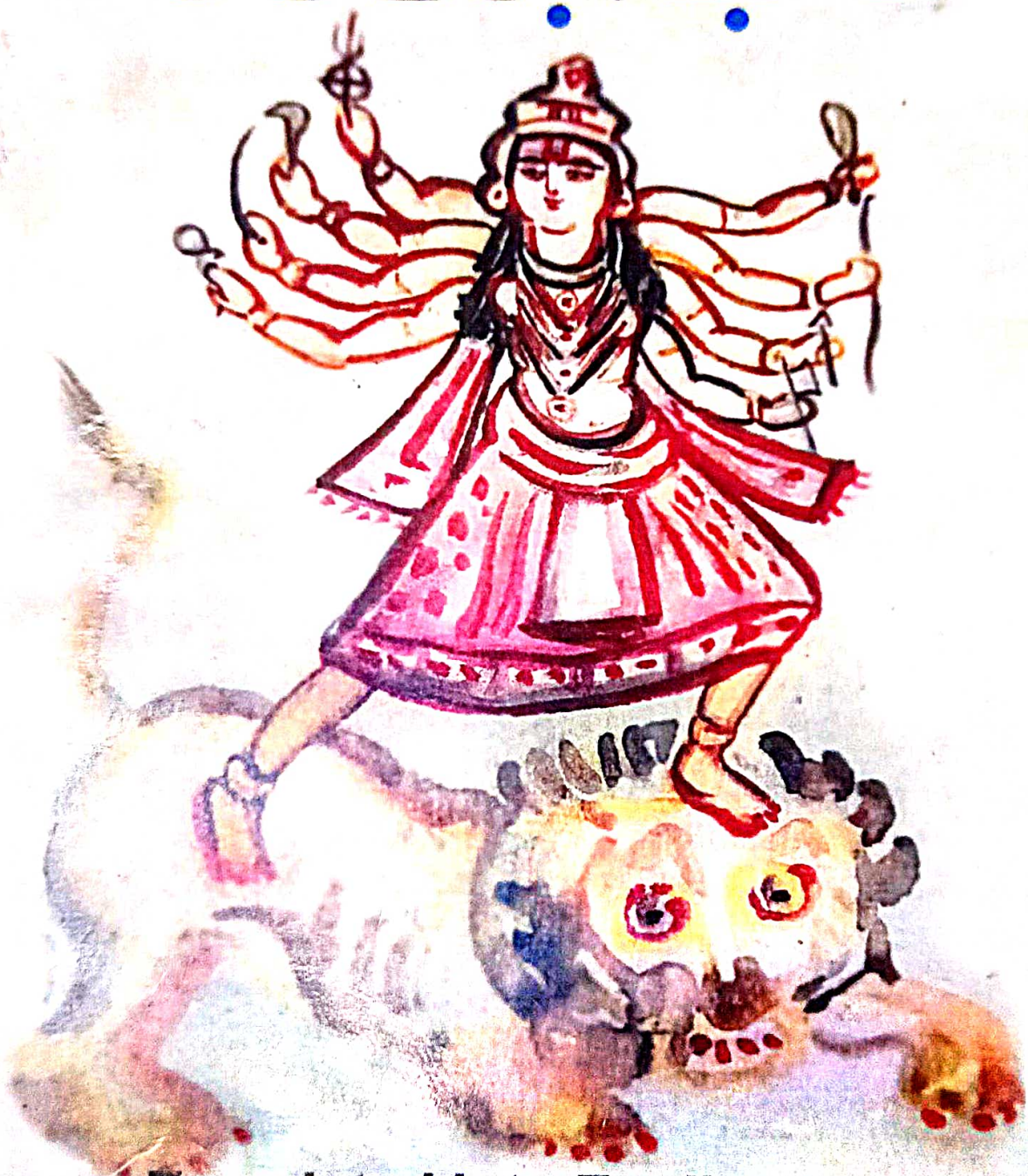
THREE EPISODES FROM
THE OLD BENGALI POEM

# CAṆḌĪ



Translated into English by
E. B. COWELL

Edited by
MOHINI MOHAN SARDAR

# THREE EPISODES FROM THE OLD BENGALI POEM "CAṆḌĪ"

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I got the opportunity of employing many information found in the internet, humorous books and articles preserved in the library and personal collections, and some especially rare materials in the book with the permission from of the authorities. This book would not have come into effect without the assistance of the authorities of these institutions and personal contributions. I admit their dues.

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I shall deem my effort amply rewarded if this rare, invaluable and undiscussed –till these days book on Pre-modern Bengali literature attracts the interests of inquisitive researchers and students. I shall highly appreciate constructive criticism, comments and suggestions for the improvement of the book.

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# INTRODUCTION

"The gods and goddesses of Kavikankan are just ordinary persons; not only men, they are contemporary Bengalees of Kavikankan.... The then condition of Bengal has been precisely depicted. Kavikankan's imagination has extensively wondered through many spheres, the courts of Zaminders, the broken huts of farmers, the inner chambers of the middle class people of that time..." ('Bengali Kabi Nay', Bharati, Bhadra 1287.)

"The entire poetry of Kavikankan may be wiped out in course of generations, but ever remains his Bhanru Dutta."

('Sahityer Mulya' April 1941, 'Sahityer Swarup' Grantha.)

The primary standard of the social aspect and the literary truth of Kavikankan's 'Caṇḍī' Kavya, found respectively from the two above-quoted comments by Rabindranath Tagore on the early youth and the termination of life of Kavi Mukunda Chakraborty, one of the greatest poets of pre-modern Bengali literature, has been wirtten in eternally golden lines. 'Chandi-mangal', 'Avayamangal' or 'Ambikamangal' were written by the poet at the end of the sixteenth century. Almost four hundred years have elapsed in mathematical terms. Providence has not only cemented the throne of Kavya-creator Kavikankan, his 'Caṇḍī' Kavya has also made an eternal place in the mindscapes of the Bengalees in several ways and in many forms during the four centuries. That is a variegated history. Our interest lies mainly in the subject translation of that diversified history of 'Caṇḍī' Kavya of Kavikankan.

At the fag-end of the Sixteenth Century (C. after 1595), from after its composition till the present, Kavikankan's 'Caṇḍī' Kavya has been discussed in varied ways. Starting from the composition of copies of manuscripts from the original ones in the age of manuscripts, and the rare poetry criticism of Mukunda in the

same era of manuscripts till the humorous printing editions of today and even from the middle of the nineteenth century, various researches and investigations about the poetry of Kavikankan surprise us. **Laying hands on this surprise arises the issue of English translation of Mukunda's 'Caṇḍī' Kavya.** It is true that in the year 1778 Nathaniel. Brassey Halhed (1751-1830) in his book **'A Grammar of the Bengal Language'** had initiated the study in translation of 'Caṇḍī' Kavya, but Halhed did not translate widely 'Chandimangal' Kavya. He just translated few lines of 'Chandimangal' for his own requirements of grammar. It was Professor Edward Byles Cowell (1826-1903) who involved himself whole-heartedly in the task of translating 'Chandimangal'. Cowell in his work entitled. **Three Episodes from the Old Bengali Poem 'Caṇḍī'** translated various parts of Mukunda's 'Caṇḍī' Kavya. Our endeavour is to provide in the hands of inquisitive researchers and readers that invaluable and unique translation made by Cowell in this book.

Regarding his investment in translating 'Chandimangal' Kavya, Cowell himself informed in the 'Introduction' of his book; however, **Dineshchandra Sen in his essay, Translation of 'Caṇḍī' by Cowell** remarked about the topic in the following manner :

"Being very old, Sahib E. B. Cowell has now demised. He asked those Bengalee gentlemen who had frequently visited him during some years before his death–"Have you read Kavi-kankan's 'Caṇḍī'?" "

Most of the ancient Begnali books are unprinted or were printed in Battala, but even in those days Bengalees with adequate knowledge in English, put down their heads in shame seeing such worn-out manuscripts or books printed in Battala. Hence, most of those persons whom Cowell had asked about 'Caṇḍī' Kavya, thought it shameful informing their ill-knowledge about the book. Regarding this I am quoting Barrister Subodhchandra Roy, B.A., L.L.B., of Calcutta High Court :

In the year 1898 or 1899 two or three pupils of us were

taught by the great professor Cowell, Department of Sanskrit, Cambridge University. One day he was very glad to know that I was from Bengal. After talks of various types he asked me, "How you read 'Caṇḍī?" Hearing that I have not read 'Caṇḍī', he was astonished and said, "Then there is a treasure for you." I hung my head. He also told, the same place Chaucer had established for himself in the English language, 'Caṇḍī' achieved in the Bengali language. After saying that, he fetched me a copy from the library and started to read the English translation of 'Caṇḍī' before me. His facial expressions and profound pleasure during reading have left an indelible impression in my mind. When he, surrounded with numerous books, was involved in reading the 'Veda' before two or three students of us, his extremely resplendent face, covered with his hair, reminded us of the earlier 'Rishis' of our country. We noticed him to have often been in a state of trance in that condition. But on that very day when he was reading to us Kavikankan's 'Caṇḍī' and its translation, his face became brighter; it could not hold his smile. I eagerly asked him, "Sir, who has made this translation?" He said that sometime ago due to illness, he stayed at the bank of sea at the city of Hastings. During those days he could not read any difficult subject. In those days he translated 'Caṇḍī' in parts because any other task did not give him pleasure at that time. He had to return from Hastings before completion of the translation. He also told that he had to face a lot of difficulty in translating those parts of 'Caṇḍī' where colloquial language had been used; he asked me if the meanings of such one or two parts had been appropriate when compared to the original one. He also expressed his wish of completing the toil of translation if spare time was available. But unfortunately he was permanently separated from his wife by death within a few days; physical weariness, excessive physical labour and old age did not allow him to finish the translation of 'Caṇḍī'."

It is known from this extended quotation of Dines Chandra Sen that Cowell, while living at Hastings in certain ill-condition,

translated his chosen parts of Mukunda's 'Chandimangal' in English. In the 'preface' of his translation, Cowell had frankly admitted the sort of difficiulties he had to face while translating this poem, replete with regional words and expressions. In our discussion we have endeavoured to put before the eyes of the readers certain individualities of those difficult sections.

This kind of translation of Mukunda's 'Chandimangal' with its multi-faceted discussions, carries with it the popularity and greatness of the poem. During the four centuries the poem has been of seminal influence to the Bengalees and it is not a matter of little pride. The translation of Sahib Cowell has increased the sublimity of that pride. The importance of that translation in the analysis of pre-modern Bengali literature is, therefore, illimitable and perpetual. In our small book we have preserved that sparse, precious and unprotected till now, translation of Cowell. We have simultaneously essayed to extricate an extended identity of the persons and their modes of participation in translating Mukunda's 'Chandimangal' Kavya in the chapter entitled 'About the Booklet' of this book. Our earnest effort has also been to recover the personal identity of Cowell, along with his picture as far as possible. I steadfastly believe that the book can unfold new directions in the research of pre-modern Bengali literature.

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*E. B. Cowell*

## ABOUT E. B. COWELL

Edward Byles Cowell was born on January 23rd 1826, in Ipswich in the country of Suffolk. His father, Charles Henry Cowell, was a great public orator, reformationist and reader of modern history and philosophy. His mother, too, had a genuine taste for poetry and art, and she also had a flair for verse-making. She also had a fondness for suggestive and discriminating criticism of art. So, it can be easily understood that Cowell's character and aspirations were moulded and well-directed under the guidance of his parents from his childhood days. His favourite aunt, the mother's younger and only sister, Elizabeth Byles, encouraged Edward to read Dumas stories, Guizot's historical volumes, and the French poets with her.

Cowell's school days were spent at the Ipswich Grammar School, known in Dr. Rigand's time as Queen Elizabeth's School. From 1833 he spent at school nearly nine years under special guidance and influence of the Headmaster, Rev. J. C. Ebden. During this period, his brimniancy, taste for art and literature, indomitable desire to learn and his splendid memory proved his superiority among his fellow-pupils. Ebden laid the foundation of Cowell's love and aptitude for work and so Cowell was always proud to have been a pupil of Ebden.

Edward became interested in Oriental languages at the age of fifteen, when he found a copy of Sir William Jones's works including his Persian Grammar in the public libarary. Self taught, he began translating and publishing Hafez within the year. His love for Oriental literature influenced him to translate the Three Episodes of Kavikankan Mukunda Chakraborty's 'Chandi-mangal' Kavya.

Married in 1845, Cowell entered Magdalen College, Oxford in 1850 where he studied and catalogued Persian manuscripts

for the Bodleian Library. From 1856-1867 he lived in Calcutta as Professor of English History at Presidency College. He was also the Principal of Sanskrit College from 1858 to 1864. Having studied Hindustani, Bengali and Sanskrit with Indian Scholars, he returned to England to take up an appointment as the first Professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge University. He was awarded the Royal Asiatic Society's first gold medal in 1898, and in 1902 became a founding member of the British Academy.

Cowell's interest in Persian literature led him to produce worldwide celebrated works like "Persian Cuneiform Inscriptions and Persian Bands", "Omar Khayyam, the Astronomer poet of Persia" and "Two Kasidahs of the Persian Poet Anwari". However, it should be remembered that apart from being a pern-man, Cowell is also chiefly celebrated as a renowned translator of Oriental languages into English and his works pave the way for further research in the sphere of the study in tranalation.

# PREFACE

Mukunda Rām Cakravartī,[1] some extracts from whose poems I wish to introduce to the English reader, lived in Bengal during the latter half of the sixteenth and the early part of the seventeenth century. He seems to have passed his life in the districts of Bardwā n and Midnapure, and he commemorates in his works Mānsiṅh, the celebrated general of the Emperor Akbar, who became governor of the newly conquered provinces of Bengal, Bihār, and Orissa in 1590. But his poems tell us as little of the wars and conquests which fill the history of Akbar's reign, and which naturally engrossed the thoughts of the poet's contemporaries, as Spenser's "Fairy Queen" tells us of the actual events which stirred men's hearts during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Mukunda Rām's characters, in fact, live in a mythological world, as far removed from the actual world of human life as those in Ovid's "Metamorphoses"; and the Goddess Caṇḍī continually appears upon the scene to help her votaries and confound their enemies, as if they were living in the earliest mythological ages. But all this is only the external form of the poem. Under this fanciful surface we come in contact with a solid reality; for there we may find a picture of Bengali village life as it acutally existed in the sixteenth century, before any European influences had begun to affect the national charactor or widen its intellectual or moral horizon; and it is this vivid realism which gives such a permanent value to the descriptions. Our author is the crabbe among Indian poets, and his work thus occupies a place which is entirely its own....

*"Quidquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,*
*Gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli";*

and hence the poem forms in itself a storehouse of materials for the social history of the people as apart from their rulers. Wherever he may place his scenes–in Çiva's heaven, or India, or Ceylon Mukunda Rām never loses sight of Bengal; he carries with him

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1 He is often called by the title Kabi-kaṅkan, the ornament of poet.

everywhere the village life of his own early days. All family or village customs are dear to him, and his work is therefore a mine of curious local and social information; and his various characters, though they may appear as only passing interlocutors in the scene, always have a real life and personality of their own. In fact, Bengal was to our poet what Scotland was to Sir Walter Scott; he drew a direct inspiration from the village life which he so loved to remember.

I subjoin a translation of the passage at the beginning of the poem where the poet gives an account of his early career, and how he was forced to leave the obscurity of his native place and find a new home and a poet's fame in the court of a neighbouring zamindar.

"Hear, neighbours, how this song of mine first into conscious utternace leapt :

Caṇḍī* came down in mortal form beside my pillow as I slept.
Good Gopināth, the talūkdār, lived honoured in Selimābād;
For generations seven his race the same estates and home had had
Dāminyā village was their home, far from the world a safe retreāt
Until Mānsiṅh came to Bengal, that bee of Vishṇu's lotus-feet.
And in his days Māhmud Sharīf over the district stretched his hand;
A local governor sent by heaven to scourge the vices of the land.
Under his rule the traders groaned, his hand lay heavy every where,
Brahmaṅas and Vaishṇavas alike stood helpless in their blank despair
His measures of all fields were false, his acre's rods were always wrong,
And howsoe'er the poor complained their words were as an Idle song.
Waste heaths he reckoned fruitful fields; he passed across the land like Death;
The poor man's last rag he would seize; prayers to his ears were idle breath.

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* Caṇḍī (Pronounced in English Chundi) is one of the forms of the goddess Umā or Durgā (the wife of Çiva), who is especially worshipped in Bengal.

The moneylender's aid was naught; his loans but added more to pay;
Two annas short was each rupee, and then the interest day by day.
At last the ryots lost all hope; their hard-earned borrowings brought no cheer,
And if they tried to sell their stock, there were no buyers far or near.
Good Gopināth by some ill fate was thrown in prison; in wild surprise
The ryots crowded round the court, but what availed their tears or cries ?
Stunned with the blow I sold my stock for little more than half its worth,
And after counsel held with friends I left my home and wandered forth.
I and my brother took our way; 't was Caṇḍī led the helpless pair;
At Bheṭnā Rūprāī gave us alms, and Jadukuṇḍg sheltering care.
Adown the Gharāī stream we sailed, the Dārukeçvar next we passed;
We stayed awhile at Pāṇḍurpur, and to Kucatyā came at last.
There without oil I took my bath, water my hunger's only stay;
Hungry and faint my children wailed, but I was famished e'en as they.
There near a lonely hermitage, hungry and scared, I fell asleep,
When Caṇḍī in a vision came and bade me rise and cease to weep.
A leaf she brought and pen and ink, and though I knew no Vedic lore,
She taught me metres and their laws and bade me sing her praises o'er.
The river Çilāī then I crossed, to Āraṛā my way I found,
A land with holy Brāhmans filled, its lord like Vyās himself renowned,
Baṅkuṛā-rāy his honoured name; I paid my homage full of fear,
And brought some verses in my hand, to which he lent a favouring ear.
He gave me rice and paid my debts, and made me tutor to his son,
And from that day Prince Raghunāth has stored my lessons every one,

Dowered with all virtues from his birth, sages and nobles at his call,
He greets me 'guru' from his heart and honours me before them all."

While Bābū Gobind Candra Datt resided in Cambridge some thirty years ago, I first learned from him about this old Bengali poem, and he kindly undertook to read it with me. We read together more than half of it while he remained in England; and after his return to India I continued my studies alone, and he allowed himself to be my continual referee in all cases of difficulty. There were often obscure words and allusions, but he generally solved them all; and he sometimes amused me by his interesting accounts of the consultations which he had held with Calcutta friends over any passages of special obscurity. These attempts of mine to put certain episodes of the "Caṇḍī" into an English dress had lain for many years forgotten in my desk, until I happened to read Mr. G. A. Grierson's warm encomiums on this old Bengali poem "as coming from the heart and not from the school, and as full of passages adorned with true poetry and descriptive power."* This mention of my old favourite rekindled my slumbering enthusiasm, and I have tried to make my imperfect translations as worthy as I could of a place in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. I shall be delighted if some younger scholar is roused to an earnest study of this fascinating poem.

With regard to the Bengali text, I may add that, although the "Caṇḍī" is a favourite poem in Bengal, many passages appear to be more or less interpolated, and the readings of many lines are corrupt and obscure. I have generally used the edition printed at Cuṅcurā in B.S. 1285 (A.D. 1878), but I have often derived help from comparing it with the text in the common bāzār editions printed at Calcutta in Çaka 1789 (A.D. 1867) and B. S. 1286 (A.D. 1879). In my translation I have sometimes ventured to shorten the long descriptions, which are apt to become tedious.

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★ See his "Note on the Languages of India" p. 108. There is a good account of "Caṇḍī" in R. C. Datt'a "Literature of Bengal."

