

Chapter II: World of 'Us' in local

Burdwan town is not considered as a heritage site by either the state (West Bengal), by the local people or by any individual. At the same time residents of Burdwan think that their town is a significant place. When I asked why? The answers are 'because it is very old'. J. C. K. Peterson described it is 'oldness' which is popularly known to the residents of Burdwan.

"The name *Bardhamana* in the vernacular Bengali language is derived from Sanskrit *Vardhamana* (the present participle passive of the verb *vardh*) and means "the increasing or prosperous. Burdwan town has been identified by M. de St. Martin with the Parthalis or Portalis which, according to the Greek geographers, was the royal city of the Gangardae (Gagarides). According to Colonel Waddell, one of its suburbs was the capital of the old Kingdom of Karma Suvarna which lay to the west of Bhagirathi river, and under the Gupta King in the seventh century comprised of the present districts of Burdwan, Bankura, Murshidabad and Hoogly. However, Mr. Beveridge places the capital of Karna Suvarn at Rangamati in Murshidabad and this is probably a more correct view. Burdwan city is first mentioned in Islamic history of India in 1574. It is the year when Akbar's troops captured it after Daud Khan's defeat and death at Rajmahal. Subsequently, it is mentioned as the country residence of Sher Afgan, the first husband of Mihr-ul-nissa, afterwards the Empress Nur-Jahan, who was treacherously attacked and

slain just outside the town by the Emperor's foster brother Kutb-Uddin, who was the Subahdar of Bengal. Jahangir subsequently married Mihr-ul-nissa and there is little reason to doubt that her first husband was murdered by his orders. Kutb-ud-din himself was killed in the encounter."¹¹⁹

Pir Baharam tomb in Burdwan town is protected by Archaeological Survey of India and the Jumma masjid of the town has been referred by numerous scholars like Cathrine Asher in their research because of its remarkable architectural feature and not because it is Burdwan. But interestingly the residents of Burdwan believe that those are important because they are in Burdwan. They also think that apart from these structures, there are a number of places and architecture of Burdwan city which are worth seeing or 'be seen in special occasion or especially'. As a result, we get a number of booklets in the vernacular language. These pamphlets give details of the significance and importance of the viewpoints with popular history. Simultaneously local historians and reporters have published books on Burdwan town. Every book contains a chapter where the author introduces and describes 'the view points' of the town in an imaginary tour of the landscape of Burdwan town. They point out these as the structures for *darshan*. What kind of 'act of seeing' is this? Does *darshan* mean a kind of spectatorship – I would discuss this in the next chapter. The author's description of the view points in today's townscape of Burdwan are layers of the history, myth, gossip, rumours and facts. Furthermore, the imaginary tour of the authors in showing and seeing the important sites

¹¹⁹ Peterson, J. C. K.: *Bengal District Gazetteers- Burdwan*, Calcutta, West Bengal District Gazetteers (1910) 1997, pp.27, 30, 32

and buildings of Burdwan town construct a visual cartographical representation of the town. I started noting the significant sites as religious structures in Burdwan town, described by the authors in these vernacular tracts. While I marked those sites and structures on the official map, developed and used by the government (Map no. 1 and 2) another map is emerged (Map no. 3)

Thus, analysis of the vernacular tracts and other texts and records, such as gazettes and reports on Burdwan written by British administrators in colonial period reveal that the local authors have developed 'we-self', by creating an illusive borderline between an 'insider' and an 'outsider'. One of the noticeable aspects of the local authors is that large numbers of references are drawn from the records and scholarships, written in the colonial period. This chapter focuses on the visual cartographic language of Burdwan town and its religious structures, written by the local authors. I suggest here the local literature bear the image of the subjects. It also analyzes how the mapping opens up and connects the structures in their entire dimension; these are detachable, reversible, and susceptible to constant modification of the local consciousness of national history, state politics, regional religiosity, and mere local popularity. It scrutinizes the position of the 'insider' and 'outsider' in such local cartographical tracts – who am I? I suggest here that the relationship between insiders and outsider is not exotic or touristy, but built up from common memory of the historical landscape, cultural values, popular myth, communal relation and social order.

Thongchai Winichakul constructed the discourse of 'We-self' in tracing the history of identification of nationhood of Thailand. Despite the unclear identification or constitution – it is a 'thing' on 'earth', and in history, which possess particular feature, all of which are distinct from others. It is the field of 'We' or one's own self. The spoken, studied and imagined reality is not a 'counterpart', but a self, a social and collective one. For this reason, a national community and its numerous aspects – nationalism, patriotism, identity, culture, history, image, worldview and so on are not merely objects of scientific study. They are aspects, physically and spiritually, of 'We-self' for studies, as well as for empathy, loyalty, partiality and obsession. The field of We-self has its own political economy and its own questions dissimilar to the field, studied by foreigners. As a part of discourse of We-self, a study seems to attain a natural authority and becomes the inside view.¹²⁰

Here, I have derived the basic grid of 'We-self' from Thongchai Winichakul's discourse on Thai nationhood, but ideologically depart from Thongchai Winichakul in probing a small local like Burdwan town. 'How' question would be answered through the discussion of this chapter. To begin with, it is a known fact that Thailand, Thongchai's case study was never colonized. Therefore, his discourse of 'We-self' is a construct of that land which transformed from a traditional state to a modern state. Thus, continuity, homogeneous persistence of the tradition, especially Thai Buddhism and Thai monarchy and responds of both to European power are the distinct characteristics or even the unique

¹²⁰ Chiang Mai, Silk Worm Book, (1995), 1998 pp.6-8

feature of the nation that in turn is genesis of their 'We-self. Of course, it lends to militarism as well.¹²¹ On the other hand, present Burdwan is a town of West Bengal, a state of India. West Bengal, a state of India and Bangladesh, an Independent country (was part of India subcontinent) have gone through colonization, partition, dislocation, migration¹²² and resettlement¹²³ and calamities¹²⁴ which in turn created 'We-self' in every small local of West Bengal. Burdwan is one of the examples. While interviewing people during my field trip, the first common question of the interviewed person was 'where is my *desh*' or 'am I *bangal* or *ghoti*'? Both questions have a common thread. The literal meaning of 'desh' in Bengali is country/ land/ state/ province.¹²⁵ Here, for the first question it suggests 'which province of Bangladesh (*purba bangla*, colloquially) do I belong to'? When I tried to explain that by birth I am an Indian and therefore that's my *desh*, which was never accepted. The interviewed persons elaborated their queries to excavate the answer they wanted to hear. When I stressed on my understanding of *desh*, I sensed that I was perceived as an 'outsider', and I faced the reluctance of the interviewed person in answering or speaking or conversing further. Let me explain the second

¹²¹ *ibid*, p.13

¹²² Migration took place in post Independence of India and Pakistan / East Pakistan and West Pakistan (1947), and is the year of Independence of Bangladesh / East Pakistan (1971) and is still continuing.

¹²³ Govind Dham in Burdwan was a refugee camp, discussed in last part of this chapter

¹²⁴ Joy Bangla (conjunctivitis at epidemic level), Burdwan fever (named after the epidemic in Burdwan), famine, flood. See Hunter, W. W. '*Statistical Account of Burdwan*', Vol.IV; Delhi, D. K. Publishing House, (1877) 1973; *The Annals of Rural Bengal* (1868)

http://www.archive.org/stream/annalsofruralben00huntuoft/annalsofruralben00huntuoft_djvu.txt, downloaded 23rd Dec 08. O'Malley; Peterson, J. C. K.: *Bengal District Gazetteers- Burdwan*. Calcutta, West Bengal District Gazetteers (1910) 1997

¹²⁵ Samsad Bengali to English Dictionary. (1968) 1994

question, '*bangal*' is addressed to people who migrated from 'purva bangla'/ east Pakistan/ Bangladesh specifically after India attained Independence (1947), '*ghoti*' is referred to people who claim their origin, from their early residences in the 'west side' of the Bengal which is today's West Bengal since Independence. Thus, '*bangal*' and '*ghoti*' is used to locate territorial origin of the people in their day-to-day life. These are words mostly used by Bengali Hindus, but it is not rare in case of Bengali Muslims. Moreover, these words are not used for people in different religious denominations, such as: Sikh, Jain, Parsi or various communities like Marwari, Sindhi, Bihari and so on, who migrated to Bengal¹²⁶. It is true that migration of people pointed by various scholars¹²⁷ in medieval and colonial period is diluted in the understanding of 'us-self' and 'we-self' of Bengali culture of West Bengal.¹²⁸ For instance, celebration of *basanta purnima* or *falgun purnima* in Bengal is known as *dol*. This festive occasion is rooted in the Gaudiya Visnavism of Bengal. In Burdwan *dol* is celebrated for two days. First day is known as '*thakurer dol*' (god's dol), second is *prajar dol* (people's dol). On the day of *thakurer dol*, the people of Burdwan play *dol* with god. The day Burdwan people celebrate *thakurer dol*, the Bengali community of West Bengal celebrates it as *dol*. In short, *thakurer dol* of Burdwan town is the people's *dol* for rest of the West Bengal. It is

¹²⁶ Throughout the thesis I shall use 'Bengal' to suggest the Bengal which consisted of West Bengal, a state of India and Bangladesh, an independent country.

¹²⁷ Eaton, Richard: *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204- 1760*; Oxford University Publication, Delhi, 1994, pp. 156-158. Chaudhuri, Susil: *Trade and Commercial Organization in Bengal 1650 -1720*, Calcutta, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay; 1975, pp 98, 223. Bayly, C. A.: *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars North India Society in the Age of British Expansions 170 -1870*; New Delhi; Oxford University Press; pp31. 140

¹²⁸ Siva Temples in Sarbamangala premises are built up by a member from Burdwan Raj, who migrated from Punjab (refer to page no 16, first chapter).

important to note that people of Burdwan do not play *dol*. They play it on the next day, which is known as *prajar dol*. I suggest here that the first day of *thakurer dol of Burdwan and dol of West Bengal* is decided as per the calander of Gaudiya Visnavism, practiced in West Bengal, though the celebration of *dol in Bengali community* has crossed the boundary of Gaudiya Vaisnavite practice. It has become a cultural festival for the Bengali community, which is celebrated by both Hindus and Muslims. The *prajar dol* seems to have a string in the history of the Burdwan raj family. The genesis of the Burdwan raj family goes back to the Khatri community of Punjab, who migrated extensively in different parts of North India¹²⁹. I suggest that celebration of *prajar dol* is the *holi*, which is celebrated by north Indian people by following the calendar of Pusti Margi and Nimbarkis. This *holi* was celebrated and popularized by Burdwan raj in Burdwan, falls on a different day. Now it is a distinctive characteristic of *dol* in Burdwan town. Thus, a spoken vernacular enables a certain group of people to think of their community in a spatiotemporal definition. Simultaneously, such search for ethnographical identity through the spoken and operational language draws a demarcation between ‘us’ and ‘them’ within the people of common-speaking language. Here, I want to point out that this understanding of ‘us- hood’ is not like the projection of nationhood as an imagined community¹³⁰ that is mediated through parole or mechanism of the state¹³¹.

