutt established in the sixteenth century by Pandit Swarupananda Mohanta of the parampara of Raghavacharyya of prayag connected with Totadri-Gadi; the other being Bara Akhra Mutt of Vadakalai Shree Vaishnavite sect at Jafargunj two miles north of Murshidabad town, established during the reign of Seraj-id-daula (approx. 1750 A. D.). This Mutt was shifted here from Dacca when its Mohant desired to settle on the bank of the Ganga and the lineage came from Galta-Gadi near Jaipur in Rajasthan. A long chronological chain of both these Mutts are available now, but this is not the place to discuss them in detail.

Due to the influence of these Shree Vaishnavite Mutts and Shree Vaishnava saints and pilgrims, tenets of Shree Vaishnavite modes of worship, some stotras and history of the lives of important religious teachers became widely known to the Bengalee followers of this religious sect, but it is doubtful how far Tamil culture and literature used to be cultivated at that time. At least no trace of it could be found and reason is not far to seek: the religious teachers were mostly North Indians having little or no idea about Tamil language, literature and way of life. But then, there had been a colony of Tamilian Shree Vaishnavites, and that too is still in existence, in Gadibero village of Purulia District on Asansol-Adra railway route in West Bengal. About sixty Achariya Brahmin families are settled here for more than 300 years. There are two versions for the reasons of establishment of such a Shree Vaishnava colony in this remote village corner of Purulia District. According to one version, Acharyya Tirumalay, a Tridandi Sannyasin of Sri Ramanuja sect from Kanchi-mandalam after his pilgrimage from Badrikasram in the Himalayas came here on his way back and the local Rajah of Panchakote wanted to become his disciple and prayed unto him to settle in this area. The Swami did not agree, but he sent his brother Sri Rangaraja Swami after his return to Kanchi. The Rajah with his family became disciple of Sri Rangaraja Swami, offered his Guru huge landed properties and constructed a temple of Sri Keshavdeb. Sri Rangaraja Swami brought from his native village many of his associates and relatives and thus a Shree Vaishnava colony grew up in course of time. According to other version, the Rajah of Panchakote while on his visit to Tirupati came in contact with Sri Gopalacharyya, a Shree Vaishnava savant, of Tirunelveli district, became his disciple, brought him with his relatives to Gadibero village and dedicated to him 104 mauzas within his zamindary. Anyway now these Shree Vaishnava families here live like their counterpart at the outside and have Bengali as their vernacular language in schools and colleges, but still in most cases have their matrimonial connections with the southerners and speak Tamil in the homestead. Tamil literature language and way of life are cultivated though in a

changed form amongst these people since centuries past in this lone corner of West Bengal.

The image of Bhasyakar Sri Ramanujacharyya (1017-1137 A. D.), a foremost religious teacher of pan-Indian fame from Tamilnadu, caught the imagination of many Bengalees in the beginning of the present century and a number of his biographies were published in Bengali. Swami Ramakrishnananda's (a monk of Ramakrishna Mission) 'Ramanuja Charit' (1898-1906 A. D. Pages 242) written on the basis of the Sanskrit 'Prapannamritam' of Anantachari Swami may be called pioneer in this field, followed by (a) Rajendra Nath Ghosh's (also turned a monk-Swami Chidhananda-afterwards) 'Shankar O Ramanuja' (1910-Pages 1060), a mammoth comparative biological sketch of the two religious giants of South India and (b) Saratchandra Shastri's 'Ramanuja charita' (1910-Pages about 160). Two dramas were written on the life sketch of Sri Ramanuja around 1920, by two famous dramatists of the then Bengal and were successfully staged in professional theatres at that time - one by Kshirode Prasad Vidavinode and the other by Aparesh Chandra Mukherjee. Holy lives of Alvars were also the subject matter of the books like 'Dvadash Alvar' by Sundarananda Vidya-vinode (1934, Pages 38) 'Shree Vaishnava' by Rasik Mohan Vidyabhusan (including lives of Acharyyas from Nathamunito Vedantadesika and Manavala Mamuni-written in 1940 with 256 pages) and Kshetra Mohan Basu's 'Alvar-Katha' (1962-70 pages). Sri Ramanuja's magnum opus in Sanskrit 'Shree Bhasyam, the main philosophical source of Visistadvaitism-was also translated into Bengali by Pandit Durgamohan Sankhya-Vedanta-tirtha who obtained Mahamahopadhyaya title for this translation in two volumes as far back as 1911.

During Pre-Independence period, two Tamil Classics were translated into Bengali by Sri Nalini Mohan Sanyal one is 'Kural' (1937) on the basis of V.V.S. Iyer's 'Maxims of Tiruvalluvar' and the other being 'Silappadiharam' of Ilango Adigal also on the basis of an English translation. This was the first time that a taste of Tamil literature could reach the general people in Bengal in their own language. A new translation



in Bengali of this great classic of Tamilnadu (Tirukkural) is being brought out by the publication deptt., of Sree Balaram Dharma Sopan, printing of which is nearing completion and here it has been attempted to keep in tact the terseness and compactness of the original Tamil which is absent in the earlier translation by Sri Sanyal.