# THE OLD BENGALI POEM, "CAṆḌI"

## I

*The hero of the first part of the poem is Kālaketu. In his former birth he had been Nīlāmbar, the son of Indra; but for an offence committed against the god Çiva in heaven he had been born on earth as a hunter. He marries a peasant's daughter, Phullarā, and lives with her in a hut in a forest which appears to be situated somewhere in the kingdom of Kaliṅga. Here he supports himself by his bow, and his wife goes to the neighbouring village and sells the meat which he brings home. They are plunged in the depths of poverty; but they are devout worshippers of Caṇḍī, who is resolved to interfere in their behalf. One day the hunter has especially bad luck and wastes the whole day without capturing any game in the forest, except a solitary lizard. This spoil, however, little as he thinks it, is to be the beginning of his good fortune, for Caṇḍī has assumed this disguise to befriend him. He returns home in sad disappointment; and here we commence our first extract.*

Famished the hunter reaches home, but finds, alas! his wife away,
For she is gone to Golāhāṭ to earn a pittance if she may;
Soon she espies him from afar, and full of hope comes hastening
home,
But as she marks his empty hands her face is overcast with gloom,
She smites her forehead with her hands, and bursts in tears for
sheer despair :
"Why with my husband still alive must I a widow's miseries
bear ?
Where were the Ghaṭak's* senses gone so evil-starred a match
to plan ?

★ The Ghaṭak is the professional arranger of contracts of marriage.

My father must have lost his eyes to give me up to such a man!
My wedding gifts foretold my fate—turmeric, saffron, pän,
forsooth;
I should have taken heed betimes, nor sold to poverty my youth."
With gentle words he comforts her, but still she sobs the same
sad tale:
"There's not one grain of rice at home, and who will buy our
goods when stale?"
"Bimalā's mother was your friend; think you, will she
compassion take?
Carry some present in your hand, a porcupine* for friendship's
sake;
Old kindness may be not yet dead; who knows but she may
hear and lend
Some refuse rice to help our need; go try your fortune with
your friend.
Borrow besides a little salt and cook some supper for us both,
I'll go for you to Golāhāṭ and bear your basket nothing loth.
And by the bye, packed in my net, you'll find a lizard tied with
care;
Take it and cook it with the rest; 't will be a relish to our fare."

She takes her humble present in her hands,
And at her old friend's door in doubt she stands,
When from within she hears a cheery shout,
"Come in, I'm glad at last you've found me out!"
"A poor man's wife no time for calls can spare,
Hunger absorbs my every hour and care."
Her friend in welcome seats her by her side
And decks her out in finery like a bride,
Anoints her hair, and combs and binds her braid,
And paints with red her forehead, as her maid.

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★ Cf. the labstar brought as a present by the sailors in "David Copperfield". The other ed. reads some flower.

Poor Phullarā, trembling, makes her errand known,
And begs some rice–a bushel–as a loan.
"Oh business for to-morrow", she replies,
"Comb out my hair and tell your histories".
Thus sat the friends, linked closely as of old,
Each heart absorbed in all the other told.

.... .... .... .... .... .... ....

Meanwhile the goddess, left alone thus bound,
Snapped with a shout the noose which tied her round;
She was no more a lizard pinioned there;
She stood a maiden now, divinely fair,
Robed in the costliest garb e'er dreamed by thought,
Which at her will the heavenly artist* brought;
Bright with all gems, a queen in all her pride,
She stood that lonely hunter's hut beside.

.... .... .... .... .... .... ....

Glad with the stock of borrowed rice she bore,
Poor Phullarā reached at length her cottage door;
When lo ! her left arm throbbed, and throbbed her eye,†
As she beheld a 'full moon' standing by !
Surprised she greets the lady with a bow,
"What is thy name and whose fair wife art thou ?"
Laughed in her heart the goddess as she stood,
And mocked poor Phullarā in her joyous mood :
"Of Brāhman caste, Ilāvṛit ‡ is my home,
But all alone I love abroad to roam;
Of honoured race my lord, none worthier lives;
But what a household his with seven co-wives !§
So, by your leave–your kindly heart I knew–
I've come to make a few days' stay with you !"
As Phullarā heard the words the stranger said,

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★ Viṣvakarman.
† These are good omens for a woman.
‡ The division of the world which includes Mount Meru.
§ This refers to the seven or eight Çaktis or personified powers of Çiva.

The very skies seemed tumbling on her head;
Poison was in her heart, though mild her tone;
No thirst nor hunger now; all thoughts of cooking gone !

"What, such a youthful bride as you in a strange house like mine to stay !
Tell me, fair lady, how you dare unguraded and alone to stray ?
That waist of your waves in the wind, poised like a stalk so light and fair;
No lion's waist is half so thin, and scarce its burden can it bear.
The bees forsake the jasmine flowers and to thy lips by hundreds fly;
Thy moon-face wears its gentle smile like summer lightning in the sky.
Those glossy curls, like dark blue hills, wreathed with white jasmine flowers–I swear
Fate wished to Prove her power and Fixed the flickering lightning in thy hair !
Far brighter than the elephant's gems gleam with a lightning flash thy teeth,
While red like bimbas* shine thy lips, a nose-ring gem thy nose beneath.
The gauze-like dress that veils thee round and adds a charm to every limb;
the pearl-like shells upon thy hands,–all makes my mind with wonder dim !
Say, art thou Urvaçī come down, or Umā dressed in all her sheen,
Indrāṇī† or Tilottamā,‡ or say what other heavenly queen ?
I cannot fathom in my thought why you have left your husband so ?

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★ The fruit of Monadica monadelpha.
† Indra's wife.
‡ A celebrated Apsaras, or nymph.

Oh I entreat you, tell me true, what spell has brought you down thus low ?
Was it some burst of jealous rage ? But if mean while of grief he dies,
Who is to tend his dying hours, as at the ghāṭ he languid lies ?
Was it some crabbed mother-in-law or husband's sister's scolding tongue ?
I will go with you to your home and try my best to right the wrong."
"How many questions more ?" she said; "here in your house I'm come to stop;
Your husband's griefs have pierced my heart, I'll bring him wealth beyond his hope.
But would you know the ills I bear ? My husband has a favourite wife,§
Gaṅgā her name, a crown to him; but all the house she fills with strife.
All day she storms, and he the while eats poison at his wild carouse;
What wonder that I banish shame and hurry headlong from the house ?
Alas that I was ever born, a helpless woman doomed to be,
Myself despised, my rival loved ! have I not cause for jealousy ?
My cruel father knew full well the hated rival I should find,
And yet he gave his daughter up, no faintest scruple moved his mind.
Rich is my lord, and seven co-wives live with him in what peace they may,
Each hating each, their railing tongues are never silent all the day.
He eats datura** till his brains are addled, and he wanders on
Drowsily mooning in a dream, but glad to find himself alone.

§ In this description of her husband there is a series of vailed allusions to Çiva as the religious Mendicant of the Tantras.

** The thorn-apple (Datura stramoxium)

With ashes is his body spread, with bones benecklaced round his throat;
Thank heaven, he wears a tiger's skin which serves alike for shirt and coat.
Snakes form his wreaths, he beats his drum, and laughs all worldly joys to scorn;
The god of love ne'er ventures near, he knows him for his foe long-sworn.
My rivals beat me as they will, he sees and hears, but does not care;
A house with seven co-wives within,–there's fever-poison in its air.
Destiny was my cruel foe, and in a hopeless desperate mood
I recked not of the consequence, but fled alone into the wood.
I met by chance your hero there; himself he brought me with him here;
Go ask him, and refuse me not, for I have refuge none elsewhere."
"Not so, I'll teach you what to do, and send you safely to your home."
Her inmost thought the goddess knew, and said, "To stay with you I've come.
Eat to your fill henceforth, for I will all the house expense provide;
Receive me as no stranger-born, but as a friend, one close allied.
I'll go before your husband's steps, in all his perils I'll be nign,
In all his conflicts in the woods a certain sign of victory.
List, I will tell you who I am, if further history you want;
I at Benares live concealed, my husband is a mendicant.
Wealth of a hundred kings is mine, more than would buy the world," she saith;
"Such wealth I'll give you; in return I only ask for trust and faith."
*Phullarā.* "I'll tell you what is best to do; back to your husband's house return;

This will bring comfort in the end, as you, though now perplexed, will learn.
If you forsake your husband's house, how will you show abroad your face ?
A husband is a woman's lord, her guardian, her one resting-place.
Others are nought compared to him; he in both worlds can bring her bliss;
He may chastise her as he will, for a king's right and duty this.
Have you not heard how Sītā once was carried off by Rāvaṇ's guile
And forced to live a prisoner, shut up in Laṅkā's far-off isle;
How Rāma slew the ravisher, but only took her back as queen
After th' ordeal fire had proved how spotless bright her truth had been ?
And even then some base-born carle could still so deeply sting his pride,–
Desperate he drove her forth again a lonely outcast from his side.
What, shall a lady born like you, so noble, so divinely fair,
Brangry like some low-born scold and fling her honour to the air ?
E'en if a low-caste woman stay in a strange house a single night,
The neighbours point at her with scorn, and all her kindred hate her sight.
Ge, you have done a thoughtless thing; believe me, to return is best,
And if your hated rival scolds, pay back her jibes with interest.
Why in a passion leave your home ? you sacrifice your all–for what ?
Poisoning yourself for spite to *her*, and will the rival care one jot ?"
The goddess answered : "I am come, because I cannot bear to see
Your noble husband thus beset with all the ills of poverty.

And list; I met him in the wood, 't was he himself who brought me here;
Ask him yourself; if he denies, I'll go and seek my home elsewhere.
Say what you will, I mean to stay; my wealth shall all your sorrows cure;
I am a lady as you say, and I will keep my honour pure.
I thank you for your good advice, but keep it for some future day;
You may require it all yourself; fear not that I shall lose my way."

With sad forebodings, next, th' unhappy wife
Gives the year's history of her struggling life :
"See this poor hut; a palm-leaf thatch atop;
One ricinus* post within its only prop;
How mid such squalor could you bear to stop ?
Baiçākh† (1) begins my misery's calendar :
Dust-storms sweep by, the suns more fiercely glare;
But howsoever fierce o'erhead the heat
I with sore feet must go and sell the meat;
Ladies may sit 'neath shady trees, but there
How should I find, alas ! a customer ?
E'en in the villages they scarce will buy,
'Who would eat flesh in Baiçākh?' is the cry.
These rags ill shield my poor head from the sun;–
Baiçākh is poison : this for number *one.*
Jyaiṣṭha‡ (2) is worse; for fiercer still its rays;
And I, however thirsty 'neath their blaze,
Yet dare not set my basket down to drink,
Or kites will empty it before I think;

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★ The Ricinus communis, or castor-oil plant, is in India a tree which is often thirty or forty feet high.

† Half April and May. I have in this passage chiefly followed the text of the 1867 edition; the last edition begins the list with Āṣāṛh.

‡ Half May and June.

Jyaiṣṭha's a fasting month to me perforce,
No month of all the twelve to me is worse.
Next comes Āṣāṛh (3), to soak the fields and roads;
And e'en the rich in their well-stocked abodes.
Feel, as they watch their stored provisions fail,
The ills which all the year the poor assail.
I trudge to sell my goods from door to door,
Thankful for refuse rice, nor hope for more.
The leeches bite me as I wade the plains;
Would 't were a serpent's bite to end my pains !
Down pours the rain in Çrāvaṇ (4) night and day;
Bright or dark fortnight, which is which, I pray !
But I must bear my basket, wet or fine;
Rags soaked, a never-ending shower-bath mine.
And if the rainfall stops a while o'erhead,
Down come the floods to drown us in our bed.
In Bhādrapad (5) yet fiercer rainfloods fall;
Rivers or streams, one deluge drowns them all.
How can I tell you half our lot of dour ?
Brahma was angry, so he made us poor.
Āçwin (6) is Caṇḍī's month, and everywhere
Rams, buffaloes, and goats are slain to her.
All women put their finest dresses on,
All except me; poor Phullarā alone
Must rack her brains for food, or famished die;
With all these victims, who my goods will buy ?
Kārttik (7) begins the winter; young and old
Get their warm wraps to shield them from the cold.
Heaven gives good cloth to all save only me;
But some deer's skin my winter cloak must be.
I crouch to warm my blood with head on knees,
Or shiver in the sun and slowly freeze.
Kind Mārgaçīrṣ (8) of all the months is best :
Now I can eat my bellyful and rest;
Indoors or out, there's food enough, no stint–

Only the piercing cold, death's self is in 't.
I wrap my tatters round me, but they tear,
And, as I Clutch them, split and leave me bare.
In Pauṣ (9) the winter's at its height; meanwhile
All men in various ways the cold beguile;
As oil to rub the limbs, or warm attire,
Strolls in the sun or betel by the fire;
All others keep the winter cold at bay,
And only I must bear it as I may.
I buy an old torn mat* with venison;
Its dust is smothering when I put it on;
Ah ! surely fate to women is unjust !
I scarce can close my eyes at night for dust !
Then Māgh (10) is dreadful with its fogs and mists;
Let the poor hunter wander where he lists,
He finds no deer to catch, for sale or food;
Nor find I herbs to gather in the wood.
Oh Māgh's a piteous month for hunting men;
No one wants flesh, for all are fasting then.
Phālgun (11) makes most fall ill; but as for me,
How could I tell you half my misery ?
Fierce is the cold; I pawn in sheer despair,
For refuse rice, my stone and earthenware;
My plates and dishes I must all resign !
Oh what a miserable lot is mine !
I dig yon hole i' the ground, and when I sup
Pour the rice gruel in and lap it up !
In Caitra's (12) month the soft south breezes blow,
In the sweet jasmine flowers the bees hum low;
And with the spring's soft influence in their heart
Maidens and youths are lovesick, though apart;
All joy save me, but I for some old sin
Must think of hunger's ravening pangs within."

★ The *khosala* is a cearse mat used by the poor to sleep on, and sometimes also wear for clothing in cold weather.

The stranger heard to th' end, then said at last :
"From this day forth these woes of yours are past !
Think of them as a something now no more,
Henceforth you share in all my ample store !"
Her face all soiled with grief and jealous fears,
Poor Phullarā poured a passionate burst of tears;
In sudden frenzy from her door she fled,
And in wild haste to Golāhāṭ she sped,
And found the hunter, who in strange surprise
Stared at her broken voice and streaming eyes :
"You have no sister-in-law, nor rival wife;
Whom have you quarrelled with in deadly strife ?"
"I have no rival wife at home but you;
Fate has indeed been cruel, you untrue !
Waking or dreaming–heaven my words will prove–
You never found me faulty in my love !
How have you turned your heart to villany ?
Why thus become a Rāvaṇ's self to me ?
Whence this young wife and all her rich array ?
Beware, the ant gets wings, but falls a prey.*
Kaliṅga's cruel tyrant watches near;
He will soon strip you bare, if once he hear."
"Come, wife, and tell the truth, deceive me not,
Or I will beat you soundly on the spot."
"Yama be witness : at our door at home
A lady stands now waiting till you come."
Poor Phullarā, when she flew to reach her lord,
Had with her brought her basket and her board :
Homeward now start the two, this guest to find,
But board and basket both are left behind !
She leads the way in eager hurry back,
While Kālu,† pondering, follows in her track.

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★ For this proverb Cf. Wilson's translation of the Sāṅkhyakārikā, p. 113. It also occurs in Don Quixote, pt. ii, ch. 53.

† This is a frequent abbreviation of Kālaketu.

They reach the hut; 't is filled with dazzling light,
As though ten thousand moons illumed the vault of night.

With lowly bow of reverence he thus addressed the stranger fair :
"A poor and lowly hunter I; tell me, bright lady, who you are;
And why, yourself of brāhman race, or, it may be, of race divine,
You with your peerless beauty come and enter this mean hut of mine.
This house betrays my bloody trade; a lady, if she steps within
This cemetery strewn with bones, must bathe to cleanse away the sin.
Go home in haste, while yet the sun lingers in yonder western sky;
Go home, I pray, or slanderous tongues will hunt you with their hue and cry.
Did you come here fatigued, to rest ? howe'er it be, I pray you, go;
Phullarā glad will go with you, and I will follow with my bow.
Think of poor Sītā; 'gainst her will the cruel fiend his victim bore,
But all th' ordeals she endured could not her once-lost home restore.
Women's good name is only kept, like an old dress, with ceaseless care;*
Thoughtlessly handled or exposed too often, each is apt to tear."
The gooddess heard in silence all he said,
And as in shame before him bent her head;
Impatient now with folded hands he cries :
"I Cannot read your meaning 'neath this guise;
But be it what it may, I care not, so

* I remember a Calcutta pupil telling me that an old pandit came one day to his father's house, and as he was about to take his seat on the ground his old dress gave way, and he at once quoted this couplet from our poem.

You only leave this house of mine and go.
'T is yours to keep your name and honour pure;
Be true yourself, and they remain secure.
But 't is not well here in such guise to come;
Any why, when questioned, doggedly thus dumb ?
Some noble's mansion your own dwelling is;
What can you want with a mean hut like this ?
The wealth of kings is round your person hung,
And yet you stray alone, so fair and young;
Have you no fear of robbers as you roam ?
Low I implore you at your feet, go home."
Still stood she dumb; enraged, the hunter now
Paused not, but fixed an arrow to his bow;
Then to his ear the fatal shaft he drew,
Calling the sun to witness ere it flew.
Lo ! the bent bow grows rigid in his hands,
And like a painted archer, there he stands !
His palsied muscles mock the will's control,
And tears proclaim his baffled rage of soul.
In vain he strives to speak one syllable,
Body and soul are smitten by a spell.
In vain his wife would take the bow away;
He cannot yield it; it perforce will stay!
The ill-gracious Mother now at last they hear
Speak in her real voice and stop their fear :
"Know I am Caṇḍī, your true constant friend,
I come to give you blessings without end.
This ancient forest which now darkens round
Thou shalt cut down, and there a city found.
To each man give a cow and rice and land,
And rule thy people with a father's hand;
While every Tuesday shall henceforth be mine,
For solemn sacrifice and worship at my shrine."

Caṇḍī then shows the hunter where a great treasure lies

buried in seven jars, and she helps him to carry them to his cottage. The next morning he takes a ring from one of the jars and goes off to a money-changer to turn it into hard cash to meet his immediate necessities. But the neighbour owes the hunter an old bill, and gets out of his way, thinking that he is come to dun him for payment.

Poor Kālu calls, "Where is my uncle, pray ?
An urgent need has brought me here to-day."
"Alas !" the wife replied, "too late you've come,
Early this very morn he left his home.
A sudden business called him, to my sorrow,
But he will pay your little bill to-morrow.
Meanwhile we've need of wood, so bring some more,
And by one payment he'll discharge each score."
"I'm very grieved to hear that he's away,
My business will admit of no delay;
I came for ready cash a ring to sell;
Some other friend will serve my turn as well."
Smiling, her manners she began to mend,
"A ring ? pray wait a minute, my good friend."
Hearing the sound of gain, by some back gate
Her husband now comes running up elate,
Eager for this new customer with his ring,
And carrying scales and purse for bargaining.
"O nephew, is it you I see at last ?
How have the days dealt with you as they passed ?"
"Uncle, I start betimes with net and bow,
And roam the woods until the sun is low,
And Phullarā plies her trade, her gains are small,
And both come home too tired to make a call.
But I have brought a ring for you to see,
You'll help me in a great perplexity.
Deal with me, neighbour, like a generous man,
Weight it and please allow me all you can."

The merchant takes it, and, intent on gain,
Carefully notes the weight to its last grain.
"No gold or silver is this ring of thine,
Only bell-metal polished till it shine.
Ratis sixteen it weighs—heaven prosper us—
With two rice grains besides as over-plus;
Now forty cowries are each rati's rate,
And twenty cowries pay the extra weight.
So that makes eight times eighty plus a score;
Then there's your little bill adds thirty more.
I dare say part in money will suffice,
I'll pay the rest in whole or broken rice."
The hunter thought, "A pretty dream, I wis;
Are the seven jars at home all false as this?"
Aloud, "Your offer in your face I fling;
I'll go and take the fellow back his ring."
The merchant said: "Five cowries more I'll pay;
Come let us deal, I'm honest as the day;
I and your brother oft have dealt, 't was he
Who told me what a bargainer you could be."
"Come, give me back my ring, and do not frown;
I'll show it to some other in the town."
"I'll add yet fifty more, upon my soul;
All in good cash, no broken rice nor whole."
His hands already seemed to grasp the prize;
But Caṇḍī laughed with Lakṣmī in the skies;
And a clear voice he heard from heaven which told,
"Think not to cheat the hunter of his gold;
Give him seven crores in cash, at once paid down.
Caṇḍī has given it to him as his own;
So shall thy wealth be largely multiplied."
The merchant heard the words, but none beside;
He turned to the hunter, "I was but in jest,
Take these seven crores, and may thy wealth be blest."
He paid him down the coins, all true and good,

And bade him fetch the oxen for the load.
Homeward the hunter hastened with a will,
But the good news flew even faster still;
Where'er he went he found the farmers there,
And every ox is pressed its load to bear;
They crowd around the money-changer's door,
And into ready sacks the gold they pour;
Then to the hunter's home they bend their way,
And there he stores his wealth as best he may;
While every friend in need receives his fee,
And every heart is glad with sympathy.