¹²⁹ Bayly, C. A.: *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars North India Society in the Age of British Expansions 170 - 1870*; New Delhi; Oxford University Press; pp. 91,140,232,390,451-455

¹³⁰ Anderson Benedict: *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, (1983) 1991

¹³¹ Example: ‘Incredible India’ of Ministry of Tourism of India. www.india-tourism.com/EN/index.html

Mapping and editing the human geography

Jojneswar Chaudhuri, an author wrote books on Burdwan has traced the spatial order of the realms of Burdwan town. Taking all the stories into his accounts, he built up a cartographical representation of Burdwan in the past. This past does not consist of any classification of period (example: ancient, medieval, colonial etc.) or any particular time, but 'believed past'. He developed a convincing existing past. He mentions that old Burdwan is traceable through its roads, bazaars, water tanks, and religious structures that physically exist today. He developed a tour to see Burdwan that is titled '*Dekhi Puri Bardhaman*'¹³². *Dekhi Puri Bardhaman* means 'seeing town Bardhaman'. Who is seeing and what is being seen are the questions I would analyze here. He starts with physical, geographical, and political dimension of the town in the globe. He writes "Burdwan town appears at 23°14' northern latitude and 87°51' longitude of the globe. Apart from the main administrative office of the town, it has two administrative offices of the sub-division. Old town ship was not large, but now it extended to twenty four square kilometers. Burdwan municipality has twenty wards. Burdwan township consists of twenty one blocks, comprising of – Alamganj, Kanainatshal, Golap Nagar, Burdwan, Bahir Sarbamangala, Mirchoba, Sankaripukur, Ichchalabad, Khaja Anwarber, Jagatber, Babur Bag, Bechar hat, Radha nagar, Sadhan pur, Idilpur, Goda, Fakirpur, Balidanga, Bhatchchala, Lakurdi and Kanchan nagar. Today's Burdwan town used to be recognized through *hat* or *ganj*. The sites of the *hat* and *ganj* are still located today, such as eastern

¹³² The seventh chapter of the third volume of Jojneswar Chaudhuri's book, titled '*Bardhman: Itihash O Sanskrit*' (Bardhaman: history and culture).Kolkata, Pustak Bipani, 1994

part of Rajbari ¹³³ (house of Burdwan raj) was known as Moradpur as shown in the *map* ¹³⁴ of revenue survey in 1858. Kanchan nagar ¹³⁵ is the oldest block of the town and was a village.” He thinks that the old roads are still traceable by looking at the crossroad of the town, since those are still marked in James Rennell’s maps ¹³⁶. Furthermore, he stressed “that ancient path is still there the way it used to stretch from Badshahi Sarak ¹³⁷ of Sadarghat to Dignagar, keeping Kanchan Nagar and Talit gar to the left side and touching Alampur and Bonpass.” He informs that Buchanan Hamilton ¹³⁸ described Burdwan as more populated than Buckingham. He mentions the three main roads in the town – Grand Trunk ¹³⁹, Bypass and Bijay Chand. Grand Trunk is the oldest one, built up by Sher Shah, the Afghan emperor of Delhi. Banka river flows through the town dividing it into north

¹³³ In Bengali bari means residence, a house. It is used as a suffix to use a proper noun and mark as landmark Example: Raj bari, Thakur bari (Tagores’ House)

¹³⁴ italics mine. Here, the author means James Ranell’s map. He never saw the map.

¹³⁵ *Nagar* in Bengali suggest arranged/ planned town or city place. But here, the author mentions that it was a village.

¹³⁶ James Rennell was appointed surveyor-general of the East India Company's dominions in Bengal, with a commission in the Bengal Engineers, dated 9 April 1764 and worked for the next thirteen years. Rennell's Atlas was one of the earliest atlases of Bengal and its adjoining areas. His *Bengal Atlas*, published in 1779. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Rennell#cite_note-DNB-0 ; http://banglapedia.search.com.bd/HT/R_0178.htm accessed on 31st May 09

¹³⁷ Built by Allaaddin Hosen Shah (1493 -1519)

¹³⁸ Francis Buchanan-Hamilton (1762-1829), Scottish physician who made significant contributions as a geographer zoologist and botanist while living in India. From 1803 to 1804 he was surgeon to the Governor General of India, Lord Wellesley in Calcutta, where he organized a zoo that was to become the Calcutta Alipore Zoo. From 1807 to 1814, under the instructions of the government of Bengal, he made a comprehensive survey of the areas within the jurisdiction of the British East India Company. He was asked to report on topography, history, antiquities, the condition of the inhabitants, religion, natural productions (particularly fisheries, forests, mines, and quarries), agriculture (covering vegetables, implements, manure, floods, domestic animals, fences, farms, and landed property, fine and common arts, and commerce (exports and imports, weights and measures, and conveyance of goods). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Buchanan-Hamilton accessed on 1st June 09

¹³⁹ Built by Sher Shah Suri (1540-45)

and south. There are small bridges to connect the northern part and southern part of the town. The author points out that these bridges are historically cited in historical text and literature of the past and built by important rulers of the past. In '*Vidyasundar kavya*' Bharatchandra Raygunakar¹⁴⁰ mentions '*eight hat sholo goli batrish bazar*' (eight markets, sixteen lanes, thirty two bazaars) in the description of Burdwan. The author traces the eight *hats* from north west to the south part of the town. Those are Tikarhat, Kotalhat, Kajirhat, Nababhat, Poddarhat, Goalhat, Birhat and Becharhat. Poddarhat is today's Khaja Anwarber. Present Borhat was known as Kotalhat. After the Plassey battle in 1757, East India Company established a collector's office in Burdwan. In 1760, Mir Kashim¹⁴¹ gifted Burdwan, Medinipur and Chottagram to the East India Company in exchange of Nawabi."¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ 18th Century popular Bengali poet. (died in 1760) . He was court poet of Raja Krishnachandra, zamindar of Nadia Gunakar is the title, given by Raja Krishnachandra. Sen Sukumar :*Bangla Sahityer Itihash* (History of Bengali Literature) , Vol II, Kolkata, Ananda Publishers Pvt. Ltd. (1940) 2000 pp.424-432

¹⁴¹ Mir Kasim Ali Khan (died 1777) was Nawab of Bengal from 1760 to 1764. He was installed as Nawab by the British East India Company replacing Mir Jafar, his father-in-law, who had himself been installed by the British after his treacherous role in the Battle of Palashi. However, Mir Jafar had started to assert independence by trying to tie up with the Dutch East India Company. The British eventually overran the Dutch forces at Chinsura and replaced Mir Jafar with Mir Qasim. Upon ascending the throne, Mir Qasim repaid the British with lavish gifts. To please the British, Mir Qasim robbed everybody, confiscated lands, reduced Mir Jafar's purse and depleted the treasury. He also transferred the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong to the British East India Company. He opposed the British East India Company's position that their imperial Mughal licence (*dastak*) meant that they could trade without paying taxes (other local merchants with *dastaks* were required to pay up to 40% of their revenue as tax). Frustrated at the British refusal to pay these taxes, Mir Qasim abolished all taxes on the local traders as well.

¹⁴² Joineswar Chaudhuri, 1994 pp. 346-347

Thus, first he gave the location of Burdwan town in a world map with its physical dimension. Then he confidently traces the physical existence of 'old baazars' which is mentioned in the literary text. Secondly, he considers the maps of James Rennell's as one of the key to trace the spatial representation of the past of Burdwan. This 'past' is stretchable to any extent, can't not be framed by date, but by location according to the author. Hence, Rennell's map become a cartographical communication between the past and present, between spatial reality and human reality, between the cartographer and user, to perceive a space without the need of direct experience. The cartographer (James Rennell) surveyed the geographical terrain of undivided Bengal with specific objectives of mapping the land. Then, by cartographic methods he conceptualized it and transformed the data into a mapping form and maps were produced. The information transmitted by the map was translated by the colonial government initially. Jojneswar Chaudhuri uses those maps as a visual representation of the land of past to locate them in the present. This past is without any parameter of time. James Rennell's spatiotemporal is considered as a timeless sight of the spatial representation of Burdwan. The text is neither a travelogue nor a guidebook. The town is not a tourist spot, yet there is a construct of touring the town to see.

Next he describes the '*visitor points*'¹⁴³ in Burdwan. He starts from the railway station of Burdwan. He starts, "Present railway station was inaugurated on 3rd February 1855."¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ italics mine

¹⁴⁴ Here, it is important to note that his tour of showing Burdwan start from railway station. The railway station as cartographical sign of colonial government somewhere also governed the imagination of the

After crossing the station, camping ground comes on right side of Grand Trunk road. Little further down in south on the left side there is a gurudwara, built up a civil surgeon, there was an orphan home in the place of gurudwara. Further down, on the left of the same road side municipality office appears. It was inside the collector's office till 1865. In 1880, during the month of May one part of Church was rent at the cost of rupees 25 per month to transfer the municipality office. After that there is a Kali temple. Nobody knows when it was built up, but it is a landmark today. Behind the temple there is the main bus stand of the town known as Tinkonia Bus stand. Furthermore, on 10th February of 1903, Lieutenant-Governor Bourdillon ¹⁴⁵ was present during the ceremony of enthronement of Bijaychand Mahatab.¹⁴⁶ Next year, Lord Curzan¹⁴⁷ was invited by Bijaychand Mahatab. This gate was made to felicitate his visit¹⁴⁸. At that time the name of the gate was 'star of India'. After Independence it was named as Vijay Toron¹⁴⁹. From the west side of the Vijay Toron, Vijay Chand road which leads to Raj bari, by crossing, named Udaychand Library, built up by Maharaj Aftabchand¹⁵⁰. Presently the office of CPI party is housed in the premises of Udaychand Library. Opposite to library, there is

author in creating the tour in the town. Consequently, he thinks that the visitors would travel by train and would start from the railway station. The other kinds of transports such as bus, cycle rickshaw, car are considered typical of local.

¹⁴⁵ James Bourdillon (1902- 1903)

¹⁴⁶ Adopted son of Burdwan Raj, (1887 -1941)

¹⁴⁷ Governor General and Viceroy of India (1899-1905)

¹⁴⁸ Jajneswar Choudhury narrates the history in such a way, as if the reader is the visitor, standing in front of the gate.

¹⁴⁹ Means decorated gate made for special purpose. It is used as a suffix. Vijay Toron is popularly known as Curzon gate till now.

¹⁵⁰ Aftabchand Bahdur (1879- 1885). He was the grand father of Udaychand Mahatab ((1941-1955) who named the library after him

Burdwan main Police station. Next Nurani Masjid comes in the left lane, west side of the police station. In front of Nurani masjid, there is a temple of Bramha Samaj, in the lane of Nabab dost kayem lane, established by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore ¹⁵¹ and Maharajdhiraj Mahatabchand ¹⁵². In Barobaazar one can easily notice ak gambuj - masjid ¹⁵³. Further ahead one finds the Gargaraghat Gurdwara. It seems Guru Nanak visited this Gurudwara, in 1605.”

Jajneswar Choudhury continues, “Then Khosh Bag appears. It was the locality of courtesans and prostitutes ¹⁵⁴. Their locality was transferred to Mahjantuli since this area became prime locality of business. Near to that place a missionary school was set up in 1832 to teach English based education. It did not become popular, since it was discovered that conversion into Christianity was taking place in guise of English medium teaching. Then one enters in Kaparpati and Sonapati, the area where cloth sellers and gold jewelers set up their shops. After that, there is Burdwan, Rajbari with a huge tower clock. Entrance of Rajbari is facing north with canon in front of the entrance. Opposite side of the Rajbari there are Mahatab Manjil and Mubarak Manjil. Italian style of the architecture

¹⁵¹ Debendranath Tagore was a deeply religious man. His movement the Brahmo Samaj was formed in 1843 by merging his Tattwabodhini Sabha with the Brahmo Sabha. Ten years after the death of the latter's founder, Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The Brahmo Sabha had fallen away from its original practices put forth in its Trust deed of Brahmo Sabha, however, Tagore revived the importance of this deed. With the influence of Brahmoism under Debendranath spreading far and wide throughout India, he gathered reputation as a person of particular spiritual accomplishment and came to be known as Maharshi.