But inspite of all these, no endeavour in this respect could be campared with those by late Swami Yatindra Ramanujacharyya (1892-1975). He is rightly called the Bhagirath for bringing the flow of Tamil Vaishnavite literary and cultural heritage to the soil of Bengal. A physician of high order and merit and one of the topmost renowned medical practitioner of his time, he relinquished family life and all worldly affairs in 1947 and settled to an Ashram founded by him on the bank of the Ganga at Khardah, in the district of 24 parganas of W. Bengal, just 10 miles north of Calcutta. He was initiated to Shree Vaishnavism in 1919 through Sri Balaram Swami of Ayodhya who was a disciple of the famous Sri Rangadesika Swami, founder of Sri Rangaji Temple, Vrindavan, the foremost seat of Shree Vaishnavas in North India. From the very beginning, Swami Yatindra Ramanujacharyya became interested in diving deep into the philosophy and literature of Visistadvaitism. Having acquired the knowledge of available Sanskrit books on the subject which he collected from Varanasi, Vrindavan, Sholapur, Pune and Madras, his attention was turned to Tamil Vaishnavite literatures which was hitherto untapped in any other Indian languages including English and he learnt Tamil himself for the purpose. He went to Srirangam (Trichy) in 1951 stayed there for a year and studied entire Nalayira Prabandham with the commentary of Peria Achchan Pillai in Tamil from U. V. Sri Ramaswami Ayyengar and also all of Sri Ramanuja's 9 books in Sanskrit from Sri Kasturi Rangachari with great devotion and hard labour. After returning to Khardah from Srirangam he wrote and published about 60 books during a span of 20 years 1955 to 1975. He first translated into Bengali from Sanskrit the entire works of Sri Ramanuja; 2 works of Yamunacharyya-Gitartha Samgraha and Alawandar Stotram; several works of Lokacharrya Swami with commentary of Mana-

vala Mamuni-Tatvatraya, Sri Vachan Bhusan, Arthapanchak etc., and Svetasvatar Upanished with its commentary of Ranga Ramanuja Muni etc. All these books were subsequently published by him from his Ashram with original Sanskrit and Bengali meaning. Sri Yatindra Swami also published several Shree Vaishnavite Sanskrit literatures with Bengali translation written by a Shree Vaishnava savant residing near Kathmandu, Nepal, whose name was Srinivas Acharyya-name of some such books are Panchastavi of Kuresh Swami, Sudarshan Satakam of Kura-Narayan Jiyar, Vilakshan Mokshadhikara of Devaraja Muni and Archiradi Marga of Lokachariya Swami. Life of Acharyya Ramanuja written by Brahmachari Sisirkumar has also been published from the Publication Department of Sree Balaram Dharma Sopan Ashram. Apart from these, Sri Yatindra Ramanujacharyya wrote and published several original books in Bengali about Shree Vaishnavism and Shree Vaishnava savants-like 'Visistadvaita Siddhanta O Prachinata' (1954), 'Alvars' (1958), 'Tatva O Tathya (1966), 'Guruvar Balaram' in 2 vols. (1960 & 1965), 'Manab Ujjivan' (1958) etc.

But his most important work was the translations into Bengali from original Tamil. All the works of 11 Alvars and about 500 Pasuram (Verses) of Tirumangai Alvar (out of about 1400 verses) and some other Tamil books important to all Shree Vaishnavas have been translated by him. Among such books so far published the following are worth-noting :

1. Sahasra-Giti (Tiruvaimoli of Nammaivar)  
with a lengthy introduction by the  
National Professor Dr. Sunity Kumar  
Chatterjee — 1963 pps.742
2. Sathakop Alvar O Tahar Divya Prabandha  
(The other 3 works of Nammalvar)  
(Nammalvar and his sacred works) — 1982 pps.152
3. Tiruppallandu (of Peria Alvar) — 1972 pps.13
4. Bhaktanghirenu Alvar O Tahar  
Divya Prabandha (Tondaradippodi  
Alvar and his sacred works) — 1976 pps.42

5. Tiruppan Alvar O Tahar Divya Prabhandha  
Tiruppan Alvar and his Sacred works — 1976 pps. 32
6. Madhurkavi Alvar O Tahar Divya Prabandha  
Madhurakavi" and his sacred works. — 1976 pps. 30
7. Pratham Alvar Traya O Tahader Divya  
Prabandha (Works of first three  
Alvars). — 1987 pps. 130
8. Shree-Vrata (Tiruppavai with  
commentary of Peria Achchan Pillai) — 1962 pps. 352
9. Shree Vaishnava Darshan O Dharma  
2 vols. (Bengali translation  
in verses of 'Idu' commentary of  
Tiruvaimoli) — 1969 & 1973 pps. 850  
(Demy quarto size).
10. Upadesh-Rattinamalai of Manavala  
Mamuni- — 1970 pps. 80

Apart from these, printing of Tiruppavai and 60 verses of Nachchiar Tirumoli (of Andal Alvar) have been completed. In all these publications the important features are - (i) transliteration in Bengali script of the original Tamil verses (ii) Bengali meaning of each Tamil word (iii) Running Bengali translation of each Tamil verse (iv) important notes and significance in the Tamil verse if any.

Sri Yatindra Swami also started a Bengali monthly journal 'Ujjivan' in 1954 which is running for 34th year now and many thought-provoking articles on Shree Vaishnavism are regularly being published in this journal.

With the sad demise of Swami Yatindra Ramanujacharyya in 1975, publication of his works suffered a big jolt no doubt, but it has not stopped, Printing of Tirukkural, Nachchiar Tirumoli and Ramanuja-nurrandadi (of Amudanar) is in progress though in snail's speed due to various reasons. After publication of these three books, printing of translation of the works of other Alvars would be taken up. It may be noted here that the late Swami Yatindra Ramanujacharyya or

Sree Balaram Dharma Sopan, the institution founded by him, was and/or is cultivating the cultural link with the south just to propagate the religious side of Shree Vaishnavism in the soil of Bengal and with this sole motive, publication of Tamil Vaishnavite works may be looked at not from any other view point. Anyway the late Swamiji has been instrumental in rousing great interest amongst the learned people in West Bengal who can now have a working knowledge about South Indian Vaishnavism hitherto unknown to them. And for this commendable work, Tamil Writers Association in Calcutta honoured him in 1966 by presenting a silver lamp as a token of appreciation.