I here close the first extract, but the original goes on to describe at some length the hunter's adventures after this accession of good fortune. He obeys the goddess' commands and cuts down the forest and founds the city Gujarāt in her honour; colonists flock to inhabit it and secure the privileges which he offers them. Amongst them comes one Bhāṅru Datt, and I add a short passage which describes his introduction of himself. It will show how the poem abounds with picturesque episodes, some of which a little remind the reader of Dickens' wealth of minor characters.

Among the foremost Bhāṅru Datt comes with choice plaintains
in his hand,
And in the rear to back him up his brother-in-law close takes
his stand;
With a broad hem sown on his rags, his pen stuck ready in his
ear,
Impudently he makes his bow, "Good uncle, hail !" as he draws
near.
A tattered blanket is his dress; a quiet smile lights up his face;
He waves his arms repeatedly, and in loud voice thus pleads
his case :
"Hopes of your favour bring me here, under your rule to find a
home;

Learn that my name is Bhāṅru Datt–you'll know it well in days
to come.
The Kāyasthas from far and near below my place are forced to
fall;
In family, judgment, moral worth, I am the leader of them all.
Blood of the three best families flows in my veins free from all
flaw–
Both of my wives were ladies born, a Mitra is my son-in-law.
All Kāyasthas on either bank of Ganges stream can eat with
me;
I claim them all as kin, and they give us their daughters willingly.
My family's stock has many shoots–wives, mothers, brothers !
it makes me pant !
Six sons-in-law with families–seven houses is the least we want.
Please give me oxen and a plough, let basket, pedal, fan be
sent;
My gracious lord will nowhere find a worthier recipient."

But, like Sancho in his island, the hunter has little knowledge of the world, and his officials, Bhāṅru Datt especially, grievously oppress the people; at last his feudal lord, the King of Kaliṅga, invades the province, and Kālaketu is conquered and thrown into prison. The goddess Caṇḍī, however, appears in a dream to the king, and her votary is restored to his people; and at his death he leaves his little kingdom to his son.

## THE OLD BENGALI POEM, "CANDI"

### II

*The second part of "Candi" begins, like the first, with the fall from heaven of the nymph Ratnamālā, who, for a forgetfulness in her dancing before Śivā and Durgā, is condemned to be born as a mortal on the earth. She is agonized at the sentences, but Durgā promises to protect her, and bids her spread her guardian's worship wherever she is. The nymph is accordingly born as Khullanā, the daughter of Rambhāvatī, who is the wife of Lakshapati, a rich merchant in Icchāni, in the district of Bardwān*

For seven months Rambhāvatī feeds her herself;
She was overjoyed when she saw her child's first teeth.
When the year was complete the child runs about from place to place;
She eagerly puts on various kinds of ornaments.
Two, three, four, five years go by;
She plays in the dust with her girl-friends.
In her fifth year they pierce her ears,
And every day she puts on beautiful dresses.
Khullanā grows from day to day;
When six years had passed, one could not describe her complexion,
She was beautiful without any ornaments.
One cannot give any simile for her, she is the furthest limit of beauty,
the moon shines in her face.*

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* I follow the text of the 1867 edition.

As she grows up to girlhood, her parents anxiously look in all directions for a suitable son-in-law; but the years pass by and Khullanā still remains unmarried.

In the meantime Dhanapati, a merchant of the neighbouring town of Ujāni, had married Lahanā, the daughter of Lakshapati's eldest brother. They had no children, but Dhanapati was high in favour with the rāja of the district.

The following adventure introduces him to the reader :–

The merchant and some gay young friends forth sally one bright
holiday,
Bearing their pigeons in their hands, to wander in the fields and
play.
Leaving their pālkīs they alight and fly their birds in aimless
fun,
Their garments and their ornaments slip down unnoticed as
they run.
Then "Let each hold the female bird", he cries, "and let the
other fly,
And whosesoever bird comes back the first shall win the victory."
The city lads troop round to see and clap their hands in wild
delight;
Up flies the merchant's pet white bird, nor lag its fellows in
their flight,
Each player holds the female bird in his left hand a prisoner
fast.
While the male pigeons soaring up dart to and fro in hurried
haste.
None had as yet turned back, when lo ! a falcon hovers in the
skies :
At the fell sight the birds disperse, each for dear life in terror
flies.
Flies like the rest the merchant's 'white', and towards Icchāni
speeds its way;
Through thorns and briars, with upturned face, its master follows
as he may.

Holding the female in his left, he calls and calls, but calls in vain;
Walls, fences, ditches stop him not, he struggles on through grass or cane,
And close behind his brāhman friend Janārdan toils with might and main.
Just at that moment Khullanā was playing, by a strange good hap,
With some girl-playmates out of doors, when drops the pigeon in her lap;
She covers it beneath her dress, and while the rest in wondarment
Growd round about her, she runs home to hide the prize good luck has sent.
The merchant follows after her, charging her with the robbery;
"Why have you stol'n my priceless bird ? Were I to lose it I should die.
Come, give it back, for, if I'm forced the theft in earnest to report,
I am the merchant to the king, and great my influence at the court.
Come, give it back, and end the jest; I see it hid beneath your dress.
You know I must not venture force, 't would break all rules of politesse."
Smiling, she whispers to herself, "My cousin's husband, who can doubt ?"
And then aloud, "Your favourite bird you must e'en learn to do without.
It will not be your meal just yet; thank heaven you 'scape that guilt to-day;
It grieved my heart to see you run like some low fowler for his prey.
It came a suppliant to my breast–a suppliant is inviolate;
This is a rule which overrules e'en merchants of the royal gate.

Still, if you 'll turn a suppliant too, and all these highflown airs
forget,
And come with straw between your teeth, I may give back your
pigeon yet."
The merchant, guessing who the girl must be,
Takes smiling leave; and, sitting 'neath a tree,
Hears all the neighbouring gossips' tongues astir,
But scandal's voice has only praise for her.
Them to his brāhman friend he turns for aid,
"Try your best skill to win me this fair maid."
Proud of th' important message which he bore,
Janārdan hastens to the father's door.
There he is welcomed with the honours meet,
A seat is brought, and water for his feet;
And the pleased father shows his eldest son,
And names his other children one by one.
Still some vexed pride inflames the Brāhman's mind,
Proud of the embassy he kept behind :
"Is this your welcome for an honoured guest ?
Where are your robes, pān, sweetmeats, and the rest ?
Am I not come on marriage business bent,
With offer of a noble settlement ?
Your daughter there is twelve years old, I hear;
And still unmarried–can I trust my ear ?
Happy that father who has safely given
His daughter to a husband when she's seven;
She needs no dower to lure the buyer's eyes,
Kind speeches are enough with such a prize.
Happy, too, he who weds his child at nine,*
He saves the funeral honours for his line,
And for himself wins happiness divine.
But you, poor dreamer, blind in heart and brain,
Have let ten years, eleven, pass in vain.

* Girls should be only married in their odd years.

Nay, worse than this, you've let the twelfth year come,
And still she lingers in her father's home.
A girl of twelve unwed !–remember hell,–
You as the father are responsible."
The father answered : "You speak well; I will do all a father should.
Look for some fitting son-in-law in Bardwān or its neighbourhood."
Of eligible sons-in-law Janārdan then recounts the list,
But none are worthy of the prize; each is found wanting and dismissed.
"Of all the merchants of renown on either side of Ganges' stream,
Like Dhanapati none I find–in welath, rank, virtue, none like him.
Ujāni is his native place, the foremost merchant of the land,
Pious to brāhmans and to gods, like Karnā liberal of hand;
Truthful and just in all his ways, of dramas fond and poetry;
Lives not on earth the son-in-law worthy of Khullanā but he."
The father heard with gladdened heart the praise of such a paragon :
"Arrange the marriage if you can, forthwith secure him as my son."
Meanwhile, concealed behind the door, his wife o'erheard the conference;
Little did she approve the scheme, and vehement was her dissidence.
"How could you ever give consent or waste your breath with such a man ?
I will not sell my child like this–was ever such a monstrous plan ?
What's all your boasted learning worth ? it only makes you more a fool;
Think of my giving up my child to bear a hated co-wife's rule !
Lahanā's tempers and her storms–'t is not your learned books can show;

What your own brother's daughter is, who half so well as I can know ?
A foolish thing is this you've done; you've heaped disgrace upon your head;
How will you show your face abroad or bear the taunts which will be said ?
I'd rather tie her round my neck and plunge with her in Ganges' wave,
Than give her thus to misery, a hated co-wife's drudge and slave.
Oh do not listen to the scheme, nor let your judgement be beguiled;
With such a tigress in the house, what would become of our poor child ?
Khullanā's like a gentle fawn, and would you for a flattering tongue
Tie such a noose round foot and neck, and do your daughter such a wrong ?
Give her the husband she deserves, so shall our daughter's heart rejoice.
You shall gain merit by the deed, and men will praise you with one voice."
"It cannot be,—the astrologers have read the story of her life,
'T is written in her horoscope that she must be a second wife."
The mother feels her last appeal is spent,
And gives reluctantly a sad consent.
This hindrance smoothed, the father next in haste
Invites the future bridegroom as his guest.
He spread a bright red blanket for his seat,
Water one brought, another washed his feet.
Rambhā in secret scrutinized his face,
And sent to call the matrons of the place.
From street to street the maid the message bore,
And trooping come the gossips to the door;
Their garments in disorder and their hair

Loose streaming in their hurry to be there;
This had one bracelet and one anklet on,
That had one eye with powder, one with none;
One leaves her hungry babe, nor heeds its cries,
One bears her baby with her as she flies.
The invitation comes by name to few,
But all the neighbours hear and flock to view,
And each is welcomed with the honours due.
Each sees the bridegroom as he sits in state,
And every one wends homeward, heart and soul elate.

The author next describes the angry grief of Dhanapati's childless wife Lahanā, when she hears from her neighbours that he is thinking of a second marriage, and that the new wife is to be her own uncle's daughter. At first she upbraids her husband with his inconstancy :–

"You have forgotten all your vows, but not for fault of mine; 't was fate, who made not woman's youth and life run side by side, of equal date. When the sun sets, the lotus fades nor stays to see itself undone; But, when the palm has lost its youth, its withered leaves still linger on."

She is, however, consoled by the gift of a silk dress and five paṇs of gold to be made into a bracelet. The ojjhā or astrologer is next sent for, and he goes with Janārdan, the family priest, to the house of the bride's father to fix the day for the marriage. The astrologer announces that the next year, as a 'seventh year', will be very unlucky, which terrifies the father, as his daughter will then be twelve years of age. The marriage, therefore, is hastened in order to fall within the current twelvemonth, and they finally fix on the 21st of the current month, Phālgun* (which corresponds to part of our February and March). The poet now proceeds to describe the marriage itself, beginning with what takes place in the bride's house :–

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★ The day of the asterism Uttaraphalgunī.

Lucky the hour and lucky is the day,
And all the household wear their best array;
By Rambhā's care, in garments turmeric-dyed,
The daughter's seated by her father's side.
And now the matron-world come flocking in,
Their shouts of *Ulu* rise in cheerful din,
While the invited guests from far and near
Come trooping up to share the festal cheer.
The drum, lute, pipe, gong, cymbals, conch and bells–
Every known instrument the concert swells;
The deafening sounds the house tumultuous fill,
While dancing girls display their agile skill.
Next, to the Sun the offerings due are given,
To Gaṇeç, Brahma, and the planets seven,*
And her† who guards the children, power benign,
The churning stick set upright as her sign;
While chanting priests the Vedic texts repeat,
And the nine offerings place in order meet–
Earth, perfumes, stones, rice, dūrbā grass, and flowers,
Fruits, ghī and curds–to please the heavenly powers.
Next silver, gold, a mirror for the bride,
And pigments, yellow, red, and black, beside;
Cowries and shells, whose hues were ne'er surpassed,
And a full dish, with lighted lamps, the last.
In a clear voice the Brāhmans chant the Ved,
The while Janārdan binds their hands with thread.
Next to the Mothers‡ offerings are addressed,
To Ruci, Gaurī, Padmā, and the rest,
And to the Nandīmukhs § are set to fall

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★ The grahas are properly nine, as the ascending and descending nodes are included in the number.

† Ṣaṣṭhī i.e. Durgā, as guarding on the sixth day after birth, when the chief danger for mother and child is over.

‡ The sixteen Matṛis.

§ A particular class of deceaned incestors in whose honour a special sign is traced with ghī on the wall.

The seven due lines of ghī along the wall;
While Rambhā with her pitcher hurries round,
Placing the auspicious water on the ground.

We have next a curious chapter describing the charms which the mother employs in order to secure her daughter's influence over her husband after her marriage. She takes the cord from a buffalo's nose, and a lamp sacred to Durgā, which the servant had previously buried in the ground; this will ensure his being as docile as any animal whose nose is pierced.* The entrails(?) of a snake are next procured from a snake-catcher's house, and the gall of a *rohit* fish caught on a Tuesday. A cow's skull is brought from a cotton-field, on which the merchant is to be made to stand for twice twenty minutes; he will then be dumb as a cow, however, Khullanā may scold him, and a friend of hers, a brāhman woman, brings her some asses' milk and curds† in a half-baked dish to complete the charm.

Meanwhile, like Kāma's self impersonate,
In his own house the merchant sits in state;
Brāhmans recite their praise, the nāch-girls sing,
And with the shouts of friends the buildings ring;
All that can bring good luck you there might view,
Each good old custom's honoured as was due,
Unbounded is the hospitality,
And every Brāhman gets an ample fee.
Then at the hour when the sun's rays decline,
And, raising dust, return the homeward kine,
With jewelled neck and wrists and flower-crowned head,
And all his limbs with saffron overspread,
He mounts the dooley; loud the dance and song,

* Two other ingredients are mentioned about which I am doubtful, pākuḍī-gāchhe [guchh] (or, as in the other edition, kākgḍī-gāchh) and hāiāMaḷāti; they may mean hemp-stalks (pākāṭī) and some Preparation of myrobalans.

† The second edition has 'snakes' curds.

And bards sing praises while it moves along;
The slow procession streams a mile or more,
The city's deafened with the wild uproar;
Loud boom the elephant-drums, as on they go
In battle order as to meet a foe.
Meanwhile, advancing from the other side,
The followers of the brother of the bride
Come in strong force; the two processions meet,
And loud the crash and jostling in the street.
Hard words are bandied first; then, as they close,
They seize each other's hair and rain their blows;
They pelt with clods, and fiercer grows the fight,
But still the bridegroom's party keep their light.
But Lakshapati, hearing of the fray,
Hastens these angry pasions to allay;
He grasps the bridegroom's hand with welcome loud,
And bears him home in safety from the crowd.
With tears of joy he first embraced him there,
Then put the wonted perfumes on his hair,
On the red blanket made him take his seat,
And had the water brought to wash his feet,
And gave him bracelets, sandal, gems, and rings,
To mark the honour which his presence brings.
Next Rambhā comes, and her glad welcome pays,
With all the forms enjoined from ancient days;
His feet are washed, the *arghya* dish brought in,
And curds flung over him good luck to win.
Next with a string she measures, as he stands,
His under-lip and measures both his hands;
Then with the selfsame string she ties him round
And knits him fast to Khullanā, captive-bound;
Seven times she winds the thread in tangles fast,
And loops the end to Khullanā's skirt at last—
A certain charm, so ancient dames have told,

He will be silent howsoe'er she scold.

Next comes the giving of the bride : the Brāhmans on their
seats rehearse.
In solemn tones before the crowd the Veda's consecrated verse;
The nāch-girls dance and play and sing, no voice in all the throng
is mute,
While loudly sound the kettledrum and tambourine and conch
and lute.
Then round the bridegroom on a throne they bear her to the
canopy;
With smiling looks the happy pair now face to face each other
see.
From her own neck she takes the wreath and puts it round him
with her hand,
Loud are the shouts of all the friends, the ulus of the matron
band.
The father then takes kuça grass and Ganges water freshly
poured,
And, calling Durgā to attest makes o'er his daughter to her lord;
And, the new kinsman welcoming, he gives him presents
manifold,
Elephants, horses, litters, cars, silver, and costly robes, and gold.
Again the burst of music sounds, the Brāhmans bind and loose
them both;
Then on Arundhatī* they gaze, type of unwavering wedded
troth;
Their parched-rice offerings next they pay to the star Rohiṇī
and Sōm†;
Last to the sacred fire they bow, the guardian deity of home.
Then they are brought within the house, and there the husband
and the wife.

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★ A star in the Great Bear, also the wife of the seven ṛshis.
† The moon.

Together eat the sugar-milk, the handsel-meal of married life.‡

Rām's the first sound that wakes the new-born day;
The bridegroom rose his daily rites to pay;
The laughing relatives around him close,
And claim th' accustomed Largess as he goes;
Then crowned with wreaths they seat the happy pair,
And all the maidens bring their presents there.
Some satins, silks, or sandal's richest smells,
Some fill the betel-box with cowrie-shells,
And gems for th' husband, and–auspicious sight !–
Rare shells with convolutions to the right !
Loudly the drums and conchs and tabours bray
To speed the parting bridegroom on his way;
The mother, as to take his leave he stands,
Puts the 'five jewels' § gently in his hands.
Prostrate before his fath'r-in-law he bows,
Then mounts the palanquin and leaves the house.

After spending some days at home in making festivities with his relations and friends, Dhanapati one day went to the Rāja's court to pay his respects. He finds that the Rāja has lately received from a fowler two marvellous birds, a sārī* and a parrot, versed in all kinds of knowledge, and is desirous of proouring a golden cage to hold them. Such a cage can only be made in Gaur, the old capital of Bengal; and as Dhanapati arrives, by his ill fortune, at this juncture, he is peremptorily sent off to

‡ The first, and also the last, meal which the husband and wife eat together

§ These are the five precious things–gold, silver, pearls, crystal and copper. See Kathās. S., ch. 77.

★ Terdus salica, These two birds are often mated in Hindu legends. For a similar mating compare the traditional attachement between the couleuvre (adder) and the murene in Provence, See Mr. J. B. Andrews (Revne des traditions populaires; tome ix, p. 335, 1894) Cf. Infra, p. 30.

Gauṛ on this errand. He has to proceed at once, without being allowed to return to his house; he can only send a hurried line to Lahanā, entrusting Khullanā and the household to her care. He arrives at Gauṛ, but finds continual obstacles and delays while the cage is being constructed, and he remains there many long months.

At first the two wives, left alone in the house, lived in perfect harmony together : Lahanā acted as the affectionate elder sister; she cooked her choicest dainties for Khullanā and devoted herself to making her happy. But this state of things did not last long; the maidservant Durbalā saw with disgust the unusual concord, and determined in her mind to do her best to put an end to it. "Where the two co-wives are not quarrelling, surely the maid in that house is crazy; I will carry tales of one to the other, she will love me like her own life." Durbalā soon kindled Lahanā's latent jealousy, as she warned her of her coming loss of influence when the merchant came home from his journey : "he will be the slave of her beauty; you will be only mistress in the kitchen."

Lahanā, in her despair, bethought her of an old friend of hers, a brāhman woman named Līlāvatī, who professed to be well versed in philtres and charms; and she despatched Durbalā to her with a message and a rich present of plantains, rice, and cakes, with fifty rupees as a fee and some bright new cowries and betel-nuts. "Durbalā took two from these last on her own account, stuffing one into each cheek. The porters go before and behind, and she in the middle; slowly, slowly she marches, swinging her arms and gathering some campak flowers as she goes."