¹⁵² Mahatab Chand Bahadur (1832- 1879). (First adopted son in Burdwan Raj Family). Mukhopadhyay, Rakhal Das: *Bardhaman –rajbanshanucharit*, Calcutta, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad; (1321) 1914

¹⁵³ Mosque with one dome

¹⁵⁴ When it is not mentioned

used to astonish people's eye.¹⁵⁵ These three buildings are conceived as Burdwan University administrative block today. The buildings of Rajbari, Mahatb Manjil and Mubarak Manjil and its surroundings are known as Raj-locality. Within this area, there is Khakhhar Shah Dargah in Payra Khana *goli*¹⁵⁶. This Dargah is earlier than Raj bari. People say that in medieval period Pir Khakhhar Shah came to Burdwan from Kabul. When Raj Bari was being built up Burdwan raj did not touch the land of Khakhhar Shah Dargah. It is behind the Rajbari. The 17th *Falgun* of every year is remembered as his day by the local people. Southern Part of Payra Khana is known as Mayur Mahal now. Actually, it is Meher Mahal. Mihr-ul-nissa and her husband Sher Afghan lived here. There is *Jama* Masjid in the west of Payra Khana *goli*. After defeating the revolt of Sobha Singh¹⁵⁷ and Rahim Khan¹⁵⁸ Aurangzeb's grandson, Sahajada Ajim-al Shan stayed three years in Burdwan town. In 1699, he constructed this Jumma masjid.

¹⁵⁵ These buildings are in Victorian style. Of course genesis of the Victorian architectural style is Greco-roman classical architecture of Italy.

¹⁵⁶ *payra* – pigeon, *khana* – room,

¹⁵⁷ Sobha Singh was the zamindar of Chitua and Barda, present Chandrokona of Ghatal sub division, West Medinipur District. Krishna Ram Ray (1675-1691) of Chakal Burdwan was appointed as revenue collector by Ibrahim Khan, grandson of Aurangzed, *subahdar* of Bengal.

Sobha Singh seems to be one of the zamindars/ local leader who tried to break away from the imperial Mughal by taking the advantage of political conflicts during Aurangzeb's period. Gopal Singh, zamindar of Bishnupur, Raghunath Sigh of Chandrakona, Rahim Khan, Pathan Sardar of Orissa joined Sobha Singh. This troop attacked the Company merchants and managed to siege 180-mile land near Ganga and slew Krishna Ray in the battle of Mulkati, near Damodar River. In 1690s captured all the members of his family, except his son Jagat Ram Rai, who escaped to Dacca and sought assistance from the governor. The rebels succeeded in capturing the important town of Hoogly, and possessed themselves of most of the country west of the Bhagirathi. Amongst the captives taken in Burdwan was Raj Kumari Satyabati, the daughter of the raja who stabbed him to death. On the death of Sobha Singh, the insurgents elected Afghan chief, Rahim Khan to be their commander. The emperor appointed his own grandson Azim –u- Shan to the

If anybody follows the road that is on the south Raj-jamin¹⁵⁹, one arrives at a large burial ground. This is the Pir Bahram Dargah. Pir Baharam stopped in Burdwan on the way from Persia to Singhal and stayed back in Burdwan. It seems that it was the preaching and meditation place of yogi Jaypal, a hindu saint. He gave shelter to Pir Baharam and when he died, he was buried in the garden of Yogi Jaypal. Akbar constructed the dargah and donated the land, which is recognized today in the names of Puratan Chawk, Fakir Pukur (behind the dargah), and Mirjapur. Jahngir employed Sheikh Bakhtiar as *muttawalli*. In the compound of Pir Baharam there are tombs of two other famous historical persons. One is Nur-Jahan's first husband Sher Afghan and the other one is

government of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. They were finally defeated just outside the town by Azim-u-Shan and their leader Rahim Khan was killed. The revolt of Sobha Singh is of special interest, as it indirectly led the foundation of the town Calcutta, Chandernagar (Chandan nagar) and Chinsura (Chunchura). The English at Sutanati, the French at Chandernagar and the Dutch at Chinsura, alarmed at the progress of the rebel, applied to Nawab Nazim for permission to put their factories into a state of defense. The Nawab ordered them in general terms to defend themselves and interpreting his order in accordance with their inclinations they transformed the settlements into fortified cities. see J. C. K. Peterson (1910), Jaineswar Chaudhury (1994). Rakhal Das Mukherjee (1905), Ekkari Chottopadhyay (2001)

¹⁵⁸ Pathan sardar who joined Sobha Singh (Refer footnote no 28). After the death of Sobha Singh, Rahim Khan changed his name to Rahim Shah and continued to control land at the west bank of Bhagirathi, seized by Sobha Singh. Krishnaram's son managed to escape to Dacca (present Dhaka in Bangladesh) and sought help from Bengal *Subahdar*. Aurangzeb appointed Azim-al-Shan a *subahdar* (1697-1712) to control the situation. Azim-us-Shan asked Rahim Shah to surrender and offered *zagir* to him. In turn, Rahim Shah played a trick with him. He asked him to come down to his place to discuss this. Azim-al-Shan sent his minister Khaja Anwar who was murdered by Rahim Shah. Later on Rahim Shah was killed by Hamid Shah Kureshi, Khaja Anwar was buried in the Poddarkot of Burdwan which is known today as Khaja Anwar Ber. Jadunath Sarkar (ed.), History of Bengal Muslim Period (1200 -1757), Vol. II, Patna, Janki Prakashan; 1977.pp.409- 421

¹⁵⁹ Land of Raj, The author suggest the land, used to be owned by Burdwan Raj.

Kutub Uddin Koka, who wanted to take his wife Mehir-un Nissa/ Nur Jahan to Delhi forcefully by following the orders of Jahangir. But both of them died at the Sadhanpur field in a personal battle. Unfortunately, the year inscribed on the tombs is wrong. Tujuk-i- Jahngiri mentions that both were killed by each other on 30th May of 1607.

After crossing Radhagung pool¹⁶⁰, the Khaja Anwar Ber pally¹⁶¹ comes in southeast side of Alamganj road. During the revolt of Rahim Shah¹⁶², Khaja Anwar minister of Azim-al- Shan was murdered there during the discussion of a treaty pact. The place was known as *ber*. He was buried there. Since then it is recognized as Khaja Anwar Ber. Apart from the tomb, there is a mosque, garden and mainstay.

After crossing the bypass of Grand Trunk road, at the north side, *Rath tala* comes at a two kilometer distance. From Rath tala, towards the west, there is the Kankaleswari temple after crossing the Eden canal. The local folks would inform that washer men used the stone the idol for washing cloths. One day, the stone turned up, and *astabhuja – chamunda*¹⁶³ are discovered. Mother goddess with eight hands in skeleton like body is

¹⁶⁰ Pool is bridge (usually small) over a narrow river.

¹⁶¹ *pally* means a small area of human habitation. It is used as suffix to mark the community with caste / religious denomination and treated as proper noun.

¹⁶² Refer foot note no. 43

¹⁶³ Banerji, S. C.: *Tantra in Bengal – A study in its Origin, Development and Influence*, New Delhi, Monohar Publication, 1992 (First edition 1978), pp.92 -93

http://www.archive.org/stream/southindianimage015351mbp/southindianimage015351mbp_djvu.txt
downloaded on 4th June,09,pp. 190-196

identified as Chamunda. Above the head, there is an elephant and under the feet the figure seems to be Siva. The temple is in nava-ratna style. There are hardly any terracotta plaques except on the enclave. The temple is 250 years old. Near to the temple, there is a place of tantric ritual of *pancha mundi*¹⁶⁴ under the *bel* tree¹⁶⁵.

From Tinkonia bus stand, on the left side of the Kalna road, one would see pir pukur. After that Kalna road rail gate, in Kha Pukur palli, there is a mosque, built up by Faruk Shayar¹⁶⁶. Beside the masjid there is Sheikh Bayajid's Mazar. Faruk Sayar constructed this mosque, because Sheikh Bayajid's prediction on him turned on true. This Masjid is known as Bon¹⁶⁷ Masjid, because of it's location in isolated area.

¹⁶⁴ *Panca-mundi asana* is a shrine of Kali, standing on five human heads (*panca-mundi*). These heads are probably of the persons sacrifice in honour of kali. The human sacrifice is one of the principles of munda sadhana of panca-tattva Tantric ritual. In *munda-sadhana*, the *sadhaka* is required to sit on *mundas* (heads rather skull) As regards the creatures, whose *mundas* are suitable, the *yogini tantra* mentions human being, buffalo and cat in case *tri-munda asana*. In case of *panca-munda asana*, jackel, snake, dog, monkey, human being are necessary. An alternative to it is aggregate of five human *mundas*. These heads are to be buried and an altar of the prescribed dimensions should be constructed over them. Banerji, S. C.: *Tantra in Bengal – A study in its Origin, Development and Influence*, New Delhi, Monohar Publication, 1992 (First edition 1978),pp.

147, 182

¹⁶⁵ (Green marmelos). Leaf and fruit of this tree are the essential offerings of Siva worship in Bengal

¹⁶⁶ Grandson of Aurangzeb, was on the Mughal throne from 1713 to 1719

¹⁶⁷ Means jungle, wood

In north side of the Banka river Sarbamangala temple would be visible. The area is known as Radha nagar pally. Sarbamangala is *nagar devi* (goddess of the town). Old residents of Burdwan are deeply throne connected with the temple. It is heard that the idol was in the house of *chunari*¹⁶⁸. The goddess gave ‘*darshan*’ to the king in his dream and went to bring her. The king found that two Brahmins from Bankura took the idol by paying *chunari* and they were on the way to Bankura. The king chased the two brahmins. He managed to bring the goddess back and promised them that he would build up a temple.

