

Chapter III : Spatiality of Religious Structures

“The making of buildings and the experiencing of buildings are both associated with distinctive mental operations and that this association is apparent in our use of language. To put it another way, we use metaphors from architecture to articulate our thoughts because the processes of design and construction and the experience of using building relate to basic mental operations and basic psychological needs.”

John Onians (Architecture, Metaphor and the Mind)²²²

This chapter investigates the field of ‘seeing’,²²³ and ‘space’ which is a much wider arena than a sphere for the circulation of the images or the questions regarding the nature of

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²²³ The history of ‘seeing’ produces an established corpus of knowledge. The discussion of seeing constitutes spectatorship in sexual and cultural differences, began with feminist film theory and continued by critical discourses of minority and emergent cultures. It concerns itself with the gaze as desire and spectatorship into the arena of desiring subjects and desired objects. Currently such binary separations have been increasingly tempered by the slippages between the ever-eroding boundaries of exclusive object-hood and coherent subject-hood.

representation. Simultaneously, the history of the relationship between space and 'seeing' is to begin with vastly over determined. It carries the intense load of colonial discourses regarding centrality of documentation and categorization of vision for an empirical determination, specifically the way the West perceived it. In these examinations the gaze is depicted as a device of investigation, verification, surveillance and cognition, which has served to sustain the traditions of Post Enlightenment scientifically and early modern technologies. Thus, the categorical looking that was sanctioned and legitimated by scientific imperatives or the manner of surveillance which claimed its necessity through the rooting out of criminality, is now understood through the questions- who is allowed to look, to what purposes, and by what academic and state discourses is it legitimated and so on. .

My thesis has three angles. First, there are images that are claimed and contested by various histories. Second, there are viewing apparatus that are steered by cultural forms such as myth, habits etc. Third, there are the subjectivities of recognition or search from which we view and by which we inform what we view. The previous two chapters discuss the first two angles. . This chapter deals with the third one, using the first two angles as tools. In this chapter I focus on the reception rather than production of images and objects or environments, where the boundary lines between making, theorizing and historicizing are eliminated.

The religious structures of Burdwan enjoy the local popularity, unlike some popular religious structures of West Bengal such as Kalighat temple and Nakhoda Masjid of Kolkata, Dakshineswara temple of 24 Pargana, Tarakeshwar temple of Hoogly district., Tara-pith of Birbhum, Furfura Sharif Dargah of Hoogly district. However, these also claim the wider historical past. For instance, people claim that Rani Rashmani Devi built the Dakshineswara temple in the same style of the Sarbamangala temple of Burdwan after seeing the latter one. On the Gargarahat Gurudwara, Burdwan proclaims about the visit of Guru Nanak. The Pir Baharam Dargah is marked as a national heritage, protected by the Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi. Each religious structure of Burdwan town has its own cartographical history. This chapter traces those cartographical trails of the religious structures. The spectatorship and mapping are the investigative instruments that allowed me to perceive and conceptualize the space, usage of space and production of the space of the religious structure that is beyond reading a ground plan of the architecture. Thus, this chapter discusses the economic and political project of the structure, its own institutional system and its connection with the state's polity which encoded in the surface and objects, used in the religious structures.

Mapping religious Structure: A conundrum

A market grew outside the Sarbamnagala temple (plate no.1,2). The market consists of convenience stores, tea shops, cycle-repairers, jewelers, saloons, telephone booths, tailors, stationary shops, club shed²²⁴, a cycle -rickshaw stand and so on. (Plate no.3 -17)

Some outlets cater the need of the local residents. These traders are comparatively larger than the shops who absolutely depend on the devotees of the temple for their day to day earnings. These small shop keepers (plate no1-4) sell the items that are used for the day to day *puja*, prayers and donation. The items include various kinds of incense sticks, red *jaba* flowers , a garland made out of a hundred and eight *jaba* flowers(one of the special offerings to the Goddess) ,a small piece of cloth (usually recognized as dress / *vastra*, element of *puja*), sweets (*batasha*, *nakuldana*, etc.) fruits, grains, votive offerings etc. Interestingly, they also keep the foot wears of the devotees for safe guarding, which is one kind of earning. Inside the temple, a person has engaged self to do the same. If a devotee is new or not a regular at visiting the temple, these shopkeepers attract the customers by saying that keeping foot wears inside the temple are either not allowed or safe. Thus there is a sense of competition amongst them. (Plate no.1to 4). The market grew in front of the east and south entrances. These shops do not sell any object, which could be taken by worshippers as a token, or symbol, which represent the Sarbamangala

²²⁴ The club shed is the place where young people of the local play carrom board and hang out, produce nothing but talk. These are the people who talk for the pleasure of talking on anything, to be in, to communicate without object or objective. The youth hold certain power on the area of the religious building. Usually they practice their association with the political parties, such as SFI, Chatra Parisad (Congress), Trinomool Congress (TMC) etc.

temple or its deity or the *pūja* in the temple, but sell the materials that would be used to in varied kinds of practices inside the building. The shops are full of variegated images, but not for sell. These images either are attached with the religious building or associated with the shop owner's religious denomination. There are also floating stocks of stray images, get accumulated in the shops through day to day process of trading. The couplings of all such images are not specific local or localized phenomenon, but happen anyhow, anyway. Devotion is such an act that is enacted everyday through donation, begging, simple offering and so on.