She left the writers' quarter on the left,
And elated she entered the brāhmans' quarter.
She arrived at the house of the brāhmaṇī medicine-woman,
She called loudly at her door for the lady Līlā.
She gives her presents and pays her respects,
And Līlāvatī with kindly greeting takes her by the hand.

She asks her for the news about her mistress,
"You have not been here, Duyā,* for many a day."
Durbalā told her the whole story,
"She wants some private talk with you."

When Līlāvatī arrived, Lahanā poured out her griefs : "No husband in the house, a co-wife set over her head–trouble heaped upon trouble!" Līlāvatī laughed at her disconsolate friend's sorrow. "Why are you so downcast at one co-wife ? I have six co-wives at home, and think nothing of it !" She then described how she kept her mother-in-law and all her rivals quiet by means of her spells, and how her potions had completely subjugated her husband to her will. A long account follows of the various spells which she recommended her to use; but she especially recommended to her the spells of cheerfulness and gentle words.

"She who would win her husband's love must wait on him with
smiling look,
Not lose her beauty at the fire, for ever drudging as his cook;
If thoughtless of her husband's wish, to all his interests blind
and cold,
The young wife is a constant care, just like the miser's hoarded
gold;
Or if her tongue is never still, of what avail will beauty be ?
Vain the silk-cotton's crimson flowers without the scent that lures
the bee.
Brown is the musk, the queen of scents; 't is sweetness wins the
surest love,
And the black kokil, by its song, enchants all listeners in the
grove.
Test for yourself th' advice I give–be gentle words henceforth
your art;
They are the best and surest pit t' ensnare that deer, your
husband's heart."

★ A colloquial abbreviation of Durbalā.

Lahanā answered : "Gentle words ? good heavens ! I know not
what they mean;
I was a single wife too long, mine the sole rule the house within;
I cannot meet this altered lot, my heart through fortune's spite
is sore;
Truly my cocoanut is spoiled, water has soaked it to the core !
No gentle words I needed then; and, if my husband scolded
me,
I beat the board about his head and stormed in louder tones
than he.
Talk not to me of gentle words; tell me some better means,
I pray–
Oh what a sudden scurvy trick was this for destiny to play !
See, I am utterly undone, the snake has bit me in the eye;
Where can I bind the bandage tight to stop the poison's agony ?"

Līlāvatī now begins to doubt as to the potency of her spells in such a desperate case as the present one; and the pair finally resolve to forge a letter as coming from the absent merchant to his elder wife at home. In it he is represented as lamenting his long absence and the continual expense it involves, and he asks her to send him some of Khullanā's gold ornaments; while Khullanā herself is to be set to tend the goats, and to wear the meanest clothes, and to sleep in the shed where the rice is shelled, in order to avert the malignant machinations of the demons. By this device the two conspirations hope that Khullanā's beauty will be spoiled, and thus her influence over the merchant brought to an end.

Ten days she kept the letter in its place,
Then went to Khullanā with a fond embrace,
With downcast looks and many a lying tear :
"O sister, can I tell you what I hear ?
Hear for yourself this letter full of woe–
How can you hope to 'scape this cruel blow."
She read the lines, but only smiled–she knew

The letter had a look that was not true.
"I have no fear, good sister," answered she;
"Who has been writing this to frighten me ?
My husband forms his strokes in different wise–
Who has been tricking us with forgeries ?"
"Surely our lord dictated what is writ,
Although another's hand indited it;
Think of the many servants he had got,
Ready to do his bidding on the spot.
You must e'en tend the goats as best you may;
His orders, like the king's brook no delay."
"Crowned as a bride I came, unthinking, glad;
How short an hour of wifehood have I had !
What fault of mine deserved such punishment ?
Why such a cruel letter has he sent ?
Go, Lahanā, mind your own concerns in peace,
And all these domineering meddlings cease."
"Little you know, you rākshasī accurst;
I'll was the hour you showed your face here first;
The king the order gave which caused the ill,
That hateful cage which keeps the merchant still;
'T is this that sends you out the goats to tend;–
Blame your own fate, not me, and there's an end !"
"Then if that letter is our lord's, his own,
Where is the messenger, who brought it, gone ?
Of all the servants whom he took to wait,
Has even one been seen within our gate?"
"To make the cage he has not gold enough;
Three servants came, impatient to be off;
They took the gold and vanished in a trice–
You were too busy at your favourite dice.
Two wives like us, left husbandless alone,–
I fear we're sure to quarrel while he's gone.
You married him for his wealth–you know 't is true,–
Am I to be your slave and wait on you?"

"Childless old woman, if you thus presume,
I'll beat you, as your mistress, with my broom."
"Durbalā, you have heard this forward chit;
Shall she go on and I submit to it ?
But yesterday she left the nursery,
And now she dares to bandy words with me !"
Each shook in wrath her bracelet-jangling arm;
The neighbouring wives come running in alarm.
By sad mischance, poor Khullanā's hand, though weak,
Came in collision with the other's cheek;
The touch was slight, but Lahanā's fury rose,
And, all on fire, she dealt her angry blows;
Each stormed and cuffed, and pulled the other's hair,
In vain the neighbours tried to part the pair;
Helplessly wondering, they watched the fray,
And Lahanā's tongue soon drove them all away.
Each on the other then her anger bent,
Their armlets, anklets clashed, their clothes were rent;
Like showers of hail their mutual blows fell fast,
But Khullanā was overpowered at last.
In vain she called her absent husband's aid,
Lahanā listened to no word she said;
She strips her of her bracelets and her rings,
Torn from her head her wreath and pearls she flings,
Her anklets, armlets, zone, away she bears,
And from her waist her silken sāṛi tears.
Poor Khullanā stands of all her pride bereft,
Only her iron ring of wifehood left;*
Thirsty and tired and weeping, there she stands,
A rope tied tightly round her neck and hands.
E'en Durbalā feels compassion as she weeps,
And brings some water for her thirsty lips.

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★ This is the iron ring always worn on the left hand of a married women : it is laid aside in widowhood.

Gently she thanks her in a grateful tone,
"O Duyā, but for you, my life had gone."

Low at her feet she falls and weeps. "Oh help me in my loneliness;
I come with straw between my teeth, a suppliant in sore distress.
I have no friend nor kindred near; my husband, he is far away,
And Lahanā in the empty house tiger-like rages for her prey.
O Durbalā, I rest on thee, be thou my help for pity's sake;
Go tell my mother, as from me–'t was she who made the sad mistake–
'Your daughter Khullanā is dead–oh what a wondrous gain you got
When to her fate you sold your child !–abide in joy and sorrow not.'
And tell my father, here alone, through Lahanā's tortures I expire–
'T was his own hand that ruthlessly threw his poor daughter in the fire."

Durbalā. She punishes the least offence with blows,
For a small fault she'd cut off ears and nose;
I must not vex her–you must wait, I say,
I'll take your message when I find a way.
In the meantime be patient and submit,
And feed the goats, if she insists on it.
I'll take your message safely–never fear–
And in a trice your father will be here."
Next Lahanā came, her harsh command to press,
While Duyā brushed the mud that stained her dress;
The staring neighbours gather from the town,
And Līlā counts the goats and writes them down.*

★ In the original there here follows a long list of the names of the goats, filling ten lines–Mālatī, Bimalā, Dhūlī, etc. It is an interesting ilustrution of St. John, X, 3, "he calleth his own sheep *by name.*"

Says Lahanā : "I will mark them every one,
That any changeling stranger may be known;
And should one die, if I the body see,
I will say naught, and she from blame be free."
Poor Khullanā, helpless in her bitter woe,
Put on her rags and sadly turned to go;
Durbalā only showed a little care,
And brushed the dust while Lahanā bound her hair.
Slowly she goes with leaves her head to shade,
And in her hand a simple switch was laid.
The goats run scampering, heedless where they roam,
And angry farmers storm to see them come.
Her flower-like body in the sun's fierce heat
Seems withering up, her clothes are steeped in sweat,
A river stops her–urged by greater dread,
She carries every goat across its bed;
Next comes a wood in sight, beneath the boughs
The hurrying goats disperse themselves to browse;
She hears the wolf's sharp howl, and wild with fear
Runs to and fro to show that she is near;
The kuç grass with its needles stabs her foot,
And drops of blood betray her devious route.
Wearied at last, she sits beneath a tree
Watching the goats stray heedless o'er the lea.
At length she stirs herself at evening-fall,
And drives her goats together to their stall,
Then waits for Durbalā to bring her fare,
All that the stingy Lahanā can spare.
Coarse was the meal–an arum leaf for dish–
Old refuse rice, poor pulse, and common fish;
Tough egg-plant stalks, of withered gourds a slice,
But ne'er a pinch of salt to make it nice.
Khullanā, weeping, eats as best she may,
Swallows a part and throws the rest away,
While Lahanā comes and watches at her side,

And scolds her for her daintiness and pride.
On her straw bed she lies each weary night,
And leads her goats afield each dawning light.
Some rice, half dust, is in a bundle tied,
And thus the day's provisions are supplied.
Carrying her switch in hand she wanders slow,
An on her head a leaf to cool her brow.
Under pretence of bringing water there
One morning Durbalā hurried after her.
"I saw", she cried, "your parents yesterday,
And told them all, but nothing could they say.
Your mother grieved the doleful story heard,
But good or bad she answered ne'er a word;
And your old niggard father, I declare,
Sent you some paltry cowries–here they are."
... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
At length the spring came down upon the woods,
And the spring breezes woke the sleeping buds;
The season sends its summons forth to all,
And every tree hangs blossoms at its call;
The drunken bees feel waking nature's power,
And roam in ecstasy from flower to flower,
Just as the village priest, the winter done,
Wanders elsewhere to greet the vernal sun.
Amidst the leaves she hears the cuckoo's voice,
And the known note makes all her heart rejoice.
"Oh will my lord come back," she cries, "to-day?
He has been gone a weary time away."
But while she counts the months, by chance she sees
A parrot and a sāṛī in the trees;
Loud she upbraids them–they had done the wrong,
Their luckless cage had kept her lord so long.
"That golden cage, that whim of yours, in truth,
Has made poor Khullanā widowed in her youth;
You drove my lord from home, and I forlorn

Was left a cruel co-wife's drudge and scorn.
She grudges me my food, or clothes to wear,
I wander keeping goats in my despair,
Have you come here to wreak your angry will
Because that cage remains unfinished still ?
Take care, be wise, my patience has a bound,
I may turn fowler, reckless how I would;
I may ensnare the parrot in the tree,
And leave the sārī widowed just like me.
But if you feel compassion for my pain,
List to my prayer, fly back to Gaur again,
My husband seek, and pour into his ear
The tale of all the miseries which I bear."

At last the goddess sends a dream to Lahanā which alarms her, and she fetches Khullanā back and begins to treat her more kindly; and, by a similar dream, she reminds the merchant of his forgotten home duties. He has been wasting time on his own pleasures during his long stay of more than a year in Eastern Bengal, under the pretext of watching the construction of the cage. Warned by the dream, he delays no longer, but returns with the cage, and is welcomed by the Rāja with every honour.

Lahanā hears the news, and sore dismayed
Turns for some help to her deceitful maid :
"The master has at last come back, I hear;
Khullanā will bewitch his mind, I fear :
Where are the ointments, charms, and philtres stored ?
Help me, I pray, and win me back my lord."
Durbalā brought the box, well pleased to tell
The mystic uses of each drug and spell;
But while her mistress tries each charm in turn,
She breathless runs poor Khullanā's thanks to earn.
"O little mother, let me kiss your feet,
Come out and hear the music in the street;
Your hope's fulfilled, my lord's come home at last,

And your long night of misery is past.
I have no mistress now but only you,
I ma all yours–you know my words are true.
I'll bear you witness what your griefs have been,
I've vexed my inmost heart for what I've seen.
Show him the rags and switch; disprove her lies,
And make her presence hateful to his eyes,
Multiply all her misdeeds as you please;
Faint heart ne'er brought a rival to one's knees."
Poor Khullanā smiled to hear such comforting,
And gave the girl in gratitude a ring;
Then Duyā rose and brought the jewel-case,
And straight unlocked its stores before her face,
While she adorned her mistress with the best,
And with art's utmost skill her person dressed,
Rings, gold, pearls, jewels–what can art do more?
When lo ! they hear the merchant at the door !
He bids farewell to his attendant train,
And calls for his wife to greet him home again.
Khullanā comes at once her lord to meet,
And pours a stream of oil before his feet;
But she was as a stranger to his eye,
Some nymph, perhaps, come down from Indra's sky;
His compliments but pained her as she heard,
And with head bowed she answered ne'er a word.
Covering her face she turned within at last,
But Duyā heard behind the door what passed,
And eager to be friends with both she flew
To tell th' expectant co-wife all she knew.
"Oh have you heard, my lady, what has come?
My lord, thank heaven ! has safely reached his home,
And who but Khullanā, forward minx though prim,
Has rushed to be the first to welcome him !
She with her youth, best clothes, and fineries,–
What an unfair advantage 't was to seize !

She never asked your leave, but ran to th' gate,
Eager to be the first at any rate.
Had we but had a wiser lord, alack !
He would have scorned her tricks and thrust her back."

Lahanā begs Durbalā to finish adorning her, and thus arrayed she hastes to make up for her lost time; but when she comes before the merchant, he appeals her by asking her who was she beautiful stranger whom she had already sent before her to give him the first welcome. Lahanā pours out her complaints.

"When first you went, a long and weary age,
Sent by the king for that unlucky cage,
You left young Khullanā in my special care,
No thought and no expense was I to spare.
I did my best–so much I will aver–
But little was the help I got from her.
She never stirred to cook the household fare,
Nor lent a hand to help me with my hair;
Dress her one thought or cooking something nice,
Or with some idle friends to play at dice.
I used to dress her out; my gems and rings
She wore as if they were her proper things;
No moment from her constant claims was free,
Durbalā had no time to wait on me;
On every choicest dish she must be fed,
And at unheard of hours her meals were spread.
She never cares to pay a visit home,
Nor lifts her hand to have her mother come;
To spend the money is her only thought,–
Fancy the waste and mischief she has wrought !"
Her outburst well her lord could understand,
And slipped a golden bracelet in her hand.

The merchant then arranges that Khullanā is to prepare a special feast for himself and his friends, and, in spite of all Lahanā's machinations, it all turns out as he wishes.

# THE OLD BENGALI POEM, "CAṆḌI"

## III

## KHULLANĀ'S ORDEAL

*The merchant Dhanapati was one day playing backgammon with some friends, when his family priest entered and reminded him that the first anniversary of his father's death was near at hand, at which time he would have to offer the customary ancestral sacrifice called the çrāddh. Dhanapati, who had been absent on the king's commission in Gaur when his father died, determines to perform the rites with every mark of honour; and he invites all his kinsmen and the principal members of the merchant caste in all the neighbouring towns to be present. They come in great numbers and assemble at his house on the appointed day. Dhanapati performs the çrāddh,* and then follows the description of the reception of the guests.*

The çrāddh was over and the Brāhmans gone,
Loaded with costly presents every one,
When, full of care, his way the merchant wends
To pay due honours to th' assembled friends.
How shall he likeliest give the least offence,
To whom presume t' assign the precedence ?
Cānd is the first in character and race,–
Cānd is the one who best deserves the place.
'T is Cānd to whom he turns the first to greet,
And brings the water first to wash his feet,
Then draws the sandal-mark upon his brows,
And round his neck the flower-wreathed garland throws,
But Çaṅkha Datt in sudden wrath out burst,

★ The original has a description of the çrāddh which I omit. A full account of the various ceremonies is given in Colabrooke's Essays, vol. I.

"I in these meetings am by right the first.
Lo ! Dhūsha Datt can witness how of late
His father's çrāddh he had to celebrate;
Full sixteen hundred merchants, one and all
Of stainless credit, gathered in his hall,
Yet I was first of all that company;
Too much good luck has made you blind, I see."
Retorts the merchant, "First, I grant, you were;
But why so ? Cānd, I warrant, was not there,
His wealth and virtues are alike untold,
Even his outer court* is filled with gold."
At this Nīlāmbar sneers, "And think you, then,
That gold can purchase everything for men ?
His six poor childless wives bemoan their fate,–
Can gold light up a house so desolate ?"
"I know you well, Nīlāmbar," Cānd replies,
"Your father too, –there's many a rumour flies.
He used to sell myrobalans, fame avers,
With all the city's scum for purchasers.
His cowrie-bundles, with a miser's care,
He stowed away here, there, and everywhere;
He'd stand for hours, and then, the hustling o'er,
Go home and dine, with ne'er a bath before."
"Well," says Nīlāmbar, "well, and why this din?
He plied his lawful trade,–was that a sin ?
And then the snack which you his dinner call,–
A sop of bread or plantain, that was all."
Nīlāmbar's son-in-law, Rām Rāy by name,
Now interposes to divert the blame :
"If we're to wrangle on a caste affair,
Had we not better turn our throughts elsewhere ?
When a young wife keeps goats in woods alone,

★ The mahals are the different compartments into which a Hindu mansion is divided each containing its garden with rooms round it on all four sides.

Is there no loss of caste to anyone ?"
At this around the room a murmur went,
One whispers and his neighbour nods assent,
And then Rām Rāy, to deepen the offence,
Called for the Harivaṃça's evidence.
All set awaiting what would happen next,
While the old Brāhman read the sacred text;
The unfriendly merchants laughed or jibed aloud,
While Dhanapati sat with head low bowed.

A passage is then read from the Harivaṃça which illustrates, by the story of Ugrasena's queen, how dangerous to female chastity lonely wanderings in the forest may prove. Rām Kuṇḍa then proposes that the passage from the Rāmāyaṇa should be read which describes how Rāma, after rescuing his wife Sītā from her imprisonment in Laṅkā, only received her again after she had proved her purity by entering unharmed a burning house of lac.

Then Alaṃkāra Datt next wags his tongue;
"Our host may well suspect there's something wrong;
His wife kept goats and wandered without let,–
Who knows what drunken ruffians she has met ?
So let her pass the ordeal; till that's done,
Who'll taste the food she cooks ? Not I, for one.
Or if the ordeal's risk unwelcome be,
Then let him pay a lac and so be free."
Here Lakshapati* threatens : "I shall bring
The whole affair at once before the king."
Then Çaṅkha Datt : "Has pride your heart so filled
That you must play the king upon the guild ?
Take care, for Garuḍ's† son his caste defied,
But the sun scorched his wings and tamed his pride.
If it's the king to whom we must resort,

★ Dhanapati's father-in-law.
† The king of birds : his son was Sampāti.

Let us all go in a body to the court;
But kings know more of criminal penalties,
These caste disputes the caste itself best tries.
Duryodhana, they say, though stout and brave,
Scorned the advice of ten, and found a grave.
It still holds true; if ten your conduct blame,
And you stand out, then woe betide your fame !"
Meanwhile the host, while loudly thus they brawl,
Steals out dismayed to scold the cause of all.

"What craze possessed you, Lahanā, to send your co-wife to the wood
To tend her goats–you'll rue the day–left houseless in the solitude ?
You promised me to keep her safe; basely have you betrayed the trust;
For your own ends you've ruined her and dragged my honour in the dust.
A king will vex by open force, by slanderous tongues our kith and kin;
A serpent by its spring and bite–but yours a deadlier wound has been.
I married her to have a son, to build for me a bridge to heaven,
That so the ancestral offerings, when I was gone, might still be given.
For who is like the sonless man–what bitterness is such as his ?
In the three worlds he has no hope–life is one string of miseries.
What is my life now worth ? Go bring a knife or poison, let me die;
We shall be glad then, both of us, but not e'en you so much as I."

From her he goes to Khullanā, and urges her by every plea
To shun th' ordeal's unknown risks and calmly face the calumny.
"Leave the ordeal's test alone; stay still at home, your proper place,

Were you by some ill chance to fail, how could I look men in the face ?
E'en should there be some fault in you, 't is not for me to utter blame,
'T was I who left you thus exposed; ill I deserve a husband's name.
You wandered in the wood alone–women are weak by nature all;
Old stories swarm with precedents how soon they, left uncared for, fall.
Cease then your fear, I'll pay the sum, and should some cross-grained wretch still pout,
I'll pay it down a second time–my purse will yet a while hold out."