The author says hat whatever the myth is that Sarbamangala is resident goddess of Burdwan since many hundred years. The age of her being in Burdwan can be located in the *dharma-mangal kavya* by Rupram Chakravarty¹⁶⁹. Moreover, Ramnanda Joti’s *chandimangal kavya*¹⁷⁰, Manik Ganguly’s *dhrama mangal kavya*¹⁷¹ and Bharat Chandra’s

¹⁶⁸ Lime-burner, or orkers in lime, as plasters; a vendor. Risley, H.H.: *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*; Vol. I Calcutta, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. (1891), 1998; p.207

¹⁶⁹ Before Rupram Chakravarty (17th century) no *dharma-mangal kavya* is found, his is the first poet of *dharma-mangal kavya*. Later poets of *dharma-mangal kavya* addressed him as ‘Adi Rupram’. Sen Sukumar :*Bangla Sahityer Itihash* (History of Bengali Literature) , Vol II, Kolkata, Ananda Publishers Pvt. Ltd. (1940) 2000; pp.121- 133-138

¹⁷⁰ 18th Century *pandit* (scholar) in Sanskrit. Wrote *Ramayan* under the title of *Ram-tatwa*, *chanid mangal*, and sarcastic comments (*atyachardidhiti*, *adwitya rahasya* etc) in Sanskrit He was a leader of one vaishnavite sect who claimed as the direct descendent of Chaitanya avtar. See Sen Sukumar :*Bangla Sahityer Itihash* (History of Bengali Literature) , Vol II, Kolkata, Ananda Publishers Pvt. Ltd. (1940) 2000,pp.439-445

¹⁷¹ 18th century poet of *dharma mangal kavya*. He also wrote a small *shitala mangal kavya*. *Dharma thukur* is his family god. He was aware of the writing of Ruparam Chakravarty. Sen Sukumar :*Bangla Sahityer*

Bidyasundar *kavya*, mentions about Sarbamangala goddess. In the premises of Sarbamangala temple there are two *ek chala* ¹⁷² Siva temple, built in the period of Chitra Sen ¹⁷³. Maharaj Tejchand ¹⁷⁴ also built three Siva temples. Chitra Sen's father Kirti Chand Ray ¹⁷⁵ constructed the Nava-ratna temple of Sarbamangala.”¹⁷⁶

Let me explain why I need to probe the writing of Jojneswar Chaudhuri. Jojneswar Chaudhuri's three volumes on Burdwan, titled “*Bardhaman; Itihas and Sanskriti*” are a extensive documentation and compilation of facts and fictions on Burdwan by keeping the pattern of gazetteers ¹⁷⁷. His books are considered as measuring base of the rest of the books, written by local historians, writers and scholars. Their common chapter or subject is ‘seeing Burdwan’, such as Sudhir Chandra Da's *bardhaman parikrama* (1992) and *bardhaman saharer itibrito* (2002), Akkari Chottopadhyay's *bardhaman jelar Itihash o loksanskriti* (2001), Gopikanta Konar (ed.) *bardhaman samagra* (four vols.), Nirad Baran Sarkar's *nagar bardhamner deb dabi* (2002), Bardhaman Abhijan Gosthi's *bardhaman charcha* (2001) and so on. Furthermore, Jojneswar Chaudhuri is an employee of UCO

Itihash (History of Bengali Literature), Vol II, Kolkata, Ananda Publishers Pvt. Ltd. (1940) 2000; pp.162-165

¹⁷² Refer first chapter

¹⁷³ Raja Chitrasen Ray (1740 -1744). Mukhopadhyay, Rakhil Das: *Bardhaman –rajbanshanucharit*, Calcutta, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad; (1321), 1905,

¹⁷⁴ Maharaj Tejchand Bahadur (1770- 1832), *ibid*

¹⁷⁵ Kirtichand Ray (1702 –1740), *ibid*

¹⁷⁶ Jojneswar Chaudhuri; 1994

¹⁷⁷ Example : Peterson, J. C. K.: *Bengal District Gazetteers- Burdwan*. Calcutta, West Bengal District Gazetteers (1910) 1997. Refer acknowledgement of Jojneswar Chaudhuri's “*Bardhaman; Itihas and Sanskriti*, Vol. I; (1990), 1995, pp. 1-14

bank, Calcutta. His interest in working on Burdwan is a kind of passion and moralistic attitude like ‘to do some thing for his land of birth (*janma bhumi and desh*)’.¹⁷⁸ Chaudhury considers Burdwan, as part of his *janma bhumi and desh*¹⁷⁹ is his state that is West Bengal. The other authors are the residents of Burdwan. For them *desh* is Burdwan. They perceive Jajneswar Chaudhury as a part of their ‘We-self’¹⁸⁰ by acknowledging his contribution. At the same time, their intention and approaches towards their books or writings in vernacular language begin to create the difference from Jojneswar Chaudhuri. It is interesting to note that they correct the errors in the writings of Jojneswar Chaudhuri, using the same sources referred by Jojneswar Chaudhuri. This is way the local authors proclaim their ‘we-self’ in particular geographical location of Burdwan and posit Jajneswar Choudhuray as an outsider. Thus, the process of forming ‘us’ creates a line of ‘them’ within the sphere of ‘We-self’. Here, my implication of ‘We-self’ in case of Burdwan departs from Thongchai Winichakul’s ‘We-self’ of identification of Thai nationhood. Here, I also suggest that all these authors are engaged in finding and pointing their own place’s distinctiveness within a small territory. As a result, ‘human

¹⁷⁸ Forward and introduction of the book, titled Bardhaman; *Itihas and Sanskriti* (Vol. I), by Jojneswar Chaudhuri’s elaborately mention this. Moreover, my personal Interview is another example.

¹⁷⁹ *desh* in Bengali suggests country/ land/ state/ province. Samsad Bengali to English Dictionary.(1968) 1994

¹⁸⁰ “Knowing or getting to know a place is like knowing or loving a person. It is akin to the instinct for monogamy – and it is no coincidence that many surnames derive their names from names of places. People’s sense of themselves tends to be part of the place where they live and work – ‘the blood kinship of the same people living in the same place’ “ T. S. Eliot, cited in Deakin R: ‘A Local Habitation and a Name’ in Clifford S and King A (ed.) *Local distinctiveness: Place, Particular and Identity*, London, Common Ground, 1993,p.2

cartography’¹⁸¹ of Burdwan, a local is developed, displayed in the premises of the religious structures that I would discuss in the next chapter.

It is important to note that all the local authors speak about the location of the religious structure, in the Burdwan town. The religious structures are imagined as ‘incredible object’, due to its myths attached. These myths belong to them, they belong to these myths. But they failed to move beyond the seeing as an outsider like colonial officials. It is a paradox, that the self conscious assertion of incredibleness undermines the unreflective field it upholds. Thus, there is hardly any attempt to introduce the interior of the religious structures. The imaginary tours (such as ‘*dekhi puri Bardhaman*’) stops outside the premises of the religious structures of Burdwan and takes ‘U’ turn. In other words, it appears that there is an obstruction between inside and outside the religious structures that ask for enquiries. Simultaneously, all these structures are burdened by their mythical tales. Hence, I would analyze now what are those myths and stories on and about the religious structure.

¹⁸¹ Harley J.B.: ‘Historical Geography and the Cartographical Illusion’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, No.15, pp.87-88, “A greater pluralism of cartographic expression --- a narrative cartography that tells story of a process at the same time as it is revealing the interconnectedness of humanity in space”

What lies beneath the tales?

Let me begin with Sarbamangala Temple. The local authors introduce Sarbamangala as *nagar devi*, in his tour of '*dekhi puri burdwan*'. He narrates about the king's *dream*. Two Brahmins from Bankura took the idol by paying *chunari*¹⁸² when he went to bring his *nagar devi*. They were on the way to Bankura. The king chased those two Brahmins. He managed to bring the goddess back and promised them that he would build up a temple.¹⁸³

Another myth¹⁸⁴ is - the *bagdi*¹⁸⁵ community got sculpted stone of sarbamangala in their fishing net while fishing. They use to use the stone for breaking the snails and oysters which damaged the sculpture. *Chunari*, community settlement beside the Damodar riverbed used to collect the broken shells to make *chuna* (lime). Once the chunari people took the stone with shells and burnt that with the shells unknowingly. It seems that at the same night, the king saw the goddess in dream. Some body says that that time Burdwan raj^{a/} was Chitra Sen, according some people it was Sangam Ray was the Burdwan raj. Anyway, it appears that the goddess ordered the king to establish her idol in a temple and

¹⁸² Lime-burner, or orkers in lime, as plasters; a vendor. Risley, H.H.: *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*; Vol. I Calcutta, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. (1891), 1998; p.207

¹⁸³ Jojneswar Chaudhuri, 1994 pp. 358-359,

¹⁸⁴ Excerpts from the interviews of temple *pujari*-s in Oct. 2004. Biplab Das's '*devi sarvamangala sankhripta itihash*', 2002

¹⁸⁵ H. H. Risley mentions that their social rank is very low. They are classed as dwellers on the outskirts of Hinduism. Some sub-caste of Bagdi became Vaishnav for upclass status. (1981), 1998.p. 43

to make an arrangement of regular worship. On the other side the *chunari* people noticed that after firing there is something which was not burnt in the furnace. After washing that they found the *astadashbhuj* *durga* idol in black coloured stone. They handed over the idol to local brahmin. The Burdwan raj met the local¹⁸⁶ brahmins. He narrated the dream and asked for the idol. However, the brahmins refused to give the idol. After discussion and negotiation, the king decided that he would construct a temple and bear the expenses of maintenance and daily worship of the temple. The same brahmins and their descendents would be the *pujari* of the temple. After that the Burdwan raj, decide to set up temple, beside Bakanala near to Raj *bari* in the land of 2 acres.(Map no.2) Today the place is known as Sarbamangala *para*. The place where the idol was unknowingly kept by *bagdi* people and discovered by *chuneri* is now recognized as *bahir* Sarbamangala today. It is said that those Brahmin were from Banerjee family of Begut village. According to the agreement, they hold the rights of be *pujari* of the temple and they adopted the title *adhikari*¹⁸⁷.

Furthermore, in 1741 CE, Raghuji Bhosle chief of Maratha army (known as *bargi*) attacked Bengal.¹⁸⁸ Continuous attack affected number of villages affected Burdwan. The people left their houses to hide and to avoid death. That time the *pujari* of Begut village

¹⁸⁶ Local within local. The distinctiveness of the small pockets of a local demarcates 'us' against 'them' within the sphere of 'We-self'.

¹⁸⁷ Title given to Brahmins who officiate at religious ceremonies. Risley, H. H. (1981), 1998, p.3

¹⁸⁸ Refer foot note 86, First Chapter, Hunter, W. W. 'Statistical Account of Burdwan', Vol.IV; Delhi, D. K. Publishing House, (1877) 1973, p.141

locked the door of the temple and went for safe shelters. When this fact came under notice of Burdwan raj he called the brahmins of Rayan village nearest to Burdwan to do the *nitya puja* in the temple. When the Maratha attacked stopped, the older *pujari* came back and demanded the full rights of *nitya puja*. It created the fights in between two groups of brahmins. In order to solve the problem the Burdwan raj ordered the two groups to do *puja* in cooperation. Since that time the brahmins of the two villages do the *nitya puja* for fifteen days of a month in shift. It is interesting to point that how the Brahmins of Shyanknara Pyamra. Gangpur, Kalipahari villages are also appointed as *pujari*¹⁸⁹. Since bagdi community found the idol first, still, preparation of oysters is offered to the Goddess as *bhog*. During *durga puja*, at the day of *astami puja*, after the sacrifice of buffalo (*mahish boli*), descendent of Burdwan raj has the first right to offer the sacrifice of goat to goddess, and the second right goes to, the *bagdi* community of Bahir Sarbamangala to offer the sacrifice of goat to the goddess. In every *amavasya*, sacrifice of goat is offered to the goddess.

I find that the whole story has a connection with rival relationship between Burdwan raj and Birbhum raj. Krishnaram Ray, grand father of Kirtichand Ray (who seems to find the Sarbamangala idol and built the *navaratna* temple) was killed by Sobha Singh, Gopal Singh, Birbhum raj and their fellows¹⁹⁰. It is also said that Kirtichand Ray defeated Sopan

¹⁸⁹ Tracing 'how' seemed to be impossible. Every body claims their own right finds other as 'other' against another.

