

## Acknowledgements

The present thesis began as a research project supported by the University Grants Commission's Junior Research Fellowship, since 1994. In the initial stages when the project had a much wider temporal aim, the documentation trips to Calcutta and Santiniketan involved interaction with a large number of personalities whose kind help I would like to acknowledge here. Among those with whom I had come into personal contact then, were Paritosh Sen, Bijon Chowdhury, Rabin Mondal, Amitabha Sengupta, Shyamal Dutta Roy, Sunil Das, Somnath Hore, Jogen Chowdhury, Sanat Kar, Lalu Prasad Shaw, Ajit Chakraborty, Pranabranjan Roy, Mrinal Ghosh, and R. Sivakumar. It is of deep regret for me that Karuna Saha and Probhas Sen are no more today, but I recall the patience with which they bore my insistent enquiries when I met them

1

In Calcutta, Anuradha Roy and Chilka Ghosh had been most cordial, both of them had worked on individual research theses on the dimensions of Left-oriented cultural practices in the context of Bengal, and their insights, opinions and suggestions have been very helpful.

Photographer Sunil Janah, whose documentation of the 1943 'famine' brought him acclaim, currently lives in London, but in the initial stages of the project it was possible to contact him through correspondences and his responses to the project have been reassuring. His brother Ashis Janah and sister Ranu Das have also provided valuable information.

So too, mention must be made of Aloka Chattopadhyay (wife of Deviprosad Chattopadhyay, unfortunately she too is no more today) and Pranati Dey wife of Bishnu Dey), both had close ties with the artist community of the period under survey. Pranati Dey had been most helpful in granting permission to photo-document the personal collection of poet Bishnu Dey to which she is currently heir.

In Baroda, Prof. Gulammohammed Sheikh, who had in his collection a photocopy of the personal scrapbook consisting of newspaper reviews and articles belonging to the artist Prankrishna Pal, had allowed complete access to the material.

On later trips, Arun Ghosh of the Bhupesh Bhavan library in Calcutta, art historian Sovon Som and historian Ashok Bhattacharya, and the theatre personality Khaled Chowdhury were significant contacts. The latter had provided an unpublished English article on the *ganasangeet* tradition,

which had confirmed the conviction regarding the relevant discussion in the concerned chapter of this thesis.

Shanu Lahiri, the painter-sister of Nirode Majumder, too had been most helpful with information regarding her brother.

The "Little-magazines", innumerable low-budget yet significant literary journals are an exceptional feature of the Bengali literary tradition. The "Little-magazine library" is a unique and fabulous repository of these and Sandip Dutta who has personally put this together has been most helpful not only in providing access to the collection for study but providing systematic photocopies of the all relevant articles which I had asked for.

I also owe immensely to a close senior-friend in Santiniketan, Meghdoot Dan, without whose suggestions and active support it would have been practically impossible to trace the various relevant publications that have aided this study. Time and again, Meghdoot-'da' has fished out for me, almost miraculously at times, books that have become out-of-print in the market! His contribution may not have been a terribly intellectual effort for the present project, but without a practical help as his, this project would not have been what it ultimately turned out to be.

The library at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta was a very helpful source for theoretical as well as documentary material, and their collection of microfilms (of the "*Janajuddha*" and the "Peoples' War" journals) has been extremely helpful. Instrumental in these had been the efforts of Tapati Guha-Thakurta, and the interest she has shown for the present study has, once again, been extremely reassuring. It was due to her interest that it was possible to attend the Cultural Studies Workshop at Gwalior arranged by the Centre (in association with the Roskilde University, Denmark, and the Centre for Basic Research, Uganda) in 1997. Responses to the paper presented in the workshop had been of instrumental in reconsidering the arguments of one of the chapters of the present thesis.

į

ŧ

Photographic documentation from original sources had been possible due to the kind permission granted by Somnath Hore, Sanjit Bose, Deepa Bose and Nirban Ash (for material in their personal collections) as well as the collection in the Kala Bhavana museum. The administrative authorities at the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi has also been most cooperative in providing colour-photocopies of from their archival documentation of the works-of-art in their collection. I am also thankful to the Director Archana Roy of the Birla Academy of Art and Culture and the painter Paritosh Sen for granting me permission to photograph the paintings from an important retrospective exhibition of the artist held in the in February 2001.

. ii

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the entire Department of Art History and Aesthetics, Faculty of Fine Arts, for it is this Department that has been instrumental in the development of my academic self.

It amazes me to realize my guide Shivaji K. Panikkar's genuinely limitless confidence in my efforts and capacity. His constant watchful monitoring of the project as well as my general academic development has been a wonderful support that is perhaps even more than what I actually deserve.

As may be expected of an extremely ordinary (even conventional) middle-class Bengali family, my parents who had no idea whatsoever of a discipline called fine-arts, let alone the specialization of art-history, nevertheless had a conviction in the fact that I should be allowed to follow the path of my heart. All they understood was that a Ph D. meant the highest qualifying degree from an institution, and they patiently bore with me longing for my completion of the thesis. I especially remember my father, who is no more today to see me actually submit this completed project report. And I would still like to believe that my mother had genuine feelings for me.

I always felt a certain sense of admiration and awe for Anshuman Das Gupta and Preetha Nair's scholarship; however it is perhaps only natural that they had been helpful good friends, who had the openness to be critical of my shortcomings. Muniraj Chakradhar Saswade displayed amazing patience in Baroda when we sat down for long sessions of photographic documentation. The credit for the excellence of almost half of the photographs in this thesis report is his. I had also had the company of Anshuman Das Gupta on more- than-one common documentation trip to Kolkata and Santiniketan, when he had extended his courteous help with the camera. In Baroda, Biswajyoti Mahanta and Sushobhita Das had extended an untiring helping hand when it was most necessary, in the final stage of the preparation of the multiple copies of this project report.

st.

To Rana Mukhopadhyay and Inchang Kim I am deeply grateful for introducing me to the world of computers, so that in due course of time this project report could take the shape it ultimately did.

With Soumik Nandy Majumder, I share a uniquely close friendship in Santiniketan. He has provided me with the much necessary moral boost beside spending hours with me in the final few days correcting the proof of the chapters, and helping me with arranging the bibliography, a job of no mean effort.

And Nandini has the ultimate credit, for she has never spared me! It was she who goaded me on ridiculing my lack of self-esteem when I had almost slipped into dejection and self-doubt