"O foolish husband, if you give to day,
Year after year you 'll have the same to pay.
Year after year they 'll wring by force their claim,
And far and wide will blow my tale of shame.
I must, then, brave th' ordeal–it must be;
I will drink poison if you hinder me."
Deep in his heart he knew her innocent,
And from his face the cloud of trouble went.
With lightened heart he entered now the hall,
And asked their presence at his festival,
And "Khullanā," he said, "shall cook for all."
Most of th' invited guests seem pleased to come;
Only Nīlāmbar downward looks in gloom.
"The tenth–my father's çrāddh is on that day;
How can I then eat flesh with you, I pray ?"
'T was an old wound that rankled in his breast–
The sore seemed healed, but still the merchant guessed.
"I ask you not to eat our common fare,
Eat rather what your Brāhmans will prepare;
But when the çrāddh is over, be my guest–

Your simple presence is my one request."
"In Gayā's shrine and Purī's have I stood–
I must not eat an alien gotra's food."
Glancing askant in rage and wounded pride,
In a rough voice the merchant thus replied :
"Shall one whose ancestors have dealt in salt
For fifty generations without halt
Boast of his family, self-deceived and blind ?
He retails salt to every low-caste hind,
And out of every penn'orth sold by weight
Steals a full quarter, –shall this boaster prate ?"
Out spoke the merchant thus, with anger filled;
Rām Kuṇḍa then, th' attorney of the guild.
Catching a signal in Nīlāmbar's eye,
Put forth his hand and deftly made reply;
"'T is all a caste affair,–then what's amiss ?
This one sells salt by caste, and potherbs this.
You married a young girl, too young and fair;
She, keeping goats, has wandered, –who knows where?
A fist that's lying stranded on the shere,
Or gold or silver on a lonely moor;–
Such is the maid who lone in forests hies;
Who can refrain from seizing such a prize ?
This is the common judgment of mankind,–
And who shall call that common judgment blind ?
If Khullanā be spotless, as you say,
Th' ordeal let her pass in open day.
Then send the invitations round, and we
Shall all be glad to taste her cookery."
Poor Dhanapati, thus on all sides pressed,
Accepts the challenge and awaits the test.

In Ganges water bathed and then bedight
With garments as the moon or jasmine white,
Khullanā offers at the goddess' feet

The flowers and lamps and perfumes as is meet.
Then walking round the image lifts her cry,
"Oh save me in this hour of jeopardy !"
Low on the ground she pleads with sobs and tears,
Till moved t' her deepest heart the goddess hears.
Before her suppliant in the room she stands,
And on the low-bowed head she lays her hands.
She promises her presence and her aid,
And Khullanā no longer feels afraid.

Meanwhile the merchant holds a council sage :
A hundred paṇḍits reverend with age,
Arranged in state on seats of honour all,
Discuss th' ordeal's ceremonial.
They call on Yama; then, as in his sight,
A mantra on two peepul-leaves they write;
Two casual strangers next are led aside
And on their heads the symbols twain are tied.
Into the lake they dive,–all tongues are still,–
But what strange shouts of joy the city fill ?

With her eight nymphs the goddess in her car
Looks down upon the contest from afar.
They rise, but not together now as erst,–
'T is Khullanā's foe gives in exhausted first.
The leaves reversed, the divers plunge once more,
But Khullanā still is conqueror as before.
Says Çaṅkha Datt : "Th' ordeal was not fair;
There was collusion with the men, I swear
Leave all these tricks, and if you would decide
Her innocence, some other test be tried."
A deadly serpent next is brought,–its eyes
Are two karañja blossoms in their dyes*;

★ "The karañja flowers are Pretty large, of a beautiful mixture of blue, white and purple." – Roxburgh.

Wildly it hisses, pent its jar within,
The jar seems bursting with the stifled din.
The merchant drops his ring inside, and loud
Rises a cry of wailing from the crowd.
But Khullanā, kneeling, lifts her gaze on high
And calls the Sun to help her purity,
And seven successive times they see her bring
Out of its prison, safe, the golden ring.
There was a silent hush, till from the press
Rām Dāṅ's harsh voice broke out in bitterness :
" 'T is all a trick,–that serpent's mouth was bound,
Or 't was a poor dull worm that could not wound."
A smith set up his furnace on the spot
And heated there an iron bar red-hot;
Red like the newly risen sun it shone,
Fear pierced the merchant's heart as he looked on.
Upon a peepul-leaf the mystic line
He traced and placed within her hand the sign;
They seize the bar with tongs as fierce it glows,
And bring it reddening like a china rose;
But Khullanā, dauntless, utters her desire :
"The life of all that lives, hear me, O fire !
If I have sinned, then scorch me with thy brand;
If I am pure, rest gently in my hand."
She stretches forth her hands the bar to clasp,
The burning mass is lowered into her grasp;
With head bowed low she bears it all alone,
Through the seven rounds she bears it, one by one,
Till on the straw at last the bar she lays,–
Up in a moment flames the straw ablaze.
Still Çaṅkha Datt looks on in discontent,
And thus he gives his bitter envy vent :
"I'm half afraid to interpose my say,
But false ordeals–what are they but play ?
There was some witchcraft in it–all was plann'd

Hence was that bar like water in her hand."
Another test was tried–the Brāhmans came
And set on fire some ghī,–up flashed the flame;
But Khullanā, where the flame was fiercest, turned,
Dropped the gold in, then took it out, unburned.
Then Mādhab Candra : "Call you this a test ?
It was a false ordeal, like the rest.
Pay the sum down, ordeals all are vain;
So, your wife cleared, your honour you 'll regain."*
Though sore provoked that thus each trial fails,
Once more the merchant yields to try the scales,†
Again does Khullanā, fearless, meet the event,
Once more the proof proclaims her innocent.
Then Dhūsha Datt comes forth the case to mend :
"I sympathize with your distress, my friend;
Your fellow-castemen, right and left, you see,
Still wag their tongues whate'er th' ordeals be.
A lac-house was the test which Sītā passed,–
To this one point they all come round at last.
You are my mother's brother; this alone
Would prove I have no interest but your own.
Make a lac-house and let her enter in,
This test will purge the faintest breath of sin."
Then Māṇik Cānd : "I must no more sit mute,
This test alone will settle the dispute.

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★ The second edition here adds the account of another ordeal with penai water. A Bengali friend, whom I consulted on this obscure phrase, writes as follows : pond is a plant which overspreads every foul tank; it is very common in Calcutta and so is it word, Panai means 'covered with pānā ' Water so covered is very cold because it not puts the sunlight and any person bathing in a tank covered with pānā is liable to cutaneous diseases. The word is pronounced and written pānaāi now." As the Pānāi comitted in the first edition, I have ventured to leave it out in my translation.

† See the Institutes of Vishnu X (Jolly's transl. Sacred Books of the fact. The innocent man weights lighter at the second trial.

It was this test proved Sītā innocent,
How can we find a better precedent ?"
At last the merchant yields, with anguish filled,–
But where's the architect such house to build ?

A solid mass of gold, a gourd(?) in size,
With solemn state is offered as the prize.
On a high pole his banner flouts the sky,
While drums and trumpets bray their hoarse reply.
Town after town–the rumour fills the land,
But all shrink hopeless at the strange demand;
"A house of lac, like Rām's !" the whisper ran;
"The gods' ordeals who but gods can plan ?"
Meanwhile her secret schemes the goddess laid
And summoned Viçwakarman* to her aid;
Called by a thought he came, behind his back
Stood Hanumat : "Go, build a house of lac."
They go–an old man this, and that a boy–
To undertake the perilous employ.
The moon conducts them to the merchants room :
"To build the house of lac you need we're come."
They stretch the measuring line and mark the ground.
And dig a trench seven cubits deep all round.
Of lac the walls are made, of lac the floors,
Of lac the beams, the rafters and the doors.
Of lac the struts and tie-beams every one,
Of lac the roof and all that's laid thereon.
The house thus built, away the builders went,
While all the guild gaze on in wonderment;
"Her honour's stainless," e'en Nīlāmbar saith,
"Who 'scapes unseathed from such a certain death."

But Khullanā, at the novel risk dismayed.
Turns to her old protectress for new aid.
The goddess hears her prayer of anxious dread,

★ The architect of the gods.

And gently lays her hand upon her head;
And tears of joy from Khullanā's eyes o'erflow
As she pours forth the story of her woe.
A while the goddess muses; then her will
Calls Fire himself to avert the threatened ill.
Swift at her bidding mighty Agni came,
Eager to know what service she would claim.
"The fiery test my votary is to brave;
Lo, I entrust her in thy hands to save."
He answered : "Cool as sandal will I be;
Thy bidding is my highest dignity."
Then as a pledge to bid her fears begone,
In Khullanā's hand he lightly placed his own;
'T was cold,–she shrank not as the fingers kissed,
Not e'en the lac* was melted on her wrist.

Around her neck the goddess' wreath she wore;
And as she stepped within the fatal door
She fired the hall : the flumes spread far and wide,
Swalled to the roof and soared aloft outside.
From her chaste body, Lo ! their tongues retire,
Cold as the sandal is that blasting fire.
High to the sky the dark somke-pillars rise;
The gods themselves gaze down with wondering eyes.
Loud as June thunder roars the o'ermast'ring blaze,
E'en the Sun's horses rear in wild amaze !
The rafters melt, the cross-ties, roof and all;
Melt the four walls, and in one crash they fall.
A shower of flowers rains down ward from above,–
Ne'er did this æon such high courage prove !
Poor Sītā's tale is all long-past and old,–
We have heard it with our ears, but this our eyes behold !

Meanwhile the mearchant beats his head and flings himself upon the ground. In the mid flames he fain would spring, but

★ Hindu women often were rings on their wrists made of shell-inc.

that his friends his hands have bound :
"Loved of my soul, I see thee not,–and life is worthless, reft of thee;
Where thou art gone I too will go,–I will be with thee presently.
Ah, faithless husband that I was ! I left thee in the co-wife's power,–
Hence all those wanderings in the wood, and all the misery of this hour."
The kinsmen weep in sympathy, with hair unbound and looks distraught;
And even Lahanā feels remorse when she sees all her spite has wrought.

The smoke cleared off, the fire burned fierce and bright,
But Oh! no Khullanā appears in sight !
In agony of heart the merchant turns,
And wildly rushes where it firecost burns,
When from the very centre of the flam.
To his stunned ears a cry of "Victory !" came
And forth she stepped and stood before the throng.
Chanting aloud to all her 'victory' song.
From her thick hair the drops of moisture rained.
The shell upon her wrist was still unstained;
Still flowed her robe uninjured to her feet,
Nor had one fibre shrivelled in the heat.
As she stands radiant, her maligners all
Before her feet ashamed and prostrate fall;
And Çaṅkha Datt is first to own his sin,–
How blind and obstinate they all have been,
"Curse us not, sister," is their common prayer;
"Forgive the pride that made us what we were."
Nīlāmbar Dās came forward with the rest
And tardily his error thus confessed :
"Count me your brother,–no ill-will I bear,–
Gladly I'll eat your rice if you 'll prepare."

Then said Rām Dāṅ, his voice half-choked and low :
"You are no mortal woman,–now I know;
Who would believe me if the tale I told ?
Who has e'er heard the like in days of old ?"

Triumphant thus in all the various tests,
Khullanā now prepares to feast her guests.
They fill the court, arranged in order round,
Seated by precedence upon the ground;
And Khullanā herself, all smiling, waits,
And hards the rice to all in golden plates.
First soup of bitter herbs to give a zest,
Then potherbs with a savoury relish dressed;
Fried fish; kid curry,* and a thick rich broth;
And every dish is perfumed. Nothing loth,
The guests applaud the courses as they come,
And fragrant steam mounts up and floats through every room.
The lighter dishes next in due degree,–
Sweet meats and curds, and rice-made furmity.
All wash their mouths, and, ending the repast,
Camphor and betel-leaf are handed last.*
Each guest recieves his present when they part;
The merchant's open hand wins every heart.
Then to Durvāsas,† patron of the clan,
A horse is given whereon sat never man;
While Kauçikī‡ receives her ewer of gold,
And unto Sātgāṅ's guilds their silken balcs are told.

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★ This book is written by a Çākta, i.e. a womlipper of Durgā according to tāntric uses; and çāktas eat fish and kid's flesh.

★ These lines are repeated in the same words in another part of the poem, but with a different couplet at the end :

Then pulpy durian-seeds are handed last,
And juicy mangoes finish the repast.

† A celebrated ancient sage.

‡ A form of the goddess Durgā or Caṇḍī.

# About the Booklet
# I

## *In the perspective of state, time and literature the birth, self-identity and poetry composition of Kavikankan Mukunda Chakraborty.*

In the early sixteenth century or before the myths in Bengali literature along with the description of the greatness of God became the psychic element of rural Bengalees. With the passage of time this turned into Mangalkavya. This branch of rural or folk literature[1] was shaped and reshaped by many poets in the form of Manasamangal, Chandimangal, Dharmamangal, Shivamangal and Annadamangal. Of them, Mukunda Chakroborty, the composer of Chandimangal, became most popular for his excellence.

Chandimangal is based on Chandi, a female divine power[2] Devi Aranyani who has been described in the tenth chapter of the Rigveda as 'Mriganang Mataram.[3] It has been stated that Devi Chandi is a female embodiment of divine power for whom offerings are made by women as sacred vow.[4] Poet Mukunda Chakroborty wrote Chandimangal, Avayamangal or Ambika mangal at the fall of sixteenth century.[5] Four hundred years have elapsed since then, but disputes centring around poet's birth, personal identity and time of his literary work have not yet been resolved.

Poet Mukunda Chakraborty has revealed his identity in the self-story written in Chandimangal which has been kept at his own village Daminya.[6] The same is found in the thirty second

manuscript[7] kept in Bardhaman Literary Sabha. In the self-story the poet has described Daminya and his family tree. Ambikacharan Gupta in his article entitled 'Kavikankan and his Chandimangal'[8] has given a detailed description of the poet's identity extracting accurately from the Daminya manuscript. Asutosh Chattapadhyay has also collected many facts on the subject and written in 'Bharatbarsha'.[9]

From their writings it is known that the poet belonged to Kayaricult of Brahmins. They domiciled at Daminya village of Bardhaman district for six-seven generations. The ancestors of the poet were devotees of Lord Vishnu.[10] The poet himself was Vaishnava.[11] While reading 'Kabikankan Candī' Rabindranath Tagore has also indicated that poet Mukunda Chakroborty was a Vaishnava.[12]

Charuchandra Bandyopadhyay has stated that the poet's family was initially 'Shaiva'. The poet's grandfather Jagannath Mishra gave up eating fish and meat, and turned into Vaishnava.[13] His father was Hriday Mishra. Seeing the name 'Daibakinandan' in 'Daibakinandan Bhane', researchers like Mahendranath Vidya-nidhi and Sukumar Sen have come to the conclusion that Devaki was the name of the poet's mother.[14] His elder brother's name Kabichandra, which was a title, not a name.[15] His younger brother's name was Ramananda, alias Ramanath.[16]

Ambikacharan Gupta writes, "After having elementary education at his own village Daminya, the poet came to Bhangamora village, three miles away, to study grammar, poetry, rhetoric and the holy law-books of the Hindus. Either, while pursuing his studies or after, Mukundaram got married at Keonta village and took up ancestral profession of agriculture to earn his livelihood for running the family. He became father of son Shivram and daughter Jashoda. He got them married. His daughter-in-law was Chitralekha and son-in-law was Mahesh."[17]

According to Sukumar Sen, Shivram, Chitralekha, Jashoda and Mahesh may be poet's daughter and son-in-law, daughter

and son, or even grandson and granddaughter.[18] Ambikacharan Gupta writes, the poet's grandson Aviram was the son of Shivram and Chitralekha.[19] Born before Shivram, the poet's one son, he called that son as 'Shishu',[20] (in the text has 'Shishu Kānde Odaner tāre') had a premature death, observe the researchers.[21]

Ambikacharan Gupta has also written in his essay, "Of his ancestors the poet knew the name of Tapan Ojha, his son Umapati Ojha, Umapati's immediate next descendant Madhav Ojha and his nine brothers born of the same mother–Uddharan, Purandar, Nityananda, Sureswar, Basudev, Mahesh, Sagar, Sarbeswar and the youngest Jagannath. The poet belonged to the fifth generation of Tapan Ojha. The poet stated in 'Granthotpattir Karan' that they had started living at Damunya village from one or two past generations of Tapan Ojha.[22]

It is known from the research work of Sukhamoy Mukhopadhyay that Tapan Ojha's son Umapati had ten sons–Madhav Sharma, Uddhav, Purandar, Nityananda, Maheswar, Garveswar, Mahesh, Sagar, Basudev and the youngest Jagannath Mishra. Gurniraj Mishra was the son of Jagannath and poet Mukunda Chakroborty was the youngest son of Guniraj.[23] Researchers are of the opinion that the poet's descendant lived at Chhotobainan village under Raina police station in the district of Bardhaman.[24]

Mukunda's second self-story entitled 'Granthotpattir Karan' is famous because he has described here his time of birth and composition of poetry, reasons for leaving village, contemporary history. It not only upholds the poet's individual identity, but also reveals sociopolitical turmoil and socioeconomic condition of that period. It is known from this story that the poet lived at Daminya village as a subject of Gopinath Nandi Neogy of Salimabad town. They were tenants of land for generations. They became victims of tyrant Dihidar Mamood Sharif and when Gopinath Nandi was captivated by the tyrant, they anticipated of ruthless tortures.[25] After discussion with Srimanta Khan and a village head, the poet left the village. On

Mukundaram's leaving the village and his writings,[26] Kshudiram Das in an article published in Visva Bharati (1375 of the Bengali Calender) has brought forth many new information about political turmoil of that period.

It is known from the article that a draft was prepared to appoint new officers of same status in all provinces on the directive of emperor Akbar in 1586 A.D. Akbar was interested in bringing about unity in administration and trouble free revenue collection. As a result both village and province came under a unitary system. The new government introduced direct tax collection from the subjects, impartial administration and fair justice. In the new system of Moghul Empire subjects were instructed to deposit taxes directly to the government. But the subjects were temporarily troubled by this system because old measurement was replaced by a new one, new settlement record was introduced resulting in tax hike, discount was introduced for coin exchange, penalty was levied on daily basis for delay in depositing the old coins. So the subjects incurred financial loss. Above all, the government's strict order harassed the subjects a lot. Todarmol was appointed as the Main Ujir of the empire and instructed to conduct official transactions in Persian language which posed a severe problem for the subjects. Facing such an unbearable situation, the poet was compelled to migrate from the ancestral home of seven generations. According to Kshudiram Das, it did not happen before 1595 A.D.[27]

In the 'Granthotpattir Karan', the poet has clearly stated the administration and land reforms of that period with precision. The situation was a major irritant to the poet and his neighbours. In this turmoil,[28] he left Daminya and settled at Arra near Ghatal, about 30 or 40 miles away from Daminya.

Sukumar Sen in an article published in the Visva Bharati. (the Bengali Calender 1363), entitled 'Mukundaramer Deshtyagkal,'[29] has given a vivid description of Mukundaram's departure from Daminya. Sen writes, the poet accompanied by his wife, child son, brother Ramanath and with some cash left

home for southward, After going two miles, Rup Roy snatched away the poet's cash at Velia village. Jadu Kundu gave shelter to the penniless family. Spending three days in Kundu's residence, the poet again took to the street.

Then the poet came in Bhengutia village after crossing Murai river. On his southward journey, he came to Patuli village sailing across Darakeswar river. When they came to Gocharia village after crossing Parasar and Damodar rivers, they were completely broken. In this village they rested near a pond, had a bath and offered pujas to his tutelary deity with waterlily flowers.[30] There was nothing to have except water. His hungry son started crying for boiled rice. Hungry and tired the poet fell asleep. In his dream appeared Devi in the image of mother and instructed him to write poetry. At last the poet reached Arra village crossing Shilai river. Bakura Roy, the zaminder of Arra, welcomed the poet and took his responsibility, gave him 12 Mound paddy and appointed him as the private tutor of his son. The poet composed his poetry, having settled at Arra.