The images in this small market are 'mechanically' reproduced. Two kinds of mechanical reproduction can be traced - i) machine generated images and, ii) mindlessly produced images. The former one appears on the wrappers of the goods or items sold by the shopkeepers such as, framed photos, calendars, banners, quick add etc. The latter one is the painted words or graffiti which aims to catch the sights of viewers, mechanically reproduced anywhere, everywhere on the walls of the religious building, streets around the building, surface of the tree trunks, shops' walls etc. The machine generated images in the temple market may hint the images of Bat-tala prints of Kolkata. In 1860s and 1870s Bat-tala print makers, especially engravers in Kolkata produced images on the similar line, to cater the taste of certain people, period and place. Those prints are now in the list of varied 'collector's/ museum's item'. Nevertheless, I am talking about those printed images, which are not recognized as products open for buying and selling. These printed images are indeed attached with the product in the form of a wrapper, banner, sticker, label in the miniature market, outside of the religious buildings of Burdwan, or

the image, belongs to the shopkeepers (not for sale anymore unless until, an extra effort goes to add another identity on those like different/ exclusive, / unique/uncommon object, worth for collection).

The temple has three entrances. The east facing arched entrance is the oldest one. (Plate no.18, 22)The south facing entrance (plate24, 25) with the grill-gate is a much later addition. Interestingly, the temple users claim that both were there from the ‘beginning’. When was this ‘beginning’? The answers of this question disclose a peculiar sense of time. It is not the time which I understand regularly by the date and year of Christian era and sometimes by my native calendar system – *bangabda*. Their time frame sums up their ‘seeing as’ and ‘being as’ on the subjective ontological level. Anyway, west entrance is not in use.

The east entrance consists of two storeyed building with an enclosed aisle (Plate no 22, 26 -28). These rooms of the building were in use in colonial period. It was constructed in 1740s as a fortification of the temple to avoid *bargi* attack. The façade of this structure was in dilapidated situation (Plate no28). The relief of the lion (Plate no.23) was place on the entrance as sign of victory of Kirtichand Ray.²²⁵ Now, adjacent area of this relief is marked as cycle stand. (Plate no.23) The terracotta plaques like woman on the chair, decorative flower petal, icon of ganesh are also fixed on the wall. (Plate no.29,

²²⁵ See chapter II, page no. 81 & 82.

30,28)The new terracotta plaques are added to cater the wish of the Burdwan Raj and descendent of the Burdwan raj whenever, it has gone through certain renovation. Thus, the Doric style of the capital and abacus of the columns was replaced by Corinthian style in 1900s which reflects colonial taste of Burdwan Raj.²²⁶ (Plate no.26, 27). After independence there is no addition or subtraction on this structure. Only repair work is attended. (Plate no.167) The east entrance leads to the enclosed aisled like space which accommodates the poor people who look for small monetary help from devotees. On the other hand the devotees understand this as an act of donation, as '*dana*' part of their regular worship by giving a minimum of fifty paisa to a maximum of two rupees.(Plate no.20,21,38)On the left side of the pathway, the back of Chandeswar and Indreswar Siva temple appears. (Plate no. 31, 44). There, a person sells the threads which are used for 'wish making'. (Plate no.33) These threads are tied on the trees of the right side of the pathway, when devotees want to make a wish. (Plate no.34) The devotee first fastens a pebble with the thread and then knots it on the tree. (Plate no.36).It is believed that if the wish gets fulfilled, the person needs to unknot the thread from the tree. This common practice is known as *manat*. The question is how would the person recognize his or her thread? One just needs to untie a thread. It seems it does not matter whose thread the person is untying. Furthermore, it seems there is no sense of 'I' and 'mine' in front of god. It is homogenized and equal; such is informed by the thread seller. Furthermore, the thread seller's god is Sri Chaitaniya Mahaprabhu. He keeps a photo frame of his god on a pedestal and decorates the *ashana*. (Plate no.35) He does his *puja* of 'Sri Chaitaniya', before he starts selling. There is no myth associated that this tree transforms into a