A new consciousness has arisen amongst Bengalees to know the Tamilians-with their language, culture and heritage. A number of enlightened Tamilian inhabitants of South Calcutta and the two Tamil Associations viz. Tamil Writers' Association and Bharathi Tamil Sangham, both of South Calcutta, are endeavouring since a long time for the interchange of cultures and getting together of both communities and knowing each others' language and literatures. Creation of two chairs in Viswa-Bharati and Calcutta University is expected to do a lot to achieve this purpose. Recent works by Samir Kanta Gupta (Alvar Padavali), Dr. Sati Ghosh (Dakshinatyer Alvar-giti O Banglar Mahajan Padavali) though incomplete in its dealing, and the works of Prof. Bishnu Pada Bhattacharyya (Bengali translation of some selected Tamil short stories) are thought to be significant. Enthusiasts like Dr. Sunity Kumar Chatterjee and Jyotish Chandra Ghosh are no more, but we have still Dr. Rabindra Kumar Dasgupta-former Director of National Library and men like Sri Sudhangsu Mohan Banerjee, and Prof. Bishnu Pada Bhattacharyya who know a lot about Tamil culture and literature. If an institution with few but laborious enthusiastic members of both communities is created at Calcutta with the patronage of the above mentioned elders, more translations of the Tamil classics and modern literary works may be brought out and inter-change of the culture of both states may be possible. Finance these days may not be hurdle to such noble work.

# **SHREE VAISHNAVISM IN NORTH INDIA UPTO THE 19TH CENTURY**

**SRI NRISINHA RAMANUJADAS**

‘Shree’ Vaishnavism means philosophical and religious system on the faith of Vishnu as expounded by Alvars and Acharyyas particularly by Sri Ramanuja of Tamilnadu. Factually speaking, Shree Vaishnavism in its true form began to be established in North India in a systematic way only during the nineteenth century. Founded and developed in Tamilnadu it took a long time of about 1000 years there for its development in the present form. Evolution of its philosophical thought more or less ceased in the early part of the 17th century, more particularly with the publication of ‘Yatindra-mata-dipika’ written by Srinivasdas and thereafter a stalemate existed. By this time southern part of the present Andhra Pradesh, entire Tamilnadu and a large part of Karnataka and Kerala came under the sway of Shree Vaishnavism. Strangely during this period, although Vaishnavism as expounded by Sri Chaitanya, Sri Sankardeva, Sri Nimbarka, Sri Ramananda, Sri Ballavacharyya and the Varakaris spread by leaps and bound in the eastern northern and western sides of India, no systematic effort by any Shree Vaishnava Acharyya was made in these parts of India for spread of its theory, philosophy literature and devotional practices. True Shree Vaishnavism was practically unknown to North India and its literature was not available there before the 19th Century. Reasons for this are not far to seek. Difficulties owing to language, custom, distance, proper communication by road and

anarchism due to absence of any stable Government all over India, stood in the way and so Shree Vaishnava Acharyyas did not dare to come to North India and settle there for propagation of its sectarian ideas among the masses.

However, it is not entirely correct to say that there was no attempt at all in this regard. Stray efforts were made for propagation of Shree Vaishnavite ideas, though not in a systematic way, in the northern side of the country all through these years. This was done by some eminent Acharyyas and Sadhus in personal capacity in course of their pilgrimage to North India and stamp of their activities is still traceable in some areas. Pilgrimage both ways—from north to south and from south to north—was the general custom amongst the devout since time immemorial, thanks to the teachings of the Hindu sages for effecting religious integration amongst the whole masses in India. Some Alvars of South India must have travelled North India on pilgrimage and they sang in praise of the divine deities installed in some prominent places. Out of 108 Divya Deshas (places of divine deities), which had been praised by the Alvars, 9 places e.g., Tuvarai (Dwaraka), Ayodhya, Naimisaranya, Vada Madurai (Mathura), Tiruvaippadi (Gokul), Kandam (Devaprayag) Tiruppiridi (Jyotispith), Badrikasram and Salagramam (Mukti-Narayan in Nepal) are situated in North India. It is not unlikely if some people were influenced by them while the Alvars were in North India, though it can not be proved decisively at this distant date.

In those days there were two traditional routes which linked north and south, - one route in the eastern side through coromondal shore via. Vizag, Simhachalam, Srikurmam, Brahmagiri, Puri, Jaipur, Jharkhand, Bhadrak, Bishnupur, Monghyr, Patna to Varanasi and onwards; the other route in the western side through Ghat via. Nasik, Gujrat, eastern Rajputana to Mathura and onwards. Traces of activities by the Shree Vaishnava Acharyyas in those days can still be located along these two traditional link routes and colonies and pockets of Shree Vaishnavas found in this part of India ascribe their origin in the hoary past caused by those moving Shree Vaishnava leaders. Many instances can be cited in this respect.

Near Brahmagiri in Orissa, there is an ancient temple called Alalnath which is corrupt form of the word Alvarnath, meaning Lord of Alvar or Lord worshipped by Alvar. The village is also known after the name of the temple. The deity is four-handed Narayan in standing pose with Shreedevi and Bhudevi on his sides. On seeing the architectural engraving and style of the deity and its 'simhasan', one should conclude that it must have been made and installed by South Indian sculptor. It was likely, by implication of its name Alvar-nath, that one Alvar was involved in its establishment. The lonely site on the traditional link route in those days having scenic beauty of Brahmagiri and Chilika lake on the background, might have attracted any Alvar to stay here in meditation for some time and during this stay he might have installed such deity here naming it after him as 'Alvar-nath'. Some people say that it was Parakal (Tirumangai) Alvar who founded this temple, as he was the only Alvar who spent a long time in North India. The temple was so famous in those days that Sri Chaitanya used to spend 15 days here every year and drew inspiration when the temple of Lord Jagannath remained closed before Rathayatra.

In Puri, Sri Ramanuja Swami himself founded a Mutt near Sankaracharya's Mutt (Govardhan Pith) and named it as Emar Mutt. This is still in existence but is now known as 'Ramanujakote'. Chronological history of this Mutt is not available, but it transpires that since 18th century onwards it became very influential in the area having the Rajah of Puri as its initiated disciple and with the help of the Rajah, 'tilak namam' of Lord Jagannath temple was done according to Shree Vaishnava custom. A new Mutt was built up just before the east gate of Jagannath Temple and all activities were shifted there and the name 'Emar Mutt' was given to this new Mutt since then.