¹⁹⁰ Refer first section of this chapter. "Jagat Ram Rai, who had been restored to the estate and honours of his father, the deceased Raja Krishna Ram Rai, after the revolt of Sobha Singh, made further addition to

Sigha, Bishnupur raj, but he failed capture his land. It could be because of *bargi* attack. It is reported, they decided to maintain cordial relationship and joined to protect their from *bargi* attack.¹⁹¹ However, Kirtichand Ray collected the sword of Sopan Singh as a sign of

the family estates of the Burdwan House, and was honoured with a *farman* by the Emperor Aurangzeb. He was treacherously murdered and left two sons, Kirti Chandra Rai (1702-1740) and Mitra Sen Rai. The elder brother added to it the parganas of Chitua. Bhursut, Barda and Manoharshahi. Kirti Chandra was a man of bold and adventurous spirit. He fought with the rajas of Chandrakona and Barda near Ghatal, and dispossessed them of their petty kingdoms. He also seized the estates of the Raja of Balghara, situated near the celebrated shrine of Tarakeshar in Hoogly. He subsequently proceeded to Murshidabad and got his name registered as proprietor of the new properties. But the boldest achievement of Kirtichand was his attack and defeating the powerful Raja of Bishnupur. The end of the seventeenth century had left the Birbhum and Bishnupur Rajas at the summit of their fortunes. Their territory lay beyond the direct control of the Musalman power, and as frontier chiefs they were so much important in keeping the border, that the Muhammadan viceroys treated them rather as allies than as subjects. The Burdwan Rajas dwelt nearer to the Murshidabad court and were time to time squeezed accordingly. Nevertheless they prospered, from a money point of view, as clever Hindu family almost always contact with indolent Musalman administrator".see J . C. K. Peterson (1910), Jajneswar Chaudhury (1994). Rakhal Das Mukherjee(1905), Ekkari Chottopadhyay(2001)

¹⁹¹ Revd. J. Long *Selection from Unpublished Records of Government for the years 1748 to 1767*; Calcutta Mahdevaprasad Saha Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay ; (1969); 1973,p. LX, 336

The marathas spent their energy in plundering the intervening frontier tracts where the dry soil and fine undulating surface afforded precisely the riding ground with their cavalry loved. There they could loot the villages exhaustibly, and in detail, by means of small parties. But in Burdwan the nature of the country compelled them to be more circumspect. They could act safely only in considerable bodies; and the cultivators soon become accustomed to fly, as matter of course, to some swamp-protected village whenever the Maratha horse appeared, leaving very little to eat, and nothing to destroy, behind them. Hunter's '*Statistical Account of Burdwan*'; Vol. IV; Delhi, D. K. Publishing House, (1877), 1973;pp.140-141

In 1741 forty thousand horses under Raghuji Bhonsla, the Maratha chief of Berar, overran Orissa and the western district of Bengal, plundering and laying waste the country to north as Katwa.. The Nawab Ali Vardi Khan, who was encamped at Midnapore, fell back before the invaders on Burdwan, and thence retired to Katwa. But retreat soon becomes a rout. It was only with the greatest difficulty and with the loss of most of his baggage and artillery that he gained the shelter of the fortress. Encouraged by his reverse, the raider possessed them of all the country west of Bhagirathi. Their ravages have been graphically described in the *Riyazu-s-Salat*: "Sacking the villages and towns of the surrounding tracts, and engaging in

victory.¹⁹² Moreover, H. H. Risley mentioned Bishnupur raj had legendary association with bagdi community.¹⁹³ Here, I also point out that Bagdi community recognized the ‘stone sculpture’¹⁹⁴ as goddess, because of the existence of preset image in the knowledge of the community which directed them to handover the sculpture to the Brahmins,

slaughter and captures, they set fire to granaries and spared no vestige of fertility. And when the stores and granaries of Burdwan were exhausted, and the supply of imported grains was also completely cut off, to avert death by starvation, human being ate plantation roots, whilst animals were fed on the leaves of trees. Even these gradually ceased to be available. For the breakfast and supper, nothing except the disc of sun and the moon feasted their eyes. The whole tract from Akbarnagar (Rajmahal) to Midnapur and Jaleswar (Jalasore) came into the possession of Marathas. Those murderous freebooters drowned a large number of the people in the rivers, after cutting off their ears, noses and hands. Tying sacks of dirt to their mouths and of others, they mangled and burnt them with indiscernible tortures. In the next year Ali Vardi Khan defeated Bhaskar Rao, the Maratha general, at Katwa and a short but successful campaign drove the raiders out of dominions. The Maratha general retreated to the passes of Panchet, and eventually making good his retreat to Chandrakona, emerged in the open country round Midnapore. This was however, but first of many such raids, and although frequently defeated the Marathas returned again and again until in 1751 the Nawab, worn out by struggle, ceded the province of Cuttack to them, and agreed to pay an annual tribute of 12 lakhs rupees as the *chaut*, or tribute of Bengal. See Salim, Gulam Hussain: *Riyazu-s-salatin: A History of Bengal*, Translation by Maulavi Abdus Salam, 1903, reprint Delhi, Idarah –i-Adabiyat; 1975. Seir-ul-Mutakharin, Raymond’s translation

¹⁹² Mukherjee Rakhai Das: (1321 bangabda) 1904, p. 43

¹⁹³ Risley, H. H. (1891), 1998, p. 37 -43. “Bagdi- a cultivating, fishing and menial caste of central and western Bengal This mythic scene lies in Kochh Behar. Siva is represented as living with number of concubines of the Kochh tribe. Parvati was moved by jealousy and so came disguised as a fisherwoman and destroyed the standing crops of Kochhinis , and Siva could only induce her to depart by begetting her a son and a daughter. These twins were afterwards married and gave birth to Hamvir, king of Bishanpur in Bankura, from whose four daughters are derived the four sub castes of Bagdi. ---they are usually classed with Bauris and Bhuiyas as dwellers on the outskirts of Hinduism”. Simultaneously Vir Hambir, significant king of Bishunupur was the descendent of Adimalla (Raghunath Malla) or his descendent Jagannath Malla was brought up by Bagdi community. Excerpt from the interviews in Oct. 2008

¹⁹⁴ In the thesis, I will use ‘painting’, ‘print’ and ‘sculpture’ to discuss my points on and about the images of the god and goddess.

inhabitants in their area. On other hand, the goddess appears in the dream of the King. In Bengali, it is called '*darshan deoa*'. He conversed and negotiated with the brahamins and the temple (*mandir*) is contructed. In short, the bagdi community, the Brahmins and the king operated from their positions of a system in order to claim their possession on the sculptures and the places of the sculpture. Thus, the temple is built in.

Local people do not know about Pir Baharam as much as they can speak on Sarbamnagala temple. However, the place is often visited by the local folks as 'evening visit', 'weekend outing', 'day's out' because of its silent scenic view. They hang out in the open courtyard or garden. The interior of the dargah is a place where old widow spend time. The place is more known because of the 'love story' of Nur-Jahan, wife of Jagangir, fourth Mughal emperor. The care taker (*muttawalli*) of the premises told me the similar story which is mentioned by J. C. K. Peterson and other local author. There is no variation in the tales. I suggest this story is handed down to the descendent by the family of *muttawalli*. There are differences in between the history, popularly known in the local of Burdwana and the history widely circulated through popular web site such as wikipedia or encyclopedia.¹⁹⁵ Here, I draw a reference of Walter J. Ong and James Clifford. Like Writing authorized website facilitates separation of data from the real, lived-in world or on real time; furthermore it restructures consciousness and makes abstract thinking possible.¹⁹⁶ The untidiness of the actual world, our presence therein, and

¹⁹⁵ Ong Walter J. : *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing the Word*; London and New York , Menthuen 1985. pp. 78- 116.

informants' reactions to our presence (particularly when felt to be socially or academically undesirable) are often omitted from the published account.¹⁹⁷

The *muttuwali* brings a paper and tells that name of Pir Bahram appears in the memorandum book of Khusrau as Hajrat Haji Bahram Sekka, a native of Turkestan. He belonged to the bayat sect of Musulmans. His name is also found in the memorandum book of Nudrat. 'Bahram Sekka was a Haji of Mecca and Medina and later on became a water carrier in the street of Mecca and Najaf. It was his duty to offer water to every thirsty wayfarer and this was considered highly virtuous. Baharam Sekka wrote in his works: Shaikh Sadi was a water carrier for forty years." The translation of the Persian inscription on the tomb is as follows: "when I wished to know the date of his death, methinks I heard a voice from the seat of God saying 'My Bahram sekka was a wonderful Fakir'." During the reign of Emperor of Akbar, Bahram Sekka came to Delhi. He was taken into the good graces of the Emperor, who placed implicit confidence in him. Owing to the machinations of Abul Fazl, Faizi who held important posts in the court of Akbar became jealous of him. Bahram Sekka left Delhi in disgust and came to Burdwan where he died within three days of his arrival (970 Hijri). J. C. K. Peterson writes that when Bahram Sakka arrived at Burdwan he heard of a famous hermit named Jaipal and made his acquaintance. However, yogi Jaipal was very much impressed with the miracles performed by this Muhammadan saint, became his disciple. The garden where he grave of Baharam Sekka lies formally belonged to Jaipal who having made over all his belongs

¹⁹⁷ Clifford, James: 'Introduction: Partial Truths' in Clifford, James and George E. Marcus; *Writing culture: the Poetic and Politics of Ethnography*; 1986, Berkley, University of California Press, pp. 13-26)

to Beharam Sekka, fixed his residence in the corner of the garden. When the news of the death of Baharam Sekka reached Akbar, he through the Nawab Nazim of Bengal, allotted the revenues of certain villages to the perpetuation of his memory. The tank and the garden were repaired and an allowance of two rupees per day was made for daily charity. The lands assigned have been resumed, and Government (colonial) has granted a monthly allowance of Rs. 42-2-3 to replace the income from them. The common story of Sher Afgan¹⁹⁸ of Burdwan is that he was a superintendent of the district under the *subahadar*

198 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sher_Afghan (last accessed on 5th June 09). Ali Quli Istajlu, 'Sher Afghan Khan', also mentioned as Ali Quli Khan Istaju 'Sher Afghan Khan' was a Mughal courtier of Persian origin earlier serving in Persia, who became the *jagirdar* of Burdwan in West Bengal (1605-1607). He was also the first husband of Nur Jahan (*Mehrunissa*), who later married Jahangir and became empress in India. He was given the title Sher Afghan Khan, by Prince Salim, Jahangir, after his meritorious actions, during a war with the Rana of Mewar. Ali Kuli Istaju, was educated under the instructions of Shah Ismail II of Safavid dynasty in Iran. Like his wife, Sher Afghan was also an immigrant from Persia, who fled from Iran, to Kandahar, then in India. He was the father of Mehrunissa's only child, a daughter, also called *Mehrunissa*, like her mother, though later called Ladli Begum, after she married Prince Shahryar, the fifth and youngest son of Jahangir and rival to Shah Jahan. Ali Quli Khan Istaju was the *safarchi*, or table-attendant, of Ismail II, the third Safavid Shah of Persia (1576-78), after whose death, he came to Kandahar, and at Multan met, Abdul Rahim Khan-I-Khana, who placed him amongst royal employees, while in the field. Later, on his recommendation, Ali Quli received a mansab, Thatta (in present day Pakistan), in the coming years during a war he rendered distinguished services to Akbar, and moved to the royal courts at Lahore. Soon after his arrival at the royal courts in 1594, Ain-e-Akbari suggests, Akbar married him to Mehrunissa (the future Nur Jahan), daughter of Mirza Ghias Beg, who was seventeen. Ghias's wife had access to the royal harem, and was on her visits often accompanied by her daughter, Mehrunissa, it here that Prince Salim (Jahangir) reportedly saw her, and fell in love with her, and Akbar, to avoid scandal, married her quickly to 'Ali Quli'. Though some historians suggest that at the time, her marriage was already fixed with a rising Persian soldier, Ali Quli Istajlu, and thus Jahangir couldn't marry her on that account.