Here the question is exactly at what point of time the poet lived and composed his works. The poet has given a clue in his Granthopattir Karan. But the problem remains in differences of opinion. After having reviewed the opinions of scholars,[31] we think that three volumes of Chandimangal Kavya were written in different phases. Of them the first was written before he left his ancestral village and the rest two were written after settling at Arra, probably before the death of Raghunath Roy.

Mukunda Chakroborty left his ancestral village Daminya in autumn 1595. On his way to Gochuria village, he offered pujas to his family God with waterlily flowers[32] and received instructions in dreams. The poet earned distinction composing Shivamangal which is Devakhanda of Chandimangal, and believed to have been written before 1595. After having settled at Arra in 1595, the poet composed his Akshetik Khanda and Banik Khanda at the fall of Raghunath Roy's reign either in 1604-05 or in 1623-24 AD. The poet was probably born in 1520

AD, left his ancestral village in 1595 due to political instability. He lived 84-85 years, either upto 1604-05, or 103-104 years upto 1623-24.

## *Notes & Reference :*


1. For details, See : Asutosh Bhattacharya : Bangla Mangalkavyer Itihas, 8th ed., 1998, p. 2
2. This opinion was made by Asutosh Bhattacharya. ibid. p. 433
3. Rigveda, Ch. 10, Shukta 146
4. This opinion was made by Sasibhushan Dasgupta. See : Sasibhushan Dasgupta : Bangla Mangalkavya Devi, Sahitya Parishad Patrika, Vol. 65, No. 2, 1365 (Bengali Calender) p. 120
5. Kshudiram Das : Mukundaramer Gramtyag O Kavyarachana Prasanga, Visva Varati Patrika, Vol. 25, No. 2, Kartik-Poush 1375 (Bengali Calendar), p. 115
6. Kavikankan Chandi, published by the University of Calcutta, 1924, based on this manuscript.
7. A photograph printed in Sukumar Sen's Bangla Sahityer Itihas, vol. 1, pp. 375-376
8. Sahitya Parishad Patrika, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 125-128
9. Bharatbarsha, Year 6, Vol. 2, No. 4, p 1325
10. This opinion was made by Ambika Charan Gupta. See : Ambikacharan Gupta : Kavikankan O Tahar Chandikavya, Sahitya Parishad Patrika, 1313 (Bengali Calendar), pp. 115-128
11. Bangabasi edition.
12. Tagore quoted from publication Division, Rabindra Bharati University, 1990 (no reference to volume) in Debnath Bandyopadhyay *ed.* Kavikankan Mukunder Avaya Mangal, pp. 74-75
13. Charuchandra Bandyopadhyay : Kavikankan Mukunder Dharmamat, Bharati Patrika year 44, vol-8, 1327, p. 629.
14. Mahendranath Vidyanidihi : Mahakavi Mukundaram Kavikankan, Vol. 2, No. 2, Sahitya Parishad Patrika, 1302 (Bengali Calendar), Page 117. Sumumar Sen : Mukundaramer Deshtyagkal, Vol. 13, No. 3, Visva Bharati Patrika, 1363 (Bengali Calendar), p. 251
15. Bangla Sahityer Itihas, Vol. 1, Edn. 6, 1978, Ananda, p. 418
16. This opinion was made by Mahendranath Vidyanidhi. See : Mahendranath Vidyanidhi : Mahakavi Mukundaram Kavikankan, Vol. 2 No. 2, Sahitya Parishad Patrika, 1313 (Bengali Calendar), pp. 126-127

17. Kavikankan O Tahar Chandikavya, Sahitya Parishad Patrika, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1313 (Bengali Calendar), pp. 126-127
18. Mukundaramer Deshtyagkal, Visva Varati Patrika, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1363 (Bengali Calendar), p. 251
19. Kavikankan O Tahar Chandikavya, Sahitya Parishad Patrika, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1313 (Bengali Calendar), footnote no. 51
20. According to Sukhamoy Mukhopadhyay the child who was sobbing was not Shivaram, another son of Mukundaram. For details see Prachin Banga Sahityer Kalakram, ed. 1, 1958, p. 208
21. This opinion was made by Sukhomoy Mukhopadhyay. See : ibid, p. 208
22. Kavikankan O Tahar Chandikavya, Sahitya Parishad Patrika, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1313 (Bengali Calendar), p. 125, footnote no. 49
23. Madhyajuger Bangla Sahityer Tathya O Kalakram, ed. 3, ch. 23, 1993, p. 150
24. This evidence was given by Ambikacharan Gupta. See : Ambikacharan Gupta : Kavikankan O Tahar Chandikavya, Vol. 13, No. 2, Sahitya Parishad Patrika, 1313 (Bengali Calendar(, p. 128, footnote.
25. This opinion was made by Srikumar Bandyopadhyay. See : Srikumar Bandyopadhyay : Kavi Mukundaram, Kavikankan Chandi, published by the University of Calcutta, 1958. See Introduction.
26. Visva Varati Patrika, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1375 (Bengali Calendar), pp. 105-115.
27. Mukundaramer Gramtyag O Kavyarachana Prasanga, Visva Varati Patrika, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1375 (Bengali Calendar), p. 108
28. According to Kshudiram Das the poet was forced to leave the village for political turmoil, not for the torture by Mahmood Sharif.
29. Visva Varati Patrika, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1363 (Bengali Calendar), pp. 248-255.
30. Accoding to Sukumar Sen, the poet meant the burnt seeds of waterlily which look like frying paddy.
31. For details See : Mohini Mohan Sardar : Kavikankan Chandi : Boichitrer Anusandhan, Codex 2010, Ch. 1 pp. 17-25
32. In South 24 Pargana's colloquial tongue the fruit is called 'Dhyap'. The seeds of this fruit when green look red like mustard seeds and turns into blackish catchu colour when dried. When burnt or fried it looks like frying paddy. According to Sukumar Sen, no puja can be offered with burnt substances. The poet offered his puja with substances which looked like burnt seeds but they were not actually burnt.

# About the Booklet
# II

## *Fact-finding on transformations of Kavikankan's Chandikavya and its review in the context of modern literature.*

Gopal Haldar has admitted in 'Bangla Sahityer Rooprekha' : "Mukundaram is the first and the only to bring about human flavour in medieval Bengali literature and which is an unexpected surprise. The age of personal identity had not landed then. Still Mukunda's poetic impulse with genuine magnaminity and sharp sense of reality had discovered the truth–human character and human flavour. He championed the grace of God and realised the real message of literature–

Man is eternal truth
Nothing exists above him

And this man is not simply obtained through ardous ascetic practices, is social bondage of Paramatma's image. He is a real man in society with good and bad, sorrow and happiness, desire and need. In upholding the greatness of God, Mukunda Chakroborty has held aloft the greatness of man. In Bengali literature he is the first poet of flowering humanity, first modern poet when modernism was yet to come, when the prestige of man was undiscovered."[1]

Gopal Halder's admission of poetic excellence of Mukunda Chakraborty reveals the modernity of his works. Living in the age when personal identity was non-existent, the search for humanism by the poet surprises us. In recent times, the English

transcription of Avayamangal has come up, which is an amazing milestone of poet Mukunda Chakraborty's modernity.

The poet completed his works at the fall of the sixteenth century.[2] But hundreds of his manuscripts were copied[3] long before the cosmetic touch given to them, because of their popularity.[4] This popularity led to his criticism in the age of manuscript. Ramananda Yoti, being jealous, criticised Mukunda in Chandimangal in 1766–'Stupid speaks the truth/Chaṇḍī came into view on road'.

Ramananda not only raised question on the reality of the poet's work but also attacked and described him as stupid. But with the passage of time the poet stood to stay perpetually for the reality and the flavour of life to his works. It is really a mystery. What elements the poet gave to his creation which were discussed in various forms and languages throughout the ages ? In this article our interest revolves round the poet's technique and spirit of writing, and their various forms of discussion.

In the age of manuscripts Mukunda's works were copied several times. The proverb that says frequent imitations corrupt the original can be applied here. The recovery of the poet's original writings is not possible now. Debate and dispute over the issue have gone to the court. One of the poet's handwritten copies has been kept with earnest care at Daminya village.[5] Going through the copy Panchanan Mandal writes–

"Rasbehari Bhattacharya, representing the ninth generation of Sivaram, showed me the manuscript in 1939. The writing was contained on a Teret leaf measuring 15 inches × 2 inches. It is fragmented more than half. The handwriting is clear. The writing style is immature. In the joined letters there is no evidence of ancient time, nor there is any trace of the sixteenth century in language. The last part of the manuscript and the petal referring to the year and date are missing."[6]

Seeing the same manuscript Dinesh Chandra Sen says–

"It can't be rightly said that the manuscript is poet's hand-

written. But there is no doubt that it contains letters written by the poet. The manuscript has been kept in the temple of Singhavahini, the worshipping idol of the poet, by the poet's successor who offer pujas to it. They believe that the manuscript is the poet's hand written. Bara Khan, the ruler of Silimabad, gave several bighas of land to the poet's son Sivaram. The deed of this land, we have found inside the manuscript. The hand writing in the manuscript is decorated and beautiful. Some lines in the manuscript have been struck off and changed with red ink. We can think that this was made by Kavikankan. His handwriting was not beautiful. The writing in the manuscript is too close and skilled like that of a Brahmin scholar. Except the poet its change was not possible by anyone else."[7]

Later Mukunda researchers informed the manuscript was written in immatured time. The style of language would not go beyond eighteenth century. As a result, the poet's handwritten manuscripts are not recoverable. But whenever one glances down the manuscripts of Kavikankan Chandi kept in various museums, it is proved beyond doubt that Mukunda Chakroborty and his Kavikankan Chandi was very popular even in the age of manuscripts.

The Poet's Chandimangal began to be published in printed form[8] when wirtten matter rolled out of printing press. The East India Company captured the ruling power of this country after having obtained the landownership of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765. The British civilians who came here for ruling did not know anything about the geography and language of the land. In order to train the officials about the literature, language and geography of the land, Fort William College was set up in 1800, and the officials were taught Bengali language. For this purpose, some teachers were appointed who wrote many Bengali books. In order to preach Christianity and publish these books Charles Wilkins (1750-1836) and Nathaniel BrassyHalhed. (1751-1830), with the help of Bengali artisan Panchanan Karmakar and his son-in-law Manohar, introduced the first press of Bengali

typefaces[9] at the residence of Andrews, Hooghly. Mukunda's Chandi-mangal was printed from this press. At the dawn of printing, Mukunda's Kavikankan Chandi rolled out of press [10] for its excellence and popularity.

In the mid-19th century studies on Mukunda Chakraborty started in various ways.[11] From this study Chandimangal Kavya and Mukunda Chakroborty got a permanent berth in the minds of people. Analysing Mukunda's poetic excellence many scholars described him as the best poet, the great poet, the realistic poet, the pessimistic poet. There is no reason to believe that Mukunda was always favourably criticised. He had to swallow adverse criticism, too. Rabindranath Tagore said–

"The deities of Kavikankan are simply human beings. Not only human beings, they were Bengalees of his time–marriage of Hara-Gouri, the grief of Menoka, women's discrediting their husbands, read Gouri's quarrle Kavikankan's is not an Epic. A voluminous[12] composition may not necessarily be an Epic."[13]

In an article entitled 'Kavyi Samalochana'[14] Aukshoychandra Sarkar, an admirer of Mukunda, quoting two lines from 'Phullarar Baromasya' (Pay attention to grief, pay attention to grief/You can see the water soaked cooked rice as food) said they were clear and realistic. Tagore criticised it vehemently and said, "showing water soaked cooked rice to demonstrate poverty may be dramatic. But where is the poetic flavour in it ? Two lines are not poetically moistened. The cooked rice adequately water-soaked, but there is no is tears of the poet. If it is really poetic, then you drink water in a clay pot and I drink on the bank of a water body is more poetic."[15]

Tagore's such criticism emboldened his nephew Balendra nath Tagore[16] who said, "the swing of Mukundaram's idea did not get a big ground. His poetic endeavour could not open the mysterious door of beauty. One would not find his desire of remote past. He has described what he saw with his open eyes. He is not a poet of excellence. Mukundaram could not describe the beauty of conduct and the heart-felt idea. Mukundaram buit

structure, but failed to infuse life into it."[17]

The criticism of Mukunda Chakraborty was not confined to journals. In the study of history of literature, Mukundaram's criticism figured in a big way. Rangalal Bandyopadhyay,[18] Iswar Chandra Gupta[19], Harimohan Mukhopadhyay[20], Mahendranath Chattopadhyay[21], Ramgati Nayaratna[22], Rameshchandra Dutta[23], Rajnarayan Bose[24], Dineshchandra Sen[25], Sreekumar Bandyopadhyay[26], Sukumar Sen[27], Sukhamoy Mukhopadhyay[28], delved deep into Mukunda Chakraborty's works. Mukunda and his Chandimangal Kavya has attained modern orientation in the hands of these scholars. Following the criticism, the research on Mukunda Chakraborty started, which included thorough analysis of Mukunda Chakroborty and his poetic endeavour.

Various editions of Chandimangal[29] and edited versions[30], Mukunda's criticism in different magazines, history of literature, researches on Mukunda, inclusion of Chandimangal in literary books and restructure of Kavikankan Chandi Kavyakahini surprise us. Being attracted towards Kavikankan Chandi and also towards Mukunda's poetic talent, many poets composed modern poems based on Chandimangal. They recorded their sense of appreciation and indebtedness to Mukunda. The poets include Madhusudan Dutta, Nagendranath Som, Mankumari Bose, Sushil Kumar Majumder, Apurbakrishna Bhattacharya, Khagendranath Ghosh, Kalikinkar Sengupta, Sudhir Gupta. The poems that they wrote were Kamalekamini[31], Srimanter Topar[32], Phullara[33], Swargiya Mukundaram Chakroborty[34], Karabaase Srimanta[35], Kavikankan[36], Kavikankan Mukundaram[37]. In some poems, tribute has been paid to Mukunda and in some others popular part of Mukunda's creation has been finetuned and converted into modern poems.

Not only in modern poems, Chandimangal has been adapted in prose writings too, which is a matter of delight. The writers include Dineshchandra Sen, Bhudharchandra Gangopadhyay, Haripada Chattopadhyay, Batakrishna Pal, Asutosh Chatto-

padhyay, Chandrakanta Dutta Saraswati Vidyabhushan, Satipati Vidyabhusan and their prose writings are Phullara[38], Khullana ba Martyaloke Chandir Puja Prachar[39], Srimanta Saodagar[40], Srimanta[41], Kalketu[42].

Mukunda's work was also a great inspiration for juvenile literature as it contained elements to attract children. Prahlad-kumar Pramanik, Nareshchandra Jana have written books entitled Chandimangaler Galpa : Kalketu[43], Chandimangaler Galpa : Dhanapati Srimanta[44] intended for juvenile readers. These stories are based on the content of Chandimangal. There was a separate reason for juvenile literature. Dr. Pabitra Sarkar has elaborated it in the foreward of Kalketu written by Nareshchandra Jana. Dr. Sarkar says : "These books of easy learning series have been written for neo-literates. The reader while reading these books would know and realise his life, society and the world around, and also associate himself with his past literature and culture. Ramayan, Mahabharat, Karbala tales, fairy tale and the story of Mangal-kavya have been presented to introduce the successors with them. The books have been written by acknowledged experts and pundits of Bengal, keeping in view the need for education and pleasure."[45] The stories have been written in lucid language with simply drawn sketches, so that they can be a fascinating to the children. The way Mukunda's Kavikankan Chandi has been restructured in various formats of literary works proves beyond doubt that it contains variegated elements.

Based on the content of Chandimangal, many plays have been written and staged from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. The playwrights include Jibankrishna Sen, Atulkrishna Mitra, Pearycharan Sarkar, Haripada Chatto-padhyay, Parbaticharan Bhattacharya, Apareshchandra Mukhopadhyay, Mahendra Gupta. The plays were Kamale-kamini (1883)[46], Ma (1895)[47], Phullara (1908)[48], Kalketu (1914)[49], Sachitra Srimanter Mashan ba Kamalekamini Darshan Gitavinay (New edition 1925)[50], Phullara (1928)[51], Kamalekamini

(1941)[52]. Theatrical performances of all plays were made in Calcutta. The writers not only converted poetic content into dramatic performance, but also revised it with the passage of time and, thus, Mukunda Chakraborty is still living among the readers. If Kavikankan Chandi lacked creative element, could adaptation be made possible ?

We have already stated that many Yatra and plays were written adapting Chandimangal. Radhanath Mitra, Girishchandra Ghosh, Manmatha Roy, Brajendrakumar De, Sisirkumar Das, Rudraprasad Chakroborty had applied their minds in this field and wrote Mayavati (1882)[53], Kamalekamini (1882)[54], Kamalekamini (1883)[55], Kamalekamini Pala (1883)[56], Dakshajagga (1883)[57], Sati (1957)[58], Chandimangal (1960)[59], Bhanru Dutta (1977)[60], Phullaketur Pala (2000)[61]. In all these plays, Chandi-mangal has been restructured to make fit for watching by the spectators. It also validates that Chandimangal bears the dramatic element which has laboriously been presented by the writers and actors before the spectators. The writers of various fields have upheld Mukundaram's poetic excellence with great detail.

Many novels have been written adapting Chandimangal. Mahasweta Devi, Selina Hossain, Sivananda Pal, Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay are renowned in this form of writing. The novels are entitled Kavi Bandyaghati Gainir Jeevan O Mrityu (1967)[62], Kalketu O Phullara (1992)[63], Byadhkhanda (1994)[64], Benebou (1994)[65], Ami Srikavikankan (2006)[66], Dhanapatir Sinhal Yatra (2010)[67]. In these novels the poet's life and political turmoil of his period have been presented in a modern form.

Novelist Shivananda Pal has admitted : I have tried to depict a pen-picture of the socio-political scene of Bengal through the poet's self-styled storytelling. Naturally, the emphasis has been laid to culture because the cultural heritage of Chandimangal has enriched Bengali literature. Chandimangal carries forward a folk culture to establish a society which would be free of exploitation, bright. The society should symbolise brotherhood

and communal harmony. The laggards, who have been denied due respect, would remain at the top of this society. The marginal people have not been placed in society's upper echelon. But they have converted the divine deities into folk deities and made them their own. The poet has lodged his protest against Brahminism and high casteism. He has taken Goddess Durga from the hands of high class people, and brought her to the home of non Aryans. In Mangalkavya, the poet has bridged the Aryans and non-Aryans culture, leading to the establishment of a new society. I have tried to welcome the poet in modern times and make him focussed in the light of science, anthropology, and archeology keeping the history of Bengal in view.[68]

It is clear from the statement of the novelist that Mukunda Chakraborty and his Avayamangal is still relevant today. This relevance validates the adaptation of his work in different forms of literature. It also proves the popularity of Mukunda's work. Mukunda wrote his Kavya four hundred years ago. His popularity makes it clear that he has the element of being eternal. Otherwise he would not have been studied and adopted even today. Here lies the excellence of Mukunda Chakroborty.