There are about 20 Shree Vaishnava Mutts in Puri, some of which were established more than 200 years ago. They have got their connection with Totadri Gadi, Annan Gadi, Tirupati Jiya Gadi, Pratibadi Bhayamkar Gadi, Ahobilam Gadi etc. This shows that Puri being one of the four 'Dhams' of India attracting lakhs

of pilgrims from all corners of India, it was selected by Sri Ramanuja Swami himself for one his Mutts and shree Vaishnava Acharyyas of different Gadis took some interest for establishing its sub-monasteries propagating religious ideals of their own before the 19th century. These Mutts together exerted influences amongst the people for a considerable time, though now many are in dilapidated condition. But even then their importance is not overlooked.

Bengal is traditionally a land where people predominantly feel the urge for following Shakti-cult. It was Sri Chaitanya and his disciples in the sixteenth century who moulded the mind of a large section of masses towards vaishnavism according to their ideals. But even then traces of Shree Vaishnava pockets can be noticeable since last 400 years or more. Some instances may be cited here.

1. In the Gadibero village of Purulia District on Asansol-Adra railway route in West Bengal, there is a colony of about sixty Shree Viashnava families settled here for more than 300 years. There are two versions on the establishment of such a Shree Vaishnava colony in this remote village corner of Purulia District. According to one version, Acharyya Tirumalay, a Tridandi Sannyasin of Shree Ramanuja sect from Kanchi-mandalam, after his pilgrimage from Badarikasram, came here and the local Rajah of Panchakote wanted to become his disciple and prayed unto him to settle in that area. The Swami did not agree, but he sent his brother Sri Rangaraj. Swami after his return to Kanchi. The Rajah with his family became his disciple and offered his Guru large landed properties, constructed a temple of Sri Keshabdeva and dedicated it to him. Sri Rangaraja Swami brought from his native village many of his associates and relatives and thus the Shree Vaishnava Colony grew up. According to the other version, the Rajah of Panchakote while on his visit to Tirupati came in contact with Sri Gopalacharyya, a Shree Vaishnava savant of Tirunelveli district, became his disciple there, brought him with relatives to Gadibero village and dedicated to him 104 Mouzas within his zamindary in Purulia. Anyway, now these Shree Vaishnava families here



though living like their Bengalee counterparts at the outside, still have their matrimonial connection with the South Indians and speak Tamil in the homestead.

2. An example of closer connection between Shree Vaishnavas and Gaudiya Vaishnava can be cited from the statement of Late Rasikmohan Vidyabhuson, a centenarian Vidvan and Acharyya of Gaudiya Vaishnavas and versatile writer of numerous religious books. He wrote some 60 years back (vide Introduction of his book 'Shree Vaishnava') that ten generations ago i.e. about 350 years back, his forefather, Hari Narayan Chatteraj, a resident of Western Bengal, became initiated to Shree Vaishnavism. His son Kumud Behari married Krishna-priya The second daughter of Srinivas Acharyya, a famous Gaudiya Vaishnava at that time.

3. Two Shree Vaishnava Mutts, of Bengal established in the 16th century are still in existence—one in Chandrakona town or Midnapore District known as Nayagunj Achari Mutt, established by Pandit Swarupananda Mohanta in Parampara of Raghavacharyya of Prayag (U.P.) connected with Totadri Gadi; the other being Bara Akhra Mutt of Vadakalai Shree Vaishnava sect at Jafargunj, two miles north of Murshidabad town, established during the reign of Seraj-ud-duala (Approx 1750 A.D.). This Mutt was shifted here from Dacca when its Mohanta desired to settle on the bank of the Ganga and the lineage came from galta-gadi near Jaipur in Rajasthan. A long chronological chain of both these Mutts are available.

Mr. H.H. Risley wrote in his 'Tribes and Castes of Bengal' that "Baishnabas... a religious sect based upon the worship of Bishnu under the incarnation of Rama and Krishna founded as a popular religion by Ramanuja in Madras and developed in Northern India by Ramananda and Kabir owes its wide acceptance in Bengal to the teachings of Chaitanya". Sri Chaitanya himself travelled in South India widely, stayed at Srirangam for about four months and exchanged his ideas with those of Shree Vaishnava Acharyyas of the place. He brought with him Sri Gopal Bhatta, a scholar and son of a Shree Vaishnava Acharyya of Srirangam and Sri Gopal Bhatta became the main

spring in later years compiling "Hari-Bhakti-Bilas" the famous Smriti book of Gaudia Vaishnava Sampradaya on line of Shree Vaishnava Smriti text. Sri Chaitanya also probably from Alvar Trirunagari of Tamilnadu the book "Brahma-Sanhita" on which he based his philosophical root. Sri Jiva Goswami, one of the chief exponents of Gaudia Vaishnava philosophy, also admits in his "Tattva-Sandarva" that for materials of his book "Sat-Sandarvas", first treatise of Gaudia Vaishnava philosophy he was indebted to the writings of the Acharyyas of the South and that he had accepted the views of Ramanuja's shree Bhasya in formulation of his philosophical doctrine. Influence of Shree Vaishnavism in the eastern sector of India before the 19th century therefore can not be neglected.

On the link route in the western side such Shree Vaishnava pockets are not rare as well. Mathura and its surrounding areas were perpetual sources of inspiration to various Alvars, particularly to Periyalvar (Vishnuchitta Suri) and Andal, which can be noted from their Divyaprabandhas. It was a must point of pilgrimage for the South Indian Vaishnavas and Sadhus who desired to travel North India in those days. Sri Natha Muni, the first Acharyya of Shree Vaishnavas Hierarchy, lived and meditated in Govardhan near Mathura for a long time. The cave on the Govardhan hill in which he meditated, the place 'Yatipura' and the deity established by him and known as 'Srinath' after his name, are still in existence and remind us about his meditation here. From Guruparampara we come to know that he was so much impressed about this place that he wanted to settle here and did not go back to his native place Virnarayanpuram in Tamilnadu unless his family deity Sri Rajagopal instructed him in dream to return. Even then he ordered before passing away from the earth that his grand-son should be named 'Yamuna' after Yamuna river. Iswar Muni, son of Natha Muni, also stayed in Govardhan for a long time. It is stated that this lineage continued there, but no account is available upto the 16th century after which the systematic record of the lineage is extant.