When he revolted against Akbar, Ali Quli sides Akbar, this led to a fall out between the two, though when Jahangir finally ascended to the Mughal throne in 1605, he excused him along with all those who favoured Akbar instead of him, and Ali Quli was made a 'jagirdaar' and received the region of Burdwan in east Bengal as a *tuyul*. Shaikh Khubu, Qutbuddin Khan Koka, (Khan-i-Chishti), was the foster-brother of Jahangir, as his mother was a daughter of Shaikh Salim. When Jahangir ascended the throne of Mughal

of Bengal. He was attacked and slain by order of the Emperor Jahangir just outside the town. It seems the unmerited misfortune of this nobleman, his lofty character and courage, and the beauty and exalted destiny of his wife Mihr-u-nissa¹⁹⁹ (the sun of women) render

Empire in 1605, Qutbuddin was made the 'subedar' (Governor) of Bengal, by replacing Raja Man Singh. Meanwhile Sher Afkan 'Ali Quli Istajlu was *tuyuldar* of Burdwan, also in the province of Bengal, and as his wife Mehrunissa (Nur Jahan) was coveted by the emperor. Subsequently in 1607, Qutb was instructed to send Sher Afghan Khan to the court as he was accused of negligence and siding with Afghan rebels and transferred, which he refused to obey. Seeing this, Qutbuddin started off for Burdwan, while he sent Ghiasa, the son of his sister, in advance to pacify Sher Afghan and bring him to the court. So upon his arrival on May 30, 1607, Sher Afghan duly went to meet him, accompanied by two men, in that moment Qutb signaled his men to arrest Sher Afghan, this alarmed Sher Afghan, and he stepped forward questioning his motive, and attacked Qutbuddin sensing treachery. Qutbuddin was fatally wounded, and seeing this, his men, surrounded Sher Afghan and killed him instantly. Qutbuddin, who was fatally wounded, died later in the night, causing much grief to Jahangir as he mentions in his memoirs, *Tuzk-e-Jahangiri*, where he also mentions his elation at the death of Ali Quli and hopes that "the blackfaced wretch will for ever remain in hell." He was killed because of the supposed love triangle, between Nur Jahan, Jahangir and Sher Afghan has been viewed as an assumption by many later historians, who cite the fact that if Jahangir had any such intentions, he wouldn't have ever bestowed upon Sher Afghan the aforesaid title, or pardoned him after he ascended the throne, or given him Burdwan.

Another historical writer, Khafi Khan mentions another extraordinary circumstance surrounding the circumstances of his death, which is said to have been related by Nur Jahan's mother. According to her, Sher Afkan was not killed by Qutbuddin's men, but, wounded as he was, managed to get to the door of his house, with the intention of killing his wife, Mehrunissa, whom he did not wish to fall into the emperor's hands. But her mother would not let him enter, and told him to mind his wounds, especially as Mehrunissa had committed suicide by throwing herself into a well. "Having heard the sad news, Sher Afkan went to the heavenly mansions." Though this story, seems far too improbable to be true. His tomb is today, situated, within the shrine complex of the poet 'Bahram Saqqa', in present day city of Burdwan or Bardhaman in West Bengal, along with tomb, Qutbuddin

¹⁹⁹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nur_Jahan (last accessed on 5th June 09) Begum Nur Jahan was born in 1577 in Kandahar, Afghanistan to travelling Persians from Tehran. Her Persian-born grandfather, who was in the service of Shah Tahmasp I, died in Yazd, laden with honours. His heirs, however, soon fell upon hard times. His son Mirza Ghias Beg (known as Itmad-ud-Daulah, "Pillar of the State", a title conferred on him by Akbar) travelled to India with his family where he rose to become an administrative official in the Mughal court. For their journey, Ghias Beg and his wife, Asmat Begum, joined a caravan travelling southward under the leadership of a merchant noble named Malik Masud. While still in Persian territory,

less than half the way to their destination, Ghias Beg's party was attacked by robbers and the family lost almost everything it owned. Left with only two mules, Ghias Beg, his expectant wife, their children, Muhammad Sharif, Abdul Hasan Asaf Khan, and one daughter, took turns riding on the backs of the animals. When the group reached Kandahar, Asmat Begum gave birth to her fourth child and second daughter, Mehr-un-Nisaa. The emperor Akbar died in 1605 and was succeeded by prince Salim, who took the regal name Jahangir. After her husband Sher Afghan (who was appointed as jagirdar of Bardhaman at that time) was killed in 1607, Mehr-un-Nisaa became a lady-in-waiting to one of the Jahangir's stepmothers, Ruqayya Sultana Begum. Ruqayya was the most senior woman in the harem and had been Akbar's first and principal wife and was also the daughter of Mirza Hindal. The father of Mehr-un-Nisaa was, at that time, a diwan to an amir-ul-umra, decidedly not a very high post. The year 1607 had not been particularly good for Mehr-un-Nisaa. Her family had fallen into disgrace. Her father, who had been holding important posts under Akbar and Jahangir, had succumbed to his only weakness, money, and had been charged with embezzlement. Moreover, due to possible involvement in the pro-Khusrau assassination attempt on Jahangir in 1607, two of Mehr-un-Nisaa's family members (one brother named Muhammad Sharif and her mother's cousin) were executed on the orders of the Emperor. In March 1611, her fortune took a turn for the better. She met the emperor Jahangir at the palace's meena bazaar during the spring festival, Nowruz Persian New Year. Jahangir grew so infatuated by her beauty that he proposed immediately and they were married on May 25 of the same year, becoming his twentieth wife. Mehr-un-Nisaa received the name Nur Mahal (Light of the Palace), upon her marriage in 1611 and was conferred the title Nur Jahan (Light of the world) in 1616. Jahangir's actual name was Nur-ud-din Muhammad, and thus the name that he gave to his wife was his own first name combined with the first part of his regal name.

Mughal empress: For Mehr-un-Nisaa's own immediate family, marriage to Jahangir became a great boon with several members receiving sizeable endowments and promotions as a result. This affection led to Nur Jahan wielding a great deal of actual power in affairs of state. The Mughal state gave absolute power to the emperor, and those who exercised influence over the emperor gained immense influence and prestige. Jahangir's addiction to opium and alcohol made it easier for Nur Jahan to exert her influence. For many years, she effectively wielded imperial power and was recognized as the real force behind the Mughal throne. She even gave audiences at her palace and the ministers consulted with her on most matters. Indeed, Jahangir even permitted coinage to be struck in her name, something that traditionally defined sovereignty. Through Nur Jahan's influence, her family, including her brother Asaf Khan, consolidated their position at court. Asaf Khan was appointed grand Wazir (minister) to Jahangir, and his daughter Arjumand Banu Begum (later known as Mumtaz Mahal) was wed to Prince Khurram (the future Shah Jahan), the third son of Jahangir, born by a Rajput princess, Jagat Gosaini. Jahangir's eldest son Khusrau had rebelled against the Emperor and was blinded as a result. The second son, Parviz, was weak and addicted to alcohol. The fourth son was Prince Sharyar, born by a royal concubine. Khurram rebelled against his father and a war of succession broke out. Due to Khurram's intransigence, Nur Jahan shifted her support to his younger brother, Shahryar. She arranged the marriage of her own daughter Ladli Begum, born of her first marriage,

the story. Mihr-ul-nissa, afterwards the Empress Nur Jahan(Light of the world), was the daughter of Chaja Aiassa, a native of Wetsern Tartary who with his wife had left that country to check his fortune at the court of the Emperor of Hindustan. In the midst of the great solitude through which they had to pass, his wife delivered of a daughter, Mihr-ul-nissa. Aiass got a job in the Akbar court with the title Actimad-ul Dowla of high treasurer of the Empire. When Mihr grew up, came under the sight of Salim or Jahangir. But Akbar and her father got her marriage done with Sher Afgan. The passion for Mihr-ul-Nissa which Selim had repressed from a respect and fear of his father, returned with redoubled violence when he himself mounted the throne of India. He recalled Sher Afgan from his retreat. He was afraid however to go so much against current of public opinion as to deprive that Amir of his wife. His incredible strength and bravery has rendered Sher extremely popular. His family and his former reputations were high. Born of noble parents in Turkomania, he had spent his youth in Persia and served the uncommon renowned Shaw Ismail, the third of the Sufoiya line. His original name was Asta Jillo. He was dignified with the title of Sher Afgan or the over thrower of the lion. In the Wars

to her stepson Shahryar. The two weddings ensured that one way or another, the influence of Nur Jahan's family would extend over the Mughal Empire for at least another generation. Jahangir was captured by rebels in 1626 while he was on his way to Kashmir. Nur Jahan intervened to get her husband released. Jahangir was rescued but died on October 28, 1627. After Jahangir's death, Nur Jahan devoted some of her life to the making of perfume, an art passed down by her mother . When Jahangir died in 1628, Nur Jahan's brother Asaf Khan took the side of his son-in-law Khurram against his sister. It was Khurram who became the new Mughal emperor under the regal name Shah Jahan. Nur Jahan was confined to a comfortable mansion for the rest of her life. During this period, she paid for and oversaw the construction of her father's mausoleum in Agra, known now as Itmad-Ud-Daulah's Tomb, and occasionally composed Persian poems under the assumed name of Makhfi. Nur Jahan died in 1645 at age 68, and is buried at Shahdara Bagh in Lahore, Pakistan in a tomb she had built herself, near the tomb of Jahangir. Her brother Asaf Khan's tomb is also located nearby. All had been personally laid out and designed by Nur Jahan herself.

of Akbar he had served with great reputation. Jahangir kept his court at Delhi when he called Sher Afgan to presence. He received him graciously and conferred new honour upon him. Sher Afgan naturally open and generous suspected not the Emperor intentions. He thought had erased the memory of Mihr-il Nissa from Jahangir's mind. The monarch was resolved to remove his rival, but the manners he used were at once ungenerous and disgraceful. On one occasion he enticed Sher Afgan to attack a tiger unarmed; on another he gave private orders that one of his elephants should waylay him in a narrow street and tread him death. Both attempts failed. Sher Afgan killed both tiger and elephant. The doomed nobleman now retired to Bengal, but even there security was denied him. Kutb-ud-din, the Subahdar of Bengal and foster brother of the Emperor, hired forty assassins to attack and murder the Emperor's rival whenever opportunity appears. The attempt was made one night when Sher Afgan was asleep. Roused by one of his assailants who thought it's a shame that forty men should fall on one, he defended himself so vigorously that he slew many of the ruffians and put the band to ignominious flight. Despairing of safety, the unfortunate nobleman retired from the capital to Bengal to his old residence at Burdwan, hoping to lie there in obscurity with his wife. Shortly after his retirement Kutub ud-din paid a state visit to Burdwan. He made a no secret to his principle officers that he had the Emperor's orders for dispatching Sher. The Amir hearing that the Subahdar is entering the town rode out two servants only to meet him. One of the pike man insulted him and insult on swords were drawn, and Sher Afgan realizing that his fate was come to attack Kutb-ud-din , who had mounted his elephant, and breaking down the howdah, cut him into two. Five other nobles fell by his hand, but he was at length overpowered by numbers. It is said that Jahangir in grief of his foster brother swore a vow that he would

never see Mihr-ul Nissa again. But her beauty and his former love conquered, and for many years she, conjointly with him, ruled the empire of India. A circumstances so uncommon in an Asiatic government is thus recorded on the coin of that period; “by order of the emperor Jahangir, gold acquired a hundred times additional value by the name of the Empress Noor Jahan (Light of the World)”. The tomb of Sher Afgan and Kutb-Ud-din lie side by side within the town of Burdwan and points out the scene of their encounter in the premises of Pir Baharam Dargah. The whole premise is part of people day to day activity apart from mutuwali’s duties. The story and space function as hetrotopia of the town, which I would discuss in the next chapter.