***Notes & Reference :***


1. Gopal Halder : Bangla Sahityer Rooprekha, Vol. 1
2. There are differences of opinion among the scholars on the time period of Mukunda's writings. According to Kshudiram Das, the time period cannot be before 1595. For detailed description, See : Dr. Mohini Mohan Sardar : *Kavikankan Chandi : Boichitrer Anusandhan,* Codex 2010, pp 15-25.
3. Hundreds of manuscripts of Kavikankan Chandikavya preserved at various museums bear the evidence. According to Panchanan Mandal, 347 manuscripts have so far been found. For detailed description, See : Asiskumar De & Biswanath Roy *ed. Kavikankan Mukunder Chandimangal : Alochana O Paryalochana,* Pustak Vipani,

1996, p. 447

4. Many hand written manuscripts have been found even after Nathaniel Barssey Halhed published *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* in 1778. We identify the post-1778 publications as matters rolled out of press.
5. The Poet's successors have preserved this manuscript.
6. For detailed description, see Kavikankan Chandir Puratan Puthir Sandhan in Asiskumar De and Biswanath Roy ed. *Kavikankan Mukunder Chandimangal : Alochana Paryalochana,* Pustak Vipani, 1996, p. 446.
7. Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay ed. Dinesh Chandra Sen : *Bangabhasha O Sahitya,* Paschimbanga Rajya Pustak Parshad, 3rd edition, 2002, p. 446.
8. Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's *A Grammar of the Bengal Language, 1778,* is taken as the first printed Bengali book. Here the discussed time period refers to post-1778.
9. Bengali letters were prepared from engraved wooden block and then from casting of lead. It was known as movable type named 'Bichal Haraf.'
10. How Chandimangal looked after being printed and how did it get its permanent seat has been vividly discussed in Dr. Mohini Mohan Sardar : *Kavikankan Chandir Boichitrer Anusandhan,* Codex 2010, Chapter 3, pp 51-116.
11. 'In various ways' means Mukunda's criticism, journals and magazines, studies on Mukunda in books, compilation in the books on literature and academic curriculum, in original literary work and in transcriptions of Chandimangal and its writer.
12. Seeing the voluminous Chandikavya Aukshoychandra Chowdhury described it as an eipc, but Rabindranath ruled it out.
13. For detailed description see : Rabindranth Tagore, *Bangali Kavi Noy,* Bharati, 4th Year, No. 5, Bhadra 1287 (Bengali Calendar) p. 228.
14. Navajiban, Agrahayan 1293 (Bengali Calendar)
15. For detailed description, see : *Kavya : Spashta O Aspashta, Bharati O Balak,* Chaitra 1293 (Bengali Calendar), Reprint, *Sahitya* 1974, p. 172
16. Balendranath Tagore was the son of Rabindranath Tagore's nephew Gaganendranath Taogre.

17. For detailed description, see : Balendranath Tagore, *Mukundaram Chakroborty*, Bharati O Balak, 13th year, No. 5, Bhadra 1296 (Bengali Calendar), pp. 262-267.
18. See, *Bangala Kavita Bishayak Prabandha*, Joistha 1259 (Bengali Calendar), Reprint. Falgoon 1345 (Bengali Calendar), Ranjan Publishing House, Kolkata.
19. See, *The late Kavibar Bharatchandra Roy. Gunakarer Jivan Brityanta*, 1 Ashar, 1262 (Bengali Calendar), Pravakar Jantra Kolkata.
20. See, Kavicharit, Vol. 1, 1869 Natun Sankrita Jantra, Kolkata.
21. See, *Bangabhashar Itihas*, Vol. 1, Jaistha, Somwat, 1928, Gupta Jantra, Kolkata.
22. *Bangla Bhasha O Bangala Sahitya Bishayak Prastab*, First edition, 1872, Budhodoy Jantra, Hooghly.
23. See, *The Literature of Bengal*, 1877, I. C. Bose & Co. Starhope Press, Calcutta.
24. See, *Bangala Bhasha O Sahitya Bishayak Baktrita*, 1878, Bangabhasha Samalochani Sabha, Calcutta.
25. See, *Bangabhasha O Sahitya*, 4th edition, 1921, Gurudas Chattopadhyay and sons, Calcutta and *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, 1911, Calcutta University.
26. See, *Banga Sahitya Upanyaser Dhara*, 6th reprint, 1380 (Bengali Calendar), Modern Book Agency, Calcutta. *Bangla Sahityer Bikasher Dhara*, 1959, Orient Book Company, Calcutta. *Sahitya O Sanskritir Tirthasangame*, 1962, Modern Book Agency, Calcutta.
27. *Bangala Sahityer Katha*, 1942, Calcutta University. *Bangala Sahityer Itihas*, Vol. 1, 5th edition, 1970, Eastern Pubsihsers, Calcutta. *Madhyajuger Bangla O Bangali*, 1352 (Bengali Calendar), Visva Bharati, Calcutta. *History of Bengali Literature* 1960, Sahitya Akademy, New Delhi.
28. *Prachim Bangla Sahityer Kalakram*, 1958, S. Mukherjee, Calcutta. *Madhyajuger Bangla Sahityer Tathya O Kalakram*, 1993, Bharati Book Stall, Calcutta.
29. In the nineteenth century exact printed versions of some manuscripts of Chandimangal Kavya have been found. 'Jod Dristang Tod Chhapitang' tagged are edition of Chandimangal.
30. In the twentieth century some writers have tried to reach near the original Chandimangal by assembling manuscripts. They have cultivated and refined the poet's work and also analysed his poetic

excellence. But these books can be called edited volume, not an edition.

31. See, Madhusudan Dutt, *Chaturdashpadi Kavitabali,* 1866, Iswarchandra Bose & Co. Stanhope Jantra, Kolkata 1273 (Bengali Calendar), p. 2
32. ibid, p 93
33. See, Nagendranath Som, *Naba Prativa,* Chaitra 1308 (Bengali Calendar)
34. See Nagendranath Som, *The late Mukundaram Chakroborty,* Jyoti, 1313 (Bengali Calendar), Janmabhumi, Magh 1313 (Bengali Calendar).
35. See Mankumari Basu, *Sribirkumar Bodh,* Nabyabharat, Bhadra, 1315 (Bengali Calendar)
36. See, Sushilkumar Majumder, *Kavikankan,* Alaka, Aswin 1346 (Bengali Calendar)
37. See, Apurbakrishna Bhattacharya, *Kavikankan Mukundaram,* Bharatbarsha, Agrahayan, 1368 (Bengali Calendar)
38. See, Dineshchandra Sen, *Phullara,* Bhattacharya & Sons, 1313 (Bengali Calendar), Calcutta.
39. See, Bhudharchandra Gangopadhyay, *Khullana ba Martyaloke Chandir Puja Prachar,* Lotus Library 1317 (Bengali Calendar)
40. See, Batakrishna Pal, *Srimanta Saodagar,* Hindudharma Press, 1912.
41. See, Asutosh Chattopadhyay, *Srimanta,* Bhattacharya & Sons, 1327 (Bengali Calendar), Calcutta.
42. Chandrakanta Datta Saraswati Vidyabhusan, *Kalketu,* Asutosh Library, 1923, Calcutta.
43. See, Prahladkumar Pramanik, *Chandimangaler Galpo : Dhanapati Srimanta,* Calcutta, Orient Book, 1954.
44. See, Prahladkumar Pramanik, *Chandimangaler Galpo : Dhanapati Srimanta,* Calcutta, Orient Book, 1955.
45. For detailed description see, Nareshchandra Jana, *Kalketu,* Sisu Sahitya Samsad, 1992, the part 'Nivedan'.
46. Jeebankrishna Sen, *Kamalekamini (Pouranik Gitikavya) : Srimanter Mashan,* Calcutta 1883.
47. See, Atulkrishna Mitra, *Ma,* Nemaicharan Basu, Calcutta 1895
48. See, Pearycharan Sarkar, *Phullara* : Milananta Drishyakavya, Radharaman Kumar, Calcutta 1908.
49. See, Haripada Chattopadhyay, *Kalketu,* Kalyanpur 1914.

50. See, Parbaticharan Bhattacharya, *Sachitra Srimanter Mashan ba Kamalekamini Darshan Gitavinay*, Nandalal Shil, 4th edition Calcutta 1925.
51. See, Apareshchandra Mukhopadhyay, *Phullara,* 1934.
52. See, Mahendra Gupta, *Kamalekamini,* Calcutta 1914.
53. See, Radhanath Mitra, *Mayavati,* Basumati Electomachine Jantra, Calcutta, 1882.
54. See, Radhanath Mitra, *Kamalekamini,* Basumati Electomachine Jantra, Calcutta 1882.
55. See, Girishchandra Ghosh, *Dakshajagna,* Gurudas Chattopadhyay & Sons, Calcutta 1883.
56. See, Girishchandra Ghosh, *Kamalekamini,* Calcutta 1883.
57. See, Girishchandra Ghosh, *Kamalekamini Pala,* Calcutta, 1883.
58. See, Manmatha Roy, *Sati,* Gurudas Chattapadhyay & Sons, Calcutta 1937.
59. See, Brajendrakmuar De, *Chandimangal,* Nirmal Sahitya Mandir, Calcutta 1960.
60. See, Sisirkumar Das, *Bhanru Dutta,* Bahurupi, 1977
61. See, Rudraprasad Chakroborty, *Phullaketur Pala,* Bhaurupi, 2000
62. See, Mahasweta Devi, *Kabi Bandyaghati Gainir Jiban O Mrityu,* Karuna Prakashani, 1967
63. See, Selina Hossain, *Kalketu O Phullara,* Vidya Prakashan, 1992
64. See, Mahasweta Devi, *Byadhkhanda,* Dey's Publishing, 1994
65. See, Mahasweta Devi, *Benebou,* Karuna Prakashani, 1994
66. See, Shibananda Pal, *Ami Sri Kavikankan,* Dey's Publishing, 2006
67. See, Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay, *Dhanapatir Sinhal Yatra,* Mitra & Ghosh, 2010
68. See, Shibananda Pal, *Ami Sri Kavikankan,* Dey's Publishing, 2006, Amar Koifiyat section, p. 7

# About the Booklet
# III

## *Contribution of Halhed in transcripting Chandimangal Kavya and its Analysis*

We have already discussed that Mukunda Chakroborty wrote Avayamangal at the fall of sixteenth century. His works are being studied through different times by different scholars. One of the lines of this study is transcription of any work. Transcription of Chandimangal in a language other than Bengali and thorough discussion on it surprise us. Here comes the question of English translation of Chandikavya which would be discussed in this chapter with all its facts found through the process of research.

Nathaniel Brassey Halhed (1751-1830) was pioneer in translating Mukunda's Chandimangal Kavya in English. In 1778 Halhed wrote 'A Grammar of the Bengal Language'. In this book he translated several lines of Mukunda's Chandimangal in English as an example of grammar. This is the first translation of Mukunda's writing in a language other than Bengali.

Possibly before 1902 G. A. Grierson criticised Chandikavya in his book 'Note on the Languages of India'. Edward Byles Cowell translated three chapters of Kavikankan Chandi Kavya in 'Three Episodes from the Old Bengali poem Caṇḍī'. At the fall of sixteenth century the interest in the study of a poetic endeavour and the English translation of Chandimangal Kavya is quite amazing. The interest of foreign pundits in Mukunda's writings shows us a new path in the study of Bengali literature.

It is known from history that after having obtained the financial stewardship in 1765,[1] the East India Company estaiblished its control in ruling Bengal, Bihar and Odisha.[2] In

order to run the administration smoothly the civilians[3] arriving from England were needed to make familiar with local tongue, geography and literature. For this purpose Fort William College was set up at Serampore in 1800. For publication of the college text books[4], a printing press was installed[5]. The books were printed in movable types (called Bichal Haraf)[6] In this press Halhed printed 'A Grammar of the Bengal Language'. To give examples of grammar Halhed translated Ramayana, Mahabharata, Annadamangal and Mukunda's Chandimangal Kavya in part. This is the first attempt of Mukunda's writings in print[7] and also the first translation in English. Halhed not only printed some verses of Mukunda's writrings but also translated them and explained their acceptability as examples. This testifies Mukunda's achievement as a poet and his greatness.

Halhed wrote his book for the training of English civilians. In the nameplate of the book he clearly stated–

"Bodhopprakashyang Shabdashastrang
Phiringinamupakararthang
Kriyate Haledengraji"[8]

It meant for the benefit of European's[9] manifestation of knowledge and science of philology[10] Halhed wrote this book in English.[11]

The nameplate of the book is as follows –

"Bodhopprakashyang Shabdashastrang /Phiringinamupakararthang / Kriyate Haledengraji/ A / Grammar / of the / Bengal Language / By / Nathaniel Brassey Halhed / Indradoyopi Yasyantang Nayyuh Shabdhavaridhe / Prakriyantasya Kritsnasya Kshamobaktung Nara Kathyang / Printed / At / Hooghly In Bengal / MDCCLXXVIII"[12]

In 'Of Cases' chapter of the book, Halhed has given an example of 'cases' quoting the following verse from Mukunda's Chandimangal along with its English translation :

1. 'Swaamee boneetaar Potee Swaamee boneetaar gatee'[13]
   The husband is the lord of the wife, the husband is the guide of the wife.

In the aforesaid example Halhed first wrote Mukunda's verse in English letters, then he has translated it. Halhed has given the English substitutes of 'Pati' and 'Gati' as 'lord' and 'guide', although Mukunda has used two words as 'husband' and 'all'. Here, Halhed could not decipher the local meaning of the words.

In the section 'Of Numbers', Halhed has given the example of number :

2. 'Ako laapha dhoreelak taahaar cheekoor
Ako chara dontogoolaa koreslak choor.'[14]
'With a sudden jump he seized his lock of hair
And with a single blow shattered all his teeth.'

In using the words 'lock of hair', 'all his teeth' and 'shattered', Halhed has rightly translated the verse.

In the same chapter he has translated another verse :

3. 'Soto Soto hostee beer Mare ako ghaay'[15]
'With one blow the hero struck a hundred elephants'

Here Halhed translated 'ek sata' into a hundred which is different from the number stated in the original verse.

In the Chapter III of his book Halhed cited an example of pronoun quoting a line of Chandimangal :

4. 'Ravanere Badhi Ram Sita Aane Nij Dham'–'Ram having defeated Ravana, brought Seeta to his own palace.'[16]

In the fourth Chapter Halhed has discussed the application of verbs and translated Chandimangal in the following way :

5. Ravanere Bandhi Ram Sita Aane Nij Dham
Karaila Pariksha Dahane'[17]
'Raam killing Ravana brought Seeta home to his own residence, and caused her to perform the ordeal with fire.'

Two different translations of the same verse evoke curiosity. Here the first translation is more poetic and easier than the second one. The word 'Bodh' has been translated as 'defeated' and 'Killing'. Killing, being the exact translation, could not lend poetic beauty and easiness like the word 'defeated'. Here, defeated is more suggestive than

killing although their use clearly manifest the translator's consciousness.

Halhed has translated 'Nijdham' in two different ways : 'to his own place' and 'to his own residence'. It also manifests Halhed's consciousness because the former is appropriate to Ramchandra's own home. Halhed knew repeating the same word damages the beauty of translation. So he translated differently.

Halhed's translation of the last line as 'caused her to perform the ordeal with fire' has unfolded the social reality. The lexical meaning of 'ordeal' is test of fate. In ancient times the innocence of an accused person was tested using substances like fire, water. Sita had to face the test of virginity being exposed to fire. Credit should be given to Halhed for keeping this in mind while translating Mukunda's verses.

In the same chapter Halhed has given the examples of verb taking the verses from Phullara's meeting with Chandi.

6. 'Kache jaia hasya hasya karay jignsa
Ke tumu Kothay ghar konkhane basa'[18]
'Having gone near and smiled repeatedly
Is the makes enquiry/Saying who are you,
were (where) is your house, and in what
place is your abode.'

In this translation Halhed has sought to keep the main theme in tact. Consequently, the translation has become more literal than rhetoric.

In the fifth chapter of the book entitled 'Of Attributes and Relations', Halhed has given examples of adjectives translating verses from Chandimangal :

7. 'Janamdukhini more Karilek bidhi'[19]
'God hath made me miserable from my
birth (Spoken by a woman)'

8. 'Sita go param sati taar suno durgati'[20]
O woman ! Seeta was very constant.

Hear her unfortunate story

9. 'Megher vikram Sama Magher Himani'[21]
'The cold of the month Maagh is like
the strength of the cloud.'

10. 'Megher vikram sama Magher himani[22]
Gharer bahire nahe sei Yuva bali'

'The cold of the month Magh is like the strength of cloud.
Then say the youth should not be without the house.'

In the first example Gouri's accusation of God for her misery is not exactly parallel to literal and latent meaning of Mukunda's verses. But it communicates Gouri's misery to the readers. In the second example Halhed has failed to transfer the meaning of 'sati'. In India's eternal religion sati has a special connotation. Halhed has translated the word in the meaning of static, firm, immovale, unchangeable which is neither literal nor suggestive although Halhed's translation : 'Hear her unfortunate story' stands correct. In the third and fourth examples Mukunda has compared the biting cold of Magh with the mighty monsoon clouds. Halhed has translated it literally which lacks poetic beauty. In the last line Mukunda said, the biting cold of Magh is so biting that even the young people lack courage to go out of home. Here, Halhed's translation gives a meaning other than literal or suggestive, leave aside poetic delicacy. As Halhed was not familiar with the local overtones of words, he committed some mistakes in their translation. Halhed's intent was not to translate Chandi-kavya, his aim was to explain the grammar, not to express the literal or inherent meaning of verses.

In the seventh chapter of a 'A Grammar of the Bengal Language', entitled the Syntax, Halhed has picked up two verses as examples of word-order from Chandimangal.

11. 'Shuno Shuno go Saai Hitopodesh Koi
Ramayane Karo Abagati'[23]
'Hear, hear, O woman, I give you good advice; put faith in
the Raamaayon.'

12. Sita go Paramsati Tar Shuno Durgati[24]
'O woman ! Seeta was very constant; hear her unfortunate story.'

In the first example, Phullara called Chandi Sai and gave example of Ramayana as an advice. In the second example the misfortune of Sita has been told. In the first example, 'abogati' in English sense is getting knowledge, getting information, paying attention. But Halhed has used the faith which in Bengali sense is 'Biswas', 'Astha', 'Bharsa'. 'Put faith' may be synonymous with belief or confidence, but there is a sharp difference. Halhed lacked this sharpness.'

Halhed possibly was the first man to translate pre-modern Bengali literature. Halhed did not translate the entire book of any poet. He only translated some verses to give examples of grammar. In doing so Halhed has shown his competence and given the pre-modern Bengali literature a permanent berth in the world. There is no doubt that the contribution of Halhed in restructuring and publicising pre-modern Bengali literature is a matter of great consideration.

## *Notes and References :*

1. After the Buxur War, 1764, The East India Company secured the financial control over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765. It is known as Dewani.
2. Securing the right of financial control, the East India Company waited for some years to collect revenue.
3. Civilian means British government employees who, having qualified in Civil Service Examination in England, came to India to rule the nation and collect revenue.
4. With the East India Company officials came to India a group of Catholics who preached Christianity. A printing press was installed at Hooghly at their initiative.
5. At the Hooghly residence of Andrews, the press was set up. The purpose of installing the press was to print Bibles in Bengali types. However, from this press Ramayana, Mahabharata, Mangal-kavyas, text books of Fort William College and many other books

were printed.