Sri Mamavala Mamuni (or Varavara Muni as he is widely called in the north-1370-1443 A.D.) organised eight Mutts or

Gadis for the purpose of strengthening and propagation of Shree Vaishnavite ideals (tenkalai version) in the south and appointed eight of his best disciples as in-charge of these Gadis-3 of them being Sannyasins and the rest Grishsthas. They were known as 'Asta Diggajas' or 'eight Gadipatis'. At present out of these Gadis, heredity lineage of 5 Gadis only exists—Varavenkata Jiyar Gadi of Nanguneri (both Sannyasins), Varada Narayan or Annan Gadi of Srirangam, Prativadi Bhayamkaram Gadi of Kanchi and Devaraja or Erumbi Appa Gadi (ali Grihas-thas), and the others are vanquished now, though the present writer has been told that the Sevaits of Venkatachari Mutt on Swargadwar Road in Puri belong to Pranaturtihar Gadi, one of the 'Asta Diggajas' said to be none-existent now. Similarly on the Vadakalai side, Ahobilam (Some say Ahobalam) Mutt of Tirunarayanpuram (Andhra Pradesh), Parakal Mutt of Mysore and Srirangam Andavan Mutt are endeavouring since several centuries for preaching Shree Vaishnavism mostly in the southern region. Before the 19th century, credit may be assigned only to Totadri Gadi which has about 200 subordinate monasteries now under its jurisdiction throughout India for propagation in this respect. It built up centuries back at least three monasteries in three important pilgrimage centres in three corners of North India, viz, Puri, Varanasi and Dwaraka which in its turn played very important role in the mediaval ages. Another factor contributed to this. There was a convention in the Totadri Gadi that a prospective Pontiff must visit 106 'Divya Deshas' (2 not being on Earth) as narrated by Alvars before he became Gadipati and in this way while travelling through the nine Divya Deshas of north India, the Shree Vaishnavites of Totadri Gadi might have brought in its fold many persons. We get the accounts of one Devacharyya (14th century) of Totadri Gadi who came to Ayodhya from the south, settled there propagating Shree Vaishnavism and Haryacharyya, grand-disciple of Devacharyya. Both of them came into conflict with Dasanami Advaitins, who then ruled supreme in the area. At last Haryacharyya defeated Raghab Bhatta, topmost Advaitin scholar of Varanasi at that time, in Shastric duel and converted him into Shree Vaishnavism naming him as Raghavananda who in later years

got famous Ramananda as his disciple. In this way the monastery of Totadri Gadi at Varanasi came to be established and became renowned in those remote days of the 14th century.

So far Shree Vaishnavism in its purest form as prevailed in North India before the 19th century has been traced and not much headway in that regard could be found. But Shree Vaishnavism, detracted from its orthodox form and reformed to suit the general masses by easing from rigorous ritual performances and by changing adorable God from Sri Lakshmi-Narayan to Sri Sita-Ram or Sri Radha-Krishna, made tremendous appeal to the public through North India, thanks to the efforts of Ramananda (1300-1411 A.D.) and his disciples in the 14 and 15th century and onwards. It has been rightly stated, in one sense, that Sri Ramananda was the harbinger of Bhakti-dharma in the north :

“Bhakti Araavida Upajii Laye Raamaananda

Pargat Kiyaa Kabiir ne Sapta Dviipa Naba Khanda”

There is a trend now a days amongst some Ramanandi Vaishnavas to denounce its connection with Shree Vaishnavas. If ‘Shree-Vaishnava-matabja-bhaskarah’ and ‘Sri-Ramarchana-Paddhatih’ – two Sanskrit books said to have been written by Sri Ramananda himself, are to be relied upon, there is no escape from the fact that Sri Ramananda was initiated by a Shree Vaishnavite Teacher. The words “Pracharyabaryan. yati-pati-sahitan pranaraya” in the 5th sloka of ‘Shree-Vaishnava-matabja-bhaskarah’ and the Guruparampara mentioned in the 3rd, 4th & 5th Slokas of ‘Sri-Ramarchana-Paddhatih’ clearly mention his connection with Shree Vaishnava sect and that he was the 12th in ‘Sisya-Parampara’ of Sri Kurattalvan or Kuresh Swami as we call him in North India, who was a famous disciple of Sri Ramanuja Swami. Dr. Grierson has given a list of his apostolic predecessors in the Indian Antiquary (Vol. XXII, 1893, pp. 265-66) in which famous Shree Vaishnava Acharyyas of Tenkalai persuasion are included. But since Ramananda detracted from the original Shree Vaishnavite ideals and reformed it according to his own ideas, it may at best be stated that

his teachings are similar with Shree Vaishnavism on the doctrinal view, but extremely divergent on the social side.

Rama worship became popular in North India, particularly in the eastern U.P. and Bihar and spread from Gujrat, Rajputana to Bengal at that time, resulting in diminution of tortures by Dasanami Sannyasins. Swami Balananda (also called Anabhoyananda) in Sisya-parampara of Ramananda, who was Pontiff of Jaipur Galta Gadi, also made a great contribution in this respect by uniting four sects of Vaishnavas (Ramanujiya, Madhvacharaya, Nimbarkiya and Ballavacharaya) in a conference at Vrindavan and by establishing 24 Akhras of Vaishnavas and a band of 'Rampatal' Vaishnava Sannyasins. It has been stated in his praises :

“Swamii Baalaananda Ko Bala Jasa Teja Prataapa  
Dasanaami Gosain sab dar kar karta milaap  
Sampradaaya chari juti rahyo ju baskar sanga  
Parhii baskarii chaap ta) bahu bidhi jote janga  
Dvaara aakhra baadhiyo Swaami Baalaananda  
Dravid desh ke dharma ko uttar pragat suchanda”

The last line is important. It shows that Ramayet Vaishnavas of Galta Gadi at that time did not consider them and their doctrine different from that of Ramanujiya Vaishnavas of the south.