The people²⁰⁰ of Kanchan nagar believe that Kanchan nagar was the part of Karnva-suvarna or Rarh²⁰¹. It is in the west of Burdwan. Karna-suvarna was the capital of Sashanka’s kingdom²⁰². Sasanka was saivaite and gaudiya vasinavism has wide range of followers. It seems that there is always a competition in building Visnu and Siva temple in this place. Thus, almost uncountable numbers of Siva and Visnu temples are seen in

²⁰⁰ Excerpts from the interview of the residents of Kanchannagar in Oct 2004. Inhabitants of Burdwan town around station consider Kanchan nagar as old part of the city, is still undeveloped because of the refugee settlement.

²⁰¹ Rarh region (Bengali:*Rar*) of West Bengal is the region that lies between the Western plateau and high lands (bordering Chhotanagpur plateau) and the Ganges Delta. Parts of the districts Murshidabad, Birbhum, Bankura, Bardhaman, Medinipur and Nadia constitutes this region. The region is about 50 to 100 m above the sea level. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rarh_region#cite_note-0

²⁰² Bandhyopadhyay, Rakhaldas: *Bangalar Itihash*, Vol. I, Kolkata, Deys Pub. (1324)1405/ (1908)1999; pp.6372

the small area of Kanchan nagar. Kanchan nagar is part of Gandowana land.²⁰³ In 1800 CE., Burdwan Ruj was not recognized as raj, but locally recognized as wealthy family, resident of Kanchan nagar. Abu Ram Rai shifted the residence from Baikunthapur viallge to Kanchan nagar. Every Year Kanchan nagar used be flooded by Damodar River. In 1916, this idol was discovered.

In early 1900 CE Kali Chaitanya Bhartai, local guru set up a small *asryam*. It seems he was in the path of *tantric* devotion. In 1905, the Garai family, resident of kanchan nagar, his disciples installed the seat of *panchya munda*. With them Charan Das, Devotee of Chaitanya, Nitai Gosai, Bijay Dutta, and Hari Dasi, daughter of Nitai Gosai, used stay with Kali Chaitanya Bhartai. It seems that in 1910 Charan Das brought an image of Chaitanya and Krishna vigraha and started worshipping in the *asryam*. That time, place of Govinda Dham temple was in derelict state. In 1916 when the Kankaleshwari idol was found, the Bijay Dutta, voice of the *asryam* and others decided to establish an *asana* of the found sculptute in the *asryam*. Thus today's Kankaleswari temple is recognized. Bijay Dutta was in the *asryam* till 1925, was administrator of the *asryam*. Pujari was Bhushan Bhattacharya. After his death, Sarveshwar Bhattacharya took the charge of *pujari*. He with his family started staying in the premises. Later on, one room was constructed

²⁰³ The characteristic of gandwana land is – existing land is rifted and inner layer of the land is uplifted due to volcanic pressure in approximate every hundred years Thus, perished things are unearthed by nature. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gondwana>; http://www.ija.csic.es/gt/ivone/ftp/Tibet/References/Himalaya/Yin_EarthScienceRev2006.pdf downloaded on 5th June 09

behind the temple for the accommodation of the *pujari*. During this time Kamalananda *paribrajak* from Uttamasryam²⁰⁴ joined Sarveshwar Bhattacharya and Bijay Dutta and started renovating the temple its premises. Kamalananda set up Harisabha in beside Krishna Sayar. People complain that this Kanchannagar became very unsafe because of local dacoit and people shifted their settlement in the place which is known Burdwan Town. In 1947, after independence with partition, migrated people from east Bengal (present Bangladesh) started settling down there.

It was 1916. Bhola Chatterjee of Mali Para spread the message about the discovery of the sculpture. It is discovered from Damodar River in the Kargeswar Moujar Barduari Village. Local village people and Rajak family used to use cleaning dirty clothes at the back side of the sculpture. One day, they turn stone to use other side and found the carved image and recognized it as goddess. Local zamindar Amar Mondol and rich businessman Khudiram Nayek and Kamalananda Paribrajak decided to set up this sculpture in the a temple. In this regard they contacted Bijay Chand Mahatab, adopted son of Aftab Chanda Mahatab, the Burdwan raj. After the discussion, they decided to set up the sculpture in the abandoned *nava ratna* of Kanchn Nagar where there is already a small *asryam* set up by Kali Chitanya Bhrati and his disciples. Burdwan raj gave one acre fifty four hundred land to develop the temple premises.

²⁰⁴ The asryam, in 24th Pargana district of West Bengal, has number of followers in the state.

Kumar De (Teli Para), Bijay Chandra Dutta (Math Para), Bijay Aguri, Mrigendranath Koley (Tambuli Para), Bhutnath Pal (Tanti Para), Bhavendranath Pal (Mali Para) were the common narrators of the whole incident. That time Sarbeshwarnanda with his wife was temple *pujari*. After that Anadi Bhattacharya was the *pujari* and his wife and his sister Gauri and daughter Gayatri were the caretakers of the temple. It seems that Kamalananda Paribrajak Sarbeswara nanda was Ayurvedic doctor. Bijay Dutta and Krishna Chandra Pal patronized for the house to Ayurvedic medicine. Bijay Dutta started growing the medicinal plant in his house and Krishna Chandra Pal opened a shop in the main bazaar of the Burdwan to sell these. Amar Mandal's son Jagat Mondol from Sankhari Bazaar of Burdwan town Khudiram Nayek donated the tube well. From 1920 to 1935, every year the flood of Damodar made the Kanchan nagar abandoned, people die in Malaria. Unmarried daughter of Anadi Bhattacharya and his sister Gauri, widow were left out in the temple premise. In 1954 Biraja Nanda Giri from Uttamasram came to see the *asryam*, established by Kamalananda *paribrajak*, *gurubhai*. He set up the inscribed "Sre Sre Sarbavidya Mandir, Uttamasryam".

There are some common strings in the tales of the Sarbamangala temple and Kankaleswari temple. The three agencies are involved in establishing the place (land) of the found sculpture where the structure (temple) is built in later on, or already existing, named in the name of the deity later. The agencies are – first, the community who discovered the sculpture. In case of Sarbamangala, it is bagdi community and in case of Kankaleswari, it is a village with mixed community.²⁰⁵ The local leaders are the people

²⁰⁵ Kanchan nagar is a place where, the refugee settlement happened extensively after 1947 (Independence of India) and after 1971 (Independence of Bangladesh). Therefore, it is difficult to identify the area of the

who behave as authority of the settlement. Here, the local suggests the area and its surroundings where the sculptures were found, but not entire Burdwan town. The brahmins in the area of bahir Sarbamangala, Rayan and Beguit village who holds the authoritative position of being brahmins and claim their rights on the found sculpture, since it is recognized as Sarbamangala idol. In the case of Kankaleswari, it is not only the Brahmins, but the group of people from different caste of the *asryam* who were active in the area in practicing religious rites (tantrism, vaisnavism etc.). It is important to note that the woman holds certain power as wife of the sadhu or as *yogini*²⁰⁶ in that *asryam*. In fact, today, the *nitya puja* of the Kankaleswari temple is done by a woman (descendant of the *pujari* Bhattacharya family). This group controlled the lives of people of Kanchan nagara through the practices of religious rites, ayurvedic medicine, counselling and so forth. Third agency is the Burdwan raj, who occupied the highest position in the psyche of the people of the Burdwan town, in spite of abolition of zamindar system. Thus, the so-called Burdwan raj or descendent of Burdwan raj could not function without negotiating with the brahmins or the *sadhus* and *yoginis* of the respective local. Consequently, the local leaders also depend on Burdwan raj in case of a large amount of donation, specifically donation of the land; the example is Kankaleswari temple. The temple was already existing and the *asryam* grew within the temple, but the discovery of the sculpture and the news of the discovery across the town called the *gurus* of the *asryam* for negotiation

settlement on the basis of the inhabitants' denominations of caste, profession or religion, though the name of the area sometime hints the settlers' identity of castes or professions or religious denominations (example : mali para, karmakar para, etc.)

²⁰⁶ For example see Pintchman Tracy (ed.) : *Women's lives, women's rituals in the Hindu tradition*; USA, Oxford University Press; 2007

with Burdwan raj in establishing the legal rights of the land of the temple and the found sculpture. The history of Burdwan and Burdwan raj reveals that the legal court can dispossesses the right over ruling the popular belief. The conscious *sadhus* of the *asryam* were aware of the story/history of *Jal Pratap Chand* (fake Pratap Chand) court case, where the Pratap Chand, heir of Burdwan raj came back to his land (Burdwan) as *Sadhu* and looked for acknowledgment. Local people believed that he was the lost Burdwan raj but he was disinherited by Pranab Chand Mahatap the first adopted son of contemporary Burdwan raj. At the end, he was proved as fraud in the court of Colonial India.²⁰⁷ Thus so-called Burdwan raj as an agent negotiates between the small areas of the town and the legislative part of the ruling government in India. The *sadhus* and the Burdwan raj are tied up in complex power relationship in order to control the local. The Burdwan raj wishes to have a control as a rich donor on the areas of the Kanchannagar through *asryam* and the *sadhus* of the *asryam* wanted to establish a legal right on the land of the temple through Burdwan raj. Thus, the Kankaleswari temple was activated as old temple (of late medieval period). Now, there is a system of temple trust board to maintain the temple of Sarbamangala and Kankaleswari in the post Independence era. The members of the Sarbamangala temple trust board is the people of Burdwan raj who hold higher designation in various government sectors and any *pujari* of the temple is not a member of the board. The Kankaleswari trust board members are the temple *pujari* and the persons who have political, economic profile in Kanchannagar rather than Burdwan town.

²⁰⁷ see Mukhopadhyay, Rakhal Das: *Bardhaman –rajbanshanucharit*, Calcutta, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad; (1321)1914. Chatterjee Sanjeeb Chandra: *Jal Pratap Chand*, 1883, Calcutta. Chatterjee Partho: *Princely Imposter. Kumar of Bhawal, Secret history of Indian Nationalism*, New Delhi, Permanent Black , 2002; Chapter four; footnote 21, pg no.60,393

Sri Govinda Dham²⁰⁸ and Kankaleswari temple share the common inhabitants of Kanchan nagar. In the *asryam* of Knakaleswari temple the vaishnavite rites were being practice by the *sadhus* along with the tantric ritual before Sri Govinda das Dham was activated by the residents of Kanchan nagar in 1970s. Thus, the sanctum of Kankaeswari still bears the clay sculpture of Sri Chaitanya with Kankaleswari sculpture in stone. Today's Govind Dham was believed to be the house of Govinda das. The Karmakar communities of Kanchanhagar also strongly claim that he was *Karmakar*²⁰⁹, son of Syamadas Karmakar and Madvidevi. He left the house because of his clamorous, shrewish wife Sashimukhi and became the disciple of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu²¹⁰. He was

²⁰⁸ Excerpts from the interviews Oct.2003, Dec. 2005, March 2006

²⁰⁹ Synonym of Kamar, metal working caste, distinguished from the Lohar by not confining themselves to the fabrication of iron implements, and by having no scruples about working with any kind of metal. They are popularly believed to be descended from an intrigue between a woman of the Sudra Caste and Viswa-Karma. They rank among the Nava-sakha. H. H. Risley. Vol. II; (1891), 1998; pp.388 -392