6. It is known from the facts that Charles Wilkins, an exemployee of East India Company, Serampore, got written Bengali letters in the pattern of then available manuscripts by Khushbat, a clerk called 'Munshi'. Then the letters were engraved and moulded, with lead and iron, by Panchanan Karmakar and his son-in-law Manohar. The types that were cast and prepared by Panchanan, a blacksmith of Balagarh, Hooghly, came to be identified as movable type (Called Bichal Haraf).
7. Chandimangal Kavya was first printed by Halhed in 1778. There is no evidence to show that Chandimangal came out of press before. However, our contention is to Show that the translation of the verses of Chandimangal made by Halhed is the first printed reproduction of Mukunda's work.
8. For detailed information see : Nathaniel Brassey Halhed : *A Grammar of the Bengal language,* Unabridged Facsimile edition, Ananda Publishers Private Limited, Calcutta, 1980, nameplate.
9. By the word 'Phiringi' Halhed possibly meant neo-civilians who came from England to rule India.
10. Halhed chose the Grammar of Bengal Language as the name of the Bengali book.
11. The book, written in English, contains examples in Bengali language. Some examples have been written in Bengali with English types. So it can be said that the book is bilingual.
12. For detailed information, See : Nathaniel Brassey Halhed : *'A Grammar of the Bengal Language',* Unabridged Facsimile edition, Ananda Publishers Private Limited, Calcutta, 1980, nameplate.
13. ibid, pp. 54-55
14. ibid, p. 70
15. ibid, p. 71
16. ibid, p. 98
17. ibid, p. 125
18. ibid, p. 123
19. ibid, p. 147
20. ibid, p. 147
21. ibid, p. 153
22. ibid, p. 123
23. ibid, p. 182
24. ibid, p. 147

# About the Booklet
# IV

## *In search of contribution of Edward Byless Cowell's contribution to the English translation of Chandimangal.*

We have already stated that the second translator of Chandimangal Kavya was George Abraham Grierson (1886-1927). Grierson was the editor of 'The Linguistic Survey of India'. In this journal the social identity of 179 languages and 544 dialects was given. In this journal Grierson wrote an article entitled 'Note on the Languages in India'[1] in which he referred to Bengali language discussing Mukunda's Chandimangal Kavya and its linguistic excellence.[2]

Going through the appreciation of Caṇḍī in Grierson's article Edward Byless Cowell translated Mukunda's Chandi-mangal in 1902. Cowell was possibly the third person to make a direct translation from Mukunda's Chandimangal in 'Three Episodes from the old Bengali Poem Caṇḍī'. In the preface of this translation Cowell stated–'

"While Bābū Gobind Candra Datt resided in Cambridge some thirty years ago, I first learned from him about this old Bengali poem, and he kindly undertook to read it with me. We read together more than half of it while he remained in England; and after his return to India I continued my studies alone, and he allowed himself to be my continual referee in all cases of

difficulty. There were often obscure words and allusions, but he generally solved them all; and he sometimes amused me by his interesting accounts of the consultations which he had held with Calcutta friends over any passages of special obscurity. These attempts of mine to put certain episodes of the "Caṇḍī" into an English dress had lain for many years forgotten in my desk, until I happened to read Mr. G. A. Grierson's warm encomiums on this old Bengali poem "as coming from the heart and not from the school, and as full of passages adorned with true poetry and descriptive power."* This mention of my old favourite rekindled my slumbering enthusiasm, .....[3]

In the preface of this translation Cowell also state that :–

"Mukunda Rām Cakravartī some extracts from whose poems I wish to introduce to the English reader, lived in Bengal during the latter half of the Sixteenth and the early part of the Seventeenth century"[4]

Cowell was so charmed glancing down Mukunda Chakraborty's verses that he compared him with English poet Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400). In the preface of his translation Cowell stated that :–

"....it is this vivid realism which gives such a permanent value to the descriptions. Our author is the Crabbed among Indian poets and his work thus occupies a place which is entirely its own....

"In fact, Bengal was to our poet what Scotland was to Sir Walter Scott; he drew a direct inspiration from the village life which he so loved to remember."[5]

Cowell has translated some parts of Chandikavya of his like in three episodes. The first episode contains the birth of Kalketu, the fragmented portrayal of his conjugal life with Phullara, Caṇḍī's image of iguana to deceive Kalketu and going to his home, manifestation of Caṇḍī's self-image and conversation with Phullara, Phullara's reprimanding Caṇḍī, arrival of Kalketu,

★ See his "Note on the Languages of India" p. 108. There is a good account of 'Caṇḍī in R. C. Datt'a "Literature of Bengal."

Caṇḍī's revelation of identity, giving monetary reward etc. In the second and third episodes Cowell has translated some fragmented parts of 'Banik khanda'. In the preface of the translation he has discussed about Kavikankan. He stated–

"I subjoin a translation of the passage at the beginning of the poem where the poet gives an account of his early career, and how he was forced to leave the obscurity of his native place and find a new home and a poet's fame in the court of a neighbouring zamindar."[6]

At the beginning of the second volume of his translation Cowell stated at the footnote that the Kavikankan Chandi which he translated, was published in 1867. We know that Mukunda's Chandimangal was first published as a book form in 1823-24[7] by Ramjoy Vidyasagar. Sukumar Sen said, this edition was later used by many Greeb Street publishers. Following this book many editions were published in the nineteenth century. Of them one was Iswarchandra Tarkachuramani who published Kavikankan Caṇḍī[8] in 1857. Other editions include The Jadunath Nayapanchanan edited Kavikankan Caṇḍī [9] was published in 1861. The Nilmani Chakraborty edited Kavikankan Caṇḍī[10] published in 1868. A revised edition of Kavikankan Caṇḍī[11] was published by Amritalal Dutta in 1874. Aukshoychandra Sarkar's edited Kavikankan Caṇḍī[12] was published in 1878.

Cowell referred to in his translation of an edition of Caṇḍī that was published in 1867. Of the aforesaid editions we have collected all except the 1867 edition. Cowell has not stated who edited this book, and from where it was published. However, all editions being almost similar, we can cite the Aukshoychandra Sarkar's edited Kavikankan Caṇḍī published in 1878 (800 pages) as an authentic book of the nineteenth century.

In this part of the book entitled 'Granthatpattir Karon' has been cited that :

Suno bhai Sabhajon Kabitwer bibaran
Ei geet hoilo jeno mate,
Uria mayer beshe Kabir shiyar deshe

Chandika basila aachambite.
Sahar Silimabaj Jahate Sajjon raj
nibase niyogee Gopinath,
Tahar taluke basi Daminyate chash chshi
nibas purush chay sat.
dhanya raja Mansingha bishnu pade je ba bhringa
Gourbanga Utkal Moheep,
Raja Mansingher kale Prajar paper phale
Deeheedar Mamud Sarif.
Ujir hoilo Rayjada beparire dey kheda
brambhan baishnaber holo Ori,
Kone kone diya dara Panero kathay kura
nahi shune prajar gohari.
Sarkar hoila kal Khil bhumi Lekhe lal
bina upokare khay dhuti,
Poddar hoilo jam taka araiana kam
pai lobbhya lay din proti.
Dihider abodh khoj Kari dile nahi rooj
dhanya goru keho nahi kene;
Prabhu Gopinath Nandi bipake hoila bandi
hetu kichu nahi paritrane.
Jamider Pratita aache Prajara Palay pache
duyar chapiya dey thana.
Praja hoilo byakuli beche gharer kurali
takar drabya beche dashaana.
Sahay Shrimanta Kha Chandibati jar gaa
jukti kailo Munib khar sane.
Daminya chariya jai Sange Ramanath bhai
pathe Chandi dila daroshane.
Bhetnay uponeeta Rupray nilo bitto
Jadu Kundu tili kailo raksha.
diya aaponar ghar nibaran kailo dar
dibas tiner dilo bhiksha.
bahiya gharai nadee Sadai Smaraye bidhi
Neutiya hoilo uponeeta.

Darukeshwar tari pailo pandur puri
Ganga Das baro koilo hito.
Narayan parashar erailo Damodar
Uponeeta kuchattya nagare.
tailo bina kailo snan Karinu udak pan
Shishu kande odaner tare.
aashram pukhari aara naibedya shalook pora
puja koinu kumud Prasune.
kshudhay parishrame niddra jaai sei dhame
Chandi dekha dilen Swapone.
hate laiya patra masee aaponi kalame basi
nana chande likhen kabitwa.
parechi aanek tantra nahi jani kono mantra
aangga dilen rachiete Sangeet.
Chandir aadesh pai Shila par haiya jai
aaroray hoinu uponeet.
aarora brahmabhan bhumi purushe purushe swamee
narapati byaser saman
pariya kabitwa baanee Sambhashinu nripamani
panch aara mapi dila dhan.
Sudhanya Bankura Roy bhangilo sakal daay
Shishu pache kailo niyojito.
taar suto Raghunath raajgune abodat
gurubali karilo pujito.
Sange Shrimanta Nandi Se jane Swapan Sandhi
anudin korilo jatan.
nitya den anumati Raghunath Narapati
gayenere dilen bhushan.
beer Madhaber Suto rup gune adbhuto
beer bankura bhagyaban.
tar suta Raghunath rajgune abodat
Shrikabikankane raso gaan.[13]

While translating the part entitled 'Granthatpattir Karon' as described in Kavikankan Caṇḍī, edited by Aukshyaychandra Sarkar, Cowell wrote :

"Hear, neighbours, how this song of mine first into conscious
Utterance leapst.
Caṇḍī came down in mortal form beside my pillow as I sleept.
Good Gopināth, the talūkdār, lived honoured in Selimābād.
For generations seven his race the same estates and home had
had
Dāminyā village was their home, far from the world a safe retreo
Until Mānsiṅh came to Bengal that bee of Vishnu's lotus feet.
And in his days Māhmud Sherif over the district stretched his
hand.
A local governor sent by heaven to scourage the vices of the
land
Under his rule the traders groaned his hand lay heavy every-
where
Brahmaṅas and Baishnavas alike stood helpless in there
blank despair
His measures of all fields were false, his acre's rods were
always wrong
And howsoever the poor complained their words were
as an idle song.
Waste heaths he reckoned fruitful fields; he passed across the
land like Death,
The poor man's last rag he would seize; prayers to his ears
were idle breath.
The money lender's aid was naught; his loans but added
more to pay;
Two annas short was each rupee, and then the interest day
by day
At last the nyots lost all hope; their hard-earned borrowings
brought no cheer,
And if they tried to sell their stock, there were no buyers
far or near,
Good Gopinath by some ill fate was thrown in prison;
in wild surprise
The ryots crowded round the court, but what availed their
tears or cries ?

Stunned with the blow I sold my stock for little more
than half its worth
And after counsel held with friends I left my home and
wandered forth.
I and my brother took our way; it was Caṇḍī led the
helpless pair;
At Bhetna Ruprai gave usalms, and Jadukunda sheltering care.
Adown the Gharai stream we sailed, the Darukecvar next
we passed.
We stayed a while at Pandurpur, and to kucatya came at last.
There without oil I took my bath, water my hunger's only stay.
Hungry and faint my children wailed, but I was famished
e'en as they.
There near a lonely hermitage, hungry and scared, I feel
saleep
When Caṇḍī in a vision came and bade me rise and cease
to weep
A leaf she brought and pen and ink, and though I knew no
vedic lore,
She taught me metres and their laws and bade me
Singher praises over,
The river Cilai then I crossed, to Arara my way I found,
A land with holy Brahmans filled, its lord like Vyas himself
renowned
Bankura-Ray his honoured name; I paid my homage
full of fear,
And brought some verse in my hand, to which he lent a
favouring ear,
He gave me rice and paid my debts, and made me tutor to
his son,
And from that day prince Raghunath has stored my
dessons every one
Dowered with all virtues from his birth, Sages and nobles
at his call
He greets me 'guru' from his heart and honours me before
them all.[14]

The selected portion of Chandimangal that Cowell translated was not a verbatim one. In order to make main theme clear he translated the necessary part. His endeavour, no doubt, is praise worthy. Dineshchandra Sen spoke about Cowell's endeavour :

"Those who do not have the opportunity to read Chandi-kavya in Bengali, can easily grasp the rhetorics of Kavikankan, going through Cowell's translation. Kavikankan's metrical composition contains a rural beauty which has clearly been suggested in the translation. The work, of translation that reminds at every step the original work, is really gratifying."[15]

Dineshchandra Sen, in his article has had a lengthy discussion about Cowell's achievement. In our dission we also share Sen's view. To present Cowell's achievement Sen has given the original work along with its English translation. Following is the text.

The main reading of Chandimangal Kavya quoted from Dineshchandra Sen and the translated reading of Cowell are as follows :–

Emon bichar Sadhu Kari mone mone,
aage jal dilo Chand bener charane.
kapale chandan diya mala dilo gale,
Emon somoy Shankha Dutta kichu bale.
banik sabhay aami aage pai man,
sampade matiya nahi karo abodhan.
Je kale baaper karma kailo Dhus Dutta,
tahar sabhay bene hoito sholo shato.
Sholo Shater aage Shankha Dutta pailo maan,
Dhus Dutta jane iha chandra Motiman.
iha shuni Dhanapati karilo uttor,
Seikale nahi ehilo Chand Sadagar.
dhane maane kulo-shile Chand nahe banka,
bahir mahale jaar sat gharai taka.
iha shuni haasi kahe Neelambar Das,
dhan hetu hay ki he kuler prakash.
chay badhu jar ghare nibasaye raanrh,
dhan hetu Chand bene sabha moddhyae shanrh.

Chand bale tore jani Neelambar Das,
tomar baaper kichu shuna itihas.
hate hate tor baap bechita aamla,
jatan kariya taha kinito abola.
nirantar hata hati barbadhur sane,
nahi snan kari beta basito bhojane.
Karir putuli se bandhito tin thani,
Neelambar Das Kahe shuno Ram Ray.
Pasara Karile tahe jaati nahi jaay,
aanto chopra khaile nahe kuler khakhar.
karir putuli bandhi jaatir byabhar."[16]

In the English translation of the quoted poem Cowell remarked :

"It is cand to whom he turns first to great
And brings the water first to wash his feet.
Then draws the sondal mark upon his brows
And round his neck, the flower wreathed garland throws
But Çankha Datta in sudden wrath out burst
I in these meetings am by right the first.
lo ! Dhusha Datt can witness how of late
His father's Çradha he had to celebrate.
Full Sixteen hundred merchants one and all
of stainless credit gathered in his hall,
yet I was first of all that company;
Too much good luck has made you blind I see.
Retorts the merchant, "Fist, I grant, you were;
But why so ? Cand, I warrant was not there
His wealth and virtues are alike untold
Even his outer court is filled with gold
At this Nilambar Sneegs, and think you then,
That gold can purchase everything for men ?
His six poor childless wives bemoan their fate.
can gold light up a house sodesolate ?"
"I know you well, Nilamber, "Cand replies
Your father too, – there's many a rumour flies

He used to sell myrobalan's fame a vers
With all the city's scum for purchasers.
His cowrie bundles, with a miser's care,
He stowed away, here there, and everywhere;
He'd stand for hours, and then, the hustling o'er
Go home and dine, with ne'er a bath before,
"Well", Says Nilambar, well and why this din ?
He plied his lawful trade – was that a sin ?
And then Snack which you his dinner call–
A sop of bread or plantain that was all."[17]

We have already said that Cowell did not make a verbatim translation of Chandikavya. He has kept the story told in the original work in tact, and then translated it briefly. Consequently one can follow the story told in the Chandimangal Kavya without any break. Cowell did not translate the story of Srimonta. He completed his selected translation in 1564 lines, gave poets life with explanation of difficult lines and words.

Dinesh Chandra Sen wrote :

"Chandikavya contains huge local tongues. It is very difficult to understand their entire meanings. I do not know whether there is any Bengalee who can decipher their full meaning. The way an octogenarian professor, staying far away from India, charmingly converted the poetic beauty of Mukunda into English, no Bengali writer has shown such attention to his fellow poet. In this context showering accolades on cowell is not enough, his perserverance puts us in surprise and enhances our respect for home poets. To bank on his mistakes would be foolish. We can only repent for the fact that before translation cowell had discussed with many educated Bengalees. But none helped him to correct the errors after going through the original work and its translation. It is difficult for a foreigner to grasp the niceties of local languages."[18]

Cowell made some mistakes in conveying the appropriate meaning of the regional language. Dineshchandra Sen has cited some examples. We shall try to understand the native of Cowell's

translation and his disadvantage in understanding the colloquial tongue. One verse of Caṇḍī Kavya reads :

E Biraha Jwarey, Jadi Swami Marey
Kon Ghate Khabe Pani ?

This verse means you have left your husband, if he expires on your absence then you will drink water from which wharf. It also means that you will face trouble on your husband's expiry.

While translating these two lines Cowell wrote : It mean while greef he dies who is to tend his dying hours. As at the ghat he languid dies.

In another verse of the Chandimangal Kavya kalketu said his wife Phāullara :

"Kar Sange Bibad kari Chakshu Karlli Rata,

'Rata' means 'Red colour', or 'Raktabarna' but Cowell has translated the verse he wrote that :

"Whom have you quarrelled with the deadly strfe"

The word 'deadly strife' and the word 'Rata' means 'Red Colour' are not equal. The meanings of the two words are totally different. Else the meaning of the varse of Chandimangal Kavya wrote by Mukunda express the imagination but Cowell could not capture the meaning of his translation. In this translation Cowell has failed to express Mukunda's suggestiveness because of his lack of familiarity with the colloquial language (local language).

Another verse of Chandimangal reads :

"Ek phule makaranda Pan kari sadananda
Dhay oli opar kusume.
Ek Ghare peye maan Gam jaji Dwija jaan
Onnya Ghare Aapon Sombhrame."

Cowell has translated that varge as below :

The drunken bees feel waking nature's power
And roam in estacy from flower to flower,
Just as the village priest, the winter done,
wander elsewhere to greet the vernal Sun."

In the verse of the Mukunda's Chandi Kavya 'jagi' means

'doing puja' or jajan. Kore, but Cowell could not understand the proper meaning of that colloquial language. So his translation expresses the defferent meaning.

In one verse of the Chandi Kavya has been cited that :

"Chay badhu jar Ghare Nibasaye Raarh"

In the verse expresses the six daughter-in-law of Chand Bene in Monasamangal Kavya. The poet referred to Chand's six widows (Daughter-in-laws of Chand Sadagar in Monasa Mongal Kavya) whose husbands (the sons of Chand Sadagar, a business man) were killed at the curse and anger of Devi Manasa. In the verse widow mean the six daughter-in-laws of Chand Sadagar were lived in his house. But Cowell translated the verse in the following manner :

"His Six poor Childless wives bemon their fate."

The word 'Badhu' means Daughter-in-laws of Chand Sadagar but Cowell has translated of the word 'Badhu' as wife which is not correct and the word 'Raarh' or 'Ranrhi' means 'widow', Cowell could not understand the proper meaning of the local word 'Raarh' he translated the word 'childless' means 'Bandhya' are not equal. As a result the translation could not express the main theme or main emotion of Mukunda Chakraborty but it has expressed the other meanings of the verse. With some marginal mistakes what Cowells has presented in admirable for a foreigner, the translation of the local longue was not an easy task.

Eulogizing Cowell's translation Dineshchandra Sen wrote : "The translation is excellent. He was fully absorbed while reading the Kavya. He has put Mukundaram in English attire, but did not outcaste him. The tune of rural Bengal resonated his heart. We can hear the echo of that pleasant tune in each line of the translation."[19]

***Notes & Reference :***

1. We could not finds the main text of G. A., Grierson despite many investigations.
2. In the other sapporting text we have been able to scape some

lines of Chandimongal wrote by G. A. Grierson, he wrote : "as coming from the heart and not from the school, and as full of passages adorned with true poetry and descriptive power." See 'Note on the languages of India', p. 108.

3. See, E. B. Cowell, Three Episodes from the old Bengali poem Candī's preface, trasnslated by Dineshchandra Sen, P. 7-8
4. See, ibid, Preface, p. 5
5. See, ibid, Preface, p. 5 & 6
6. See, ibid, Preface, p. 6
7. About the subject the scholar of Mukanda informed that : "Kabikankan Chandi has been printed several times. In the first the book printed on 1230 (Bengali Calender) as 1823-24 A.D. The book entitled "Kabikankan Chakrabortir Krito Chandir pustak Sreejukta Raamjay Vidyasagar Bhattacharya dwara Sudhanusudha Karia Kalikatay Sree Biswanath Deber Chapakhanay Muddrito hailo Shakabda 1745."
See, Sukumar Sen's edited "Kavikankan Birachita Chandimongal" Sahitya Academi 2001, Bhumika, p. 12-13
8. See, Mohini Mohan Sandar's Kavikankan Chandi : Boichitrer Anusandhan, chapter III, pp. 53-59.
9. In this edition mentioned on Collection of Printed Books 1853-1857, compiled by Jatindramohan Bhattacharya, p. 123.
10. For elaboration. See, Mohini Mohan Sandar's Kavikankan Chandi : Boichitrer Anusandhan, chapter III, p. 60.
11. idib, pp. 60-65.
12. ibid, pp. 65-80.
13. Aukshoychandra Sarkar edited Kavikankan Chandi, printed and published by Nandalal Bose, Chinsura Sadharani Jantra, 1285 (Bengali Calendar), pp. 12-15.
14. See, Three Episodes from the Old Bengali Poem Candī by E. B. Cowell, Preface, pp. VI–VII.
15. For elaboration See, Dineshchandra Sen's, Cowell Krita Chandir Anubad, Prabasi, Baisakh, 1311 (Bengali Calendar), p. 30.
16. ibid, pp. 30-31.
17. ibid, pp. 30-31.
18. ibid, p. 31.
19. ibid, p. 32.

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