In course of time Ramanandis were split up into several branches e.g., Bendiwalas, Laskari, Raidasi, Kabirpanthi, Chaturbhuj, Ramasakhi etc. and these were again sub-divided. Some of them preached their own faith entirely dissociating with the forms and customs preserved by Ramananda as brought down from Sri Ramanuja, while others e.g., Ramapanthis are still following some of Ramanuja's points.

Similarly in Gujrat, Swaminarayan faith has considerable followers, the founder of which hailed from Chapaya in Ayo-dhya Subdivision. Its origin can also be traced from Shree Vaishnavism, though in its forms and significances it has got no similiarity, yet it clings to Visistadvaita philosophy slightly altered.

Thus Shree Vaishnavism in alienated form in some way or other from the original may be said to prevail in North India at the same time of Sri Varavara Muni, though it would be better to describe them as branch-faiths and they played very important role in spreading Vaishnavism.

We have discussed the position of true Shree Vaishnavism in North India before the 19th century. If we consider the same at the close of the 19th or in the early quarter of the present century, an altogether different picture will be visualised. A sloka containing important Shree Vaishnava personalities at that time in North India can very well illustrate what enormous change was made in this regard during the last century. The sloka is reproduced as it is collected, without making any attempt to correct it.

“Bikhyaapiyan dravidee prapattim puurvaarsayo adabhradayo  
biraktaah samgnantaram praapya paraamkushaadyaah te punyab-  
human punaraabiraasan sriranga-yogiindraguruun Mukundaan  
Karunyalabdha shrutimaulivedyaan Raamaacharya-munim  
Janaardana-gurum Raamaprapannam tato Meghashyaamancha  
tatha paramahansam Falaaharinam tato Raamantaadi Tubbaabi-  
dham Raghunripam Govindadasam brikam, shastrincha Sudars-  
hanam shatharipum Gopaalamasvananam srinaarasiimham  
Balaraamsurim vaasuincha Mabavanam Banshidharamcha  
Baalamukundajugmam Govindajugmam Raghunathadasam Sriraa-  
ghavan Srimathuraa prapannam sriramaamishram kamalavanetram  
Visvakachamum sribalabhadaasam srisalaikam Maadhavapra-  
pannam Praatah samuthaaya visuddhadhiyaa niranteram  
mangalamaatanoti,

Shree Vaishnava leaders who are referred to above are as follows :-

Name	Place	Gadi
1. Shri Rangadesik Swami	Vrindavan, U.P.	Govardhan Gadi (Branch of Annan Gadi).
2. Sri Mukundacharyya	Basaon, Bihar	"
3. Sri Ramacharyya	Pandharpur, Maharashtra	Pratibadi Bhayamkar
4. Sri Janardan Guru	Reema, U.P.	"
5. Sri Ramaprapannacharyya	Deoreah, U.P.	Govardhan
6. Sri Meghashyamacharyya	Chitrakut, U.P.	Ahobilam
7. Paramahansa Rajendra Suri	Tretpali, Patna, Bihar.	Govardhan
8. Sri Falahari Jiyar Swami		Totadri
9. Sri Ramacharyya Swami	Kashi, U.P.	Govardhan
10. Sri Tularam Swami	Kashi, U.P.	"
11. Sri Raghuraj Singh	Reema, U.P.	Prativadi Bhayamkar
12. Sri Lachmichand, Radha- kissen & Govondadas Seth.	Vrindavan, U.P.	Govardhan.
13. Sri Sudarshan Shastri	Vrindavan, U.P.	"
14. Sri Sathakop Swami	"	"
15. Sri Gopalacharyya	Khorasa, Saurashtra	Totadri

16.	Sri Hayagrîb Swami	Vrindavan	Govardhan
17.	Sri Narasingha Swami	Girnar Parvat, M.p.	Prativadi Bhayamkar
18.	Sri Balam Swami	Ayodhya, U.P.	Govardhan
19.	Sri Basudev Shastri	Biyani, Punjab	"
20.	Sri Mahaban Shastri	"	"
21.	Sri Bangshidhar Shastri	Amritasar, Punjab	"
22.	Sri Balmukunda Swami	Didwana, Rajasthan	Totadri
23.	Sri Balmukunda Swami	Puskar, Rajasthan	Ahobilam
24.	Sri Govindacharyya	Jammu	Govardhan
25.	Sri Govindacharyya	Chandausi, U.P.	"
26.	Sri Raghunath Shastri	Thaibari, Tehri-Garwal	"
27.	Sri Raghavacharyya	Bet Dwaraka, Saurashtra	Melkote
28.	Sri Mathura Prapanna Swami	Badrinath, Tehri-Garwal	Govardhan
29.	Sri Ramamisra Swami	Kashi, U.P.	"
30.	Sri Kamalnayan Shastri	Junagarh, Saurashtra	"
31.	Sri Visvaksen Swami	Buxar, Bihar	Prativadi Bhayamkar
32.	Sri Balabhadra Swami	Ayodhya, U.P.	Totadri
33.	Sri Saligramacharyya	Balia, Bihar	"
34.	Sri Madhabprapanna Swami	Kashi, U.P.	"



It may be noted that Govardhan Gadi, Prativadi Bhayamkar Gadi and Totadri Gadi took the initiative in the 19th century and became successful in spearheading Shree Vaishnavism in North India during the period. Province-wise, in U.P. Punjab, Tehri-Garwal and Jammu, Govardhan Gadi exercised comparatively more influence; in Saurashtra, Gujrat, Rajputana and Bihar Prativadi Bhayamkar Gadi was more influential and in places like Kashi (U.P.), Didwana (Rajputana), Dwaraka (Gujrat) and Bengal Totadri Gadi had its stronghold.