²¹⁰ Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486 - 1534), was a monk and social reformer of the 16th century Bengal, (present-day West Bengal and Bangladesh) and Orissa in India. Sri Krishna Chaitanya was a notable proponent for the Vaishnava school of Bhakti yoga (meaning loving devotion to Krishna/God) based on the philosophy of the Bhagavata Purana and Bhagavad Gita. Specifically he worshipped the forms of Radha and Krishna and popularised the chanting of the Hare Krishna maha mantra and have composed Siksastakam in Sanskrit. His line of followers, known as Gaudiya Vaishnavas, revere him as an avatar of Krishna in the mood of Radharani who was prophesised to appear in the later verses of the Bhagavata Purana. He was also sometimes referred to by the names *Gaura* (Sanskrit for *golden one*) due to his light skin complexion, and *Nimai* due to his being born underneath a Neem tree. There are numerous biographies available from the time giving details of Chaitanya's life, the most prominent ones being the Chaitanya Charitamrita of Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami and the earlier Chaitanya Bhagavata of Vrindavana Das Thakura (both originally written in the Bengali language but now widely available in English and other languages) and the Chaitanya Mangala, written by Lochan Das Thakur. See Sen Sukumar (1940), 1978; Vol. I, pp.228-324

accompanying Sri Chaitanya on his travel to South India. His *karcha* is his journey to south India, and the diary purports to describe firsthand this journey. Govinda Das *karcha* is considered as a literature of Gaudiya Vaishnavism²¹¹, with its questionable authenticity.²¹²

²¹¹ Gaudiya Vaishnavism (also known as Chaitanya Vaishnavism) is a Vaishnava religious movement founded by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1534) in India in the 16th century. "Gaudiya" refers to *Gauḍadeśa* (present day Bengal/Bangladesh) with Vaishnavism meaning *the worship of Vishnu*. Its philosophical basis is primarily that of the Bhagavad Gita and Bhagavata Purana, as well as other Puranic scriptures and Upanishads such as the Isha Upanishad, Gopala Tapani Upanishad, and Kali Santarana Upanishad. The focus of Gaudiya Vaishnavism is the devotional worship (bhakti) of Radha and Krishna, and their many divine incarnations as the supreme forms of God, *svayam bhagavan*. Most popularly this worship takes the form of singing Radha and Krishna's holy names, such as '*Hare Rama Hare Krishna*' which is known as *kirtan*. The movement is sometimes referred to as the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya sampradaya referring to its traditional origins in the disciplic succession of spiritual masters (gurus) believed to originate from Brahma. It classifies itself as a monotheistic tradition, seeing the many forms of Vishnu as expansions or incarnations of the one Supreme God, *adipurusha*. see Chakravarty Ramakanta: *Vaishnavism in Bengal 1486 – 1900*, Calcutta, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1985

²¹² The text was first published by Jay Gopal Goswami in 1895. There is debate and doubt regarding the date of the text. Sukumar Sen, Mrinal kanti Ghosh and Amritlal Seal justified their doubt that the text is not a literature of 16th and 17th century. Sukumar Sen questioned Govinda Das's company with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, by using the reference of bairagya and sanyas parts of *chaitanya charitamrita* by Krishnadas Kaviraj. Sen Sukumar: (1940), 1978; Vol. I, p.300-302, 316-footnote no 227. But Dinesh Chandra Mahshaya believed in dating of Jay Pal Goswami. He republished the text in 1926 (Calcutta University)

The land was under Bangiya Karmakar Samaj of Calcutta²¹³. In 1971, the refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)²¹⁴ found shelter in this land because of local residents like Udit Ray, Sumit Sarkar etc. When Bhavani Charan Dutts, the secretary of *Bangiya Karmakar Samaj* claimed the land the local residents demanded the land for refugee. They justified by saying that people from Bangiya Karmakar Samaj of Calcutta seldom visited that place. The house of *karcha kobi* Govinda Das was in dilapidated situation. At the same time, the replacing the shelter-less refugees is the violation of the philosophy of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, and the practices of Chaitanys Mahaprabhu and Karcha kobi. Thus, with the help of Birendranath Dutta, the Ward Councilor, Jatin Chakravarty, the Minister of Public Work Department of State Government this land was taken under the government. It is made as Govind Das Cultural Centre and a new architecture is constructed. In the course of time, the refugees are no more refugees, found the shelters elsewhere and moved,

²¹³ I have been informed by Tapan Kumar Roy the secretary of Govinda Das Janmotsav committee (through committee formed in 1981, I am using the name of the committee to point who the people are) that the Office of Bangiya Karmakar Samaj is in Harrison Road of Calcutta. He also informed that it is no more there. He could not give me the old address. He said that Samaj people used to come once in a year to celebrate Govinda Das's birthday. None of the Govinda Das *Janmotsav* committee ever visited Bangiya Karmakar Samaj's office. The discussion and negotiation regarding the land always happened when Bangiya Karmakar Samaj used to come and claim the land legally and asked the refugees to move out. He informed with pride that Govinda Das *Janmotsav* committee people never went to them asking for it.

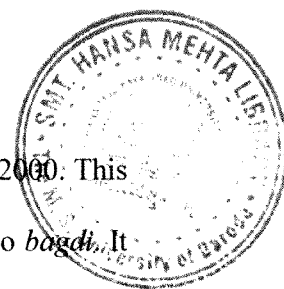
²¹⁴ It is the same year 21st February, East Pakistan became independent and recognized as present Bangladesh.

It is important to note that they mention this place as ‘cultural centre’ in the any kind of public affairs and official printing format such as pamphlet, news paper, letter etc. However, they believe that it is a ‘temple’. They are conscious and aware of the history of the whole structure. They clearly say that they got this place with the help of CPI government. It is funded by Public Work Department of the state government. They told that The CPI government ‘technically’ can not built up temple. That is why it is ‘named’ as ‘Govinda Dham’²¹⁵, a cultural centre, but all know that it is a temple, where Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu visited. Who are ‘they’ here? Who are ‘all’ here? ‘They’ and ‘all’ consist of *karmakar* caste people, the refugees of 1970s from Bangladesh and their extended family and devotees of Sri Chaitanya (they are not necessarily vaishnavites). Simultaneously, these people consider they are the residents of Burdwan. Thus, the communities of Govinda Das ‘temple cum cultural centre’²¹⁶ project their local distinctiveness in Burdwan and built up a sense of community identity by celebrating *dol* after five days of *purnima* of *Falgun* month.²¹⁷ Their *dol* is recognized as *pancham dol*.

²¹⁵ Mostly used as suffix, means residence, dwelling-house. Sometime it suggests a holy place, place of pilgrimage (such as Puri dham, Gaya Dham, Kasi Dham). Here, it is used to suggest both - dwelling of Karchakabi Govinda Das, which is a holy place.

²¹⁶ Henceforth, I would address the Govinda Dham as temple cum cultural centre, since I was constantly corrected, whenever I addressed it as a cultural centre by saying that it is a temple (*Mandir* in Bengali).

²¹⁷ Traditionally *dol* happens at the full moon of *falgun*, eleventh month of Bengali year. It is believed that it is Govinda Das’s Birth Day. Some say that he was born in 1468, some believe it is 1469, few say that they do not know the English year, in Bengali year it is 878, but every body believes that it is fifty day from full moon (*panchami thithi*). There is a similar controversy on the year of his travel to South India. Surprisingly there is no Bengali year. It moves between 1508 and 1510. See Sen Sukumar: *Bangla Sahityer Itihas* (1940), 1978; Vol. I, p.300-302, 316-footnote no 227



They form Govinda Das Janmotsav Committee in 1981 which is registered in 2000. This committee does not consist of only people of *karmakar* caste, but of brahmin to *bogdi*. It is engaged in maintenance, renovation, restoration, fund-raising of the temple cum cultural centre. Thus, they define the sphere of 'us' against 'them' within the 'We-hood'. Here, them is abstract. It is used to define their existence. At the same time, here 'We-hood' is not one, but number such as 'people of Burdwan', 'people of Knachan nagar', 'supporter of CPI government'²¹⁸, 'refugee'²¹⁹. Here, the two-way connection between beliefs and experience are caught in empirically testable propositions which produced the existing structure of Govinda Das temple cum cultural centre. The people of Govinda Das temple cum cultural seemed to work with empiricist conception of cause and effect: beliefs and values are connected to actions, actions have consequences and, these consequences feed back onto the beliefs and values.²²⁰

²¹⁸ The land of Bangiya Karmakar Samaj could be seen as part of land occupation movement led by, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to gather support in 1970s. (CPI /CPM) came to power in West Bengal in a coalition with other centrist and leftist parties in 1967 and again in 1969. Widespread, unrest, mobilization and land occupation took place, but movement was suppressed from 1971 -72 onwards by Delhi-supported Government under the President's rule. In the election held, after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi lifted Emergency Rule in 1977 the CPM emerged as the largest party in West Bengal legislative Assembly. The Party has been in power ever since in the state as the dominant partner of left coalition. see Ruud, Arild Engelsen : 'The Indian Hierarchy: Culture, Ideology and Consciousness in Bengali Village Politics' in *Modern Asian Studies* 33, 3 1999 Cambridge University Press; pp.703-704

²¹⁹ They think refugees (*udbastu* in Bengali) are not only those people who migrated or still migrating from east Bengal/ Bangladesh, but also abandoned women and old people.

²²⁰ Here, I recall F. G. Bailey's construction of commonsense version of expected-utility framework in case of Bisipara culture. see Bailey, F. G. : *The Civility of Indifference on Domesticating Ethnicity* Delhi, Oxford University Press; 1996

The *sebayit* of Bon masjid says that whole mazhar was in the jungle, that is why, it is popularly known as bon masjid. Otherwise, Muslims of the town know it as Alfate masjid. He adds that it was built in the time of Sher Shah Suri by Wajid Ali Sufi Shah. Local authors write that it was built by Farukshayyar, when Sheikh Bayaji's prediction on him turns out to be true. When I told him what the local authors write, he sarcastically commented by pointing finger at me that these writers make the story of significance. Furthermore, he tells that there was a time when there was no place to spit because of religious site, all of them were important. There is no story, no myth in case of Jumma masjid. Local people do not mark it significant, but the author consider it as a significant historical structure, which would be 'worth to see'.

Thus, the analyses of the vernacular tracts reveal a constructed imaginary tour to Burdwan town for imagined tourists, and stress the distinctiveness of the site and structures of the town. Simultaneously, this tour stops outside the structure, specifically in case of religious structures and takes different turn for another site. Seeing and experiencing inside the space of the religious structures appear closed or blocked. None of the authors (from colonial to contemporary) attempted to understand inter and intra relationship between the space of inside and outside religious structures and their co relation with other structures in the same landscape. As I have discussed, there is a sense of 'us' and 'them' with the We-self. This 'us' and 'them' are neither countering part nor collective, perhaps disengaged, perhaps we connect it to see as continuity from past to

present in terms of time and space. Here, 'we' suggest I as a researchers and local authors who imagined themselves as an 'outsider'. As F. G. Bailey says "it is appropriate to test an intuition and ethnography. Subsequent events and actions may later falsify what introspection has said was in even one's mind. The risk of error increases when the image is projected into the mind of another person, and for obvious reasons it becomes greater still when that persons mind has been shaped by another culture and a set of experience foreign to the would be intuitor."²²¹ In the previous (first) chapter, I said that spectatorship is one of the primary investigative tools of my research to probe the space of the religious structures of Burdwan. In this chapter, I have discussed how a spectatorship of a viewer has been build up through '*dekhi puri Burdwan*'. In the next chapter I would investigate the space inside the religious structures and what kind of viewership is developed in connection with space, time, viewer, viewed and so on.

²²¹ *ibid.* p. 162