We shall see now how these Shree Vaishnava personalities worked during the period under review.

Govardhan Gadi (Branch of Annan Gadi, Srirangam) with its head quarter in Govardhan near Mathura is stated to have a hoary past and is said to have links with Sri Natha Muni (10th century), but no chronological history is available. It was only from the 16th century onwards that a systematic record could be extant. According to 'Govardhana-suri-prabhavam', a Sanskrit text, one Sri Sathakopa Swami initiated by a Shree Vaishna teacher of Annan Gadi came from the south and established a monastery by the side of Manas Ganga in Govardhan with the deity Sri Radhakanta Jiu and after him came in succession the following persons as Pontiffs of the Gadi :

<b>Name</b>	<b>Period of Pontiffship</b>
Sri Sathakopa Swami	35 years
Sri Venkatacharyya Swami	59 years
Sri Krishnacharyya Swami	65 years
Sri Sheshacharyya Swami	67 years
Sri Sriniwasacharyya Swami (Died 1838 A.D.)	77 years
Sri Rangadesika Swami (1810-1874 A.D.)	37 years
Sri Sriniwasacharyya (1852-1884 A.D.)	10 years
Sri Govardhan Rangachari (Died 1941 A.D.)	58 years

Thereafter Sri Balak Swami and on his demise his son Sri Govardhan Rangachari (II) became Pontiffs of the Gadi.

The exact activities of the Pontiffs before Sri Rangadesik Swami are not known in detail, but Sri Rangadesik Swami did a lot for propagation and strengthening of Shree Vaishnavism in U.P. and Punjab which may only be compared with that of Sri Varavara Muni (15th century) in the south. A versatile genius he hailed from Kanchimandalam, came in touch with Sriniwasacharyya of Govardhan in his boyhood, was initiated by him and educated at Varanasi. Having been placed in the Pontiff's seat of Govardhan Gadi at the age of about 30 years he by his erudite scholarship, knowledge in various shastras and Shree Vaishnava literatures, devotion, ritual performances, sweet behaviours and organising capacity, drew the attention of the people around. Under his inspiration his disciples, Seth Govindadas and his brothers Seth Lachmi-chand and Radhakissen of Mathura, built up in 1859 the great Sri Rangaji temple in Vrindavan and handed it over to their Guru Sri Rangadesik Swami as gift. The Swamiji then settled at Vrindavan and shifted the Govardhan Gadi there. The vast temple complex in its turn became the centre of Shree Vaishnava culture in North India and played its due role for propagation of Shree Vaishnavism. Sri Rangadesik Swami wrote and translated into Sanskrit from Tamil the core Shree Vaishnava literatures like Tiruvaimoli, Tiruppavai, Tirupallandu, Vartamala, Shree Vachanbhusan, Mumukshupadi, Nigamppadi, Parandapadi, Tatvatraya, Arthapanchaka, Gadyatraya, Archiradimarga etc., which were hitherto inaccessible to the North Indians and as a result a good number of his disciples having mastered the subject under his teaching and guidance spread in different important places of North India and dedicated their lives to the preaching of Shree Vaishnavism. Most of the important personalities mentioned in the aforesaid list as initiated to Govardhan Gadi were disciples of Sri Rangadesik Swami. Amongst his disciples expert in Vedanta and other shastras were-Sudarshanacharyya, Sriniwasacharyya Shastri, Ramanujacharyya Shastri (all in Vrindavan), Kamalnayanacharyya Shastri (Junagarh), Bangshidhar Shastri (Amritasar), Basudevacharyya Shastri and Mahaban Shastri (Biyani, Punjab), Ramamisra Shastri, Bhaga-

vatacharyya Shastri (Kashi) Tularām Shastri (Kashi) Bhagavatacharyya Shastri (Ayodhya) and Chiranjilal Shastri (Mathura). The following disciples were expert in Rahasya Shastra of Shree-Vaishnava Sampradaya Balaram Swami (Ayodhya), Paramale Swami, Ramanujdas Swami, Maithilji, Surdasji, Sankarshanacharyya Shastri (all in Vrindavan), Paramahansa Rajendracharyya (Tretapali, Bihar), Mahanta Ramaprapannacharyya (Deoreah) and Gobindacharyya Shastri (Bilsa). This shows the tremendous effect Sri Rangadesik Swami created amongst intelligent youths of the age by his teaching and organising ability. His disciples after demise of their Guru also spread Shree Vaishnavism in different parts of North India by establishing temples and Ashrams and thus contributed in multiplying the effect. Sri Rnagadesik Swami also enhanced the glory of Shree Vaishnavism by defeating in shastric duel his opponent Pundits in Bundi and Kashi organised by Rajahs of Bundi and Jaipur respectively.

The Pontiffs of Prativadi Bhayamkar Gadi (Kanchi) also played a very significant role in this respect at the same time. Sri Anantacharyya Swami or Gadi Swami as he was popularly called (1774? - 1845 A.D.) came to North India from Kanchi, widely travelled in Rajputana propagating Shree Vaishnavism amongst the people and elites of the area, and was reverentially honoured by the Rajahs of Jodhpur, Bundi, Kotah and Udaipur. He also constructed a temple in Puskar in 1845 A.D. His great grandson (4th in succession list) Sri Anantachari Swami also (1874-1937 A.D.) was a versatile scholar and linguist knowing English, Gujrati, Hindi & Marathi apart from South Indian languages. He also travelled throughout North India from one corner to another solely for the sake of spreading Shree Vaishnavism. He also did the same thing for Shree Vaishnavism what his predecessor and teacher of Rahasya Shastra Sri Rangadesik Swami of Govardhan Gadi did previously in U.P. He extensively travelled on foot with an unimpeachable missionary spirit and zeal through Central Provinces, Bihar, Orissa to Calcutta and from there to U.P., Rajputana, Ahmedabad considering it as his duty and preached religion and philosophy of Sri Ramanuja converting thousands of people to his sect. He organised Shree Vaishnava conferences on all India basis

for the first time at Prayag U.P., in 1911 and then in subsequent years at Puri, Jabra (Malwa) and Calcutta with grand success each time. The organisation of All India Shree Vaishnava Sammelan is the outcome of his efforts. He also came in to shastric duels with the Pandits at Varanasi and raised high the flying colours of Visistadwaita philosophy by defeating the opposition. He founded Shree Vaishnava temples at Rol (Rajputana), Jabra (Malwa), Varanasi, Chindwara, Amraoti (C.P.) and Bombay and also restored many old worn-out shrines to their former glory by extensive repairs. Apart from lecturing tours throughout North India he wrote many books on Shree Vaishnava philosophy and published well known periodicals like Shastramuktavali, Manjubhasini, Vaidik-Sarvaswa, Brahmavidya etc., and established a printing press "Sudarshan Press" at Kanchi for such purposes. He also left a band of talented disciples who after him dedicated their lives in continuing the mission of their Guru. Swami Visvaksenacharyya Tridandi Maharaj (Buxar), Swami Devanayakacharyya (Varanasi), Sri Lakshmanacharyya (Amjhora), Pandit Dwaraka Prasad Chaturvedi (Prayag). Sri Narahari Shastri (Manasa), Sri Sampat Kumar Misra (Shikar), Sri Rampratap Shastri etc., are some of them worth mentioning in this respect along with some well-known Shresthis like Kshemraj Srikrishnadas, Seth Puranmall Ganeriwala and Somani family who contributed greatly for the purpose with their money and active help. It is justified when a writer concluded on his achievements by saying "if lines are drawn to connect Haidarabad and Calcutta, Calcutta and Hardwar, Hardwar and Dwaraka and Dwaraka and Haidarabad, an area about one third of the total extent of India is got; so much of Vaishnava India has felt his Holiness's influences."

Acharyyas of different branches of Totadri Gadi in North India also followed the pursuit and penetrated deeply in the villages of Bengal, Bihar, U.P. and C.P. for propagating Ramanuja cult amongst the people during the century and with a lasting effect. Acharyyas of Ahobilam Gadi also did not lag behind, but concentrated mostly in the urban area with the educated people. They also published and distributed sectarian literature and magazines for widespread propaganda.

The cumulative effect of the efforts made by different Shree Vaishnava Acharyyas as mentioned above was that Shree Vaishnavism was firmly placed in the soil of North India and became a manifest factor during the 19th century and the pace has been further accelerated during the present century. The picture that we get at the end of the 19th century is the establishment of colonies of Shree Vaishnavas in different provinces of North India: Puri and Cuttack in Orissa Calcutta and its suburbs, Gadibero, Midnapore, Jessore and Murshidabad in Bengal; Buxar, Arrah, Patna, Gaya in Bihar; Vrindavan, Mathura Varanasi, Ayodhya, Prayag, Chitrakut, Beirelly, Hrishikesh, Joshimath in U.P.; Biyani and Amritasar in Punjab; Puskar Maulasar, Deedwana, Jodhpur in Rajputana; Bombay, Sholapur, Dwaraka, Ahmedabad in Saurashtra and Bombay; Indor, Raichur in Central Provinces and in many other places not specifically mentioned. With these spiritual outposts at different corners of North India firmly established at the close of the last century, great leap forward has been made in the present century by annexation of new areas in the remote villages and urban cities even in neighbouring country like Nepal where Shree Vaishnavas are now an accountable factor.

**உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவன வெளியீடுகள்**

1. சமயச் சொல்லகராதி	35-00
2. தொல்காப்பியம்-உரியியல்	20-00
3. மங்கலதேவி கண்ணகி கோட்டம்	15-00
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5. வாத்திய மரபு	20-00
6. குத்புநாயகம் ஆய்வுரை	15-00
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8. தமிழ் தந்த வ. உ. சி.	15-00
9. தொல்காப்பியம்-இடையியல்	22-00
10. மறைமலையடிகளார் தனித்தமிழ்க் கொள்கை	15-00
11. உலக முதன்மொழி தமிழ்	12-00
12. மகாமதிப்பாவலர்	11-00
13. டாக்டர் உ. வே. சா. இலக்கணப் பதிப்புகள்	12-00
14. தமிழர் கூத்துகள்	25-00
15. செக்கிழுத்த செம்மல் சிதம்பரனார்	15-00
16. மருந்து செய்முறைகள்	45-00
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18. தமிழ் நாவல்கள் (அகர வரிசை)	40-00
19. தமிழ் வாழ்க்கை வரலாற்றிலக்கியம்	35-00
20. 1982-இல் தமிழ்	90-00
21. தமிழர் திருமணம்	25-00
22. மொழிபெயர்ப்பியல்	10-00
23. நெல்லை மாவட்ட நாட்டுப்புறத் தெய்வங்கள்	15-00
24. செங்கை மாவட்ட ஊர்ப்பெயர்கள்	25-00
25. விவிலியம் திருக்குறள் சைவசித்தாந்தம் ஓர் ஒப்பாய்வு	20-00
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30. இலக்கியத்தில் ஊர்ப்பெயர்கள்—தொகுதி-2	22-00
31. தமிழர் இசை	70-00
32. இளங்கோவின் இலக்கிய உத்திகள்	12-00
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34. தமிழ் இலக்கியக் கொள்கை—தொகுதி-9	20-00
35. தொல்காப்பியம்—வினையியல்	20-00
36. தன்வந்திரி குழந்தை வாகடம்	14-00
37. தொல்காப்பியம்—பெயரியல்	12-00
38. தமிழரின் தாயகம்	10-00
39. தொல்காப்பியம்—விளிமரபு	6-00
40. தொல்காப்பியம்—வேற்றுமை மயங்கியல்	12-00
41. இலக்கியத்தில் ஊர்ப்பெயர்கள்—தொகுதி-1	12-00
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