²²⁶ See chapter II, page no. 69

specific one. The temple trust board arranged it to cater the devotee's needs, since it is the most prominent tree that catches the sight of the temple users before entering in the area of sanctum. The devotees used to tie the thread on any part of the temple. In order to maintain temple premises, the tree before the main temple boundary is marked for serving the habit of devotee's *manat*. It seems the worshippers offer coins after tying the thread that used to be flicked. In order to stop that, the temple authority²²⁷ put up a box, generally known as *pranami* box. Several *pranami* boxes are also kept in different parts of temple premises, such as two *nat mandir*, in front of the main sanctum. Moreover, the *pranami* boxes are fastened with the chains so that no body thinks or tries to steal the box. (Plate no.40, 43,111,112,141) The trust board has also put the banners and posters in requesting to give *pranami* in the boxes. (Plate no.32, 40, 43, 47, 48,50,60,66 61,114,115,142) The point, I want to highlight here is that the temple management is a noticeable aspect of the 'temple-being' today. (Plate no.46) However, in spite of the temple trust board's precaution, one would notice that someday the photo frame of a god is kept under the tree or near the tree and the worshippers offer coins.(Plate no. 39). The temple management considers this cheating, illegal and unauthorized. The moment they notice it, they remove this. According to them it is not only the poor people or beggars who are involved in doing this, but also temple *pujari*-s. Since none of the *pujaris* is a part of the management board, there is a power search and struggle amongst the trust board and temple priests to control the flow of finance through day to day *pranami*. They inform that the large part of temple maintenance is estimated out of daily *pranami*. For the worshippers the coins are the votive offering, they refuse to think about who is

²²⁷ Established in 1958 by late Udaychand Mahtab, descendent of Burdwan Raj

collecting it. Here, devaluation of the coin, as currency and evaluating it as just votive offerings are an aspect to be noticed here. Furthermore, the interesting point is - they say that 'they see' that they offered to the god after their *manat*. They do not think about what they do not see. It does not matter which god it is. In short – whether it is Kali or Siva or Krishna, does not matter to a devotee. The devotees are not strictly governed by any particular denomination of the sect such as saivite, vaishnavite etc. It is a kind of daily earning for those persons who keep a photo of god, once they manage to convince the temple *pujari* and could bribe them in the name of *dakshina* to brahmmin. The managing board of the temple not only controls the premises of the temple, but also the land outside the temple. The board put up an order on the top of tree, inside the temple so that it is visible and readable from outside. (Plate no.37) The order is meant for the outside issue only. It informs that 'selling that land in the surroundings of the temple is prohibited'. How much power a Temple trust has that it can put up an order regarding land for the inhabitants of the local. Furthermore, a women sits everyday under the tree for little bit earning through begging. (Plate no.38) She says that is her area of sitting. It seems every person like her has an area inside the temple to sit for the same purpose. (Plate no.20, 21,148) Thus, lands, and the claim on the land where it is large or small, whether it is legal or temporal is a paradox of the temple being.

The temple trust board is engaged in maintaining the discipline in the temple premises, by keeping instructions in terms of time, place and people. For example; where to keep tiny tokens of donation, where to give large amounts, when, how and from where *bhog*

would be available, time of *puja*, *arati* etc. My enquiry was, if somebody breaks the instruction what happens. All the temple users, consisting of regular and sudden worshipers, members of trust board, and the temple priests gave a common answer. It is 'ma can see every thing, she punishes, and she does the judgment'. Here ma is the Sarbamangal goddess. Every body believes in her and places her in the seat of surveillance. The higher authority believes that due to her punishment, the poor is poor, they beg, they steal her *puja* (here, the *puja* is the coins), it is not only the punishment of this birth, but of the previous birth too. The peripheral persons mention that ma knows their conditions, it is her decision. That is why they could manage to earn some of the other way from her areas (temple) or she feeds them. There is no sin, if they 'flick' coins.

Anyway, the *nat mandir* on the east side of the sanctum comes into sight behind *manta* tree. (Plate no.41) After crossing the gate, the east facing *nat mandir* appears. This *nat mandir*, the open space in-between *nat mandir* and iron fence lead to main temple. (plate no. 42) The pathway passes through a cubical (plate no.45, 46) where on the right side there is Sarbamangala Mandir trust board office (plate no.46). It reaches an open passage in-between the three Siva temples and south *nat mandir* of the main sanctum. (Plate no.47, 49) This passage is used for animal sacrifice on the day of *astami of Durga puja*. Otherwise, *boli khanra* is a still life in the passage. A narrow stair-case allows one to go the terrace . (plate no.50)

These three Siva temples are facing south. (Plate no.310) The Siva temple on the east side of the entrance is known as Rameswar. (Plate no. 51, 52)The middle one, which is facing the sanctum of the main temple, is recognized as Mitreswar. (Plate no. 53, 54,298)The Siva temple on the west entrance is commonly known as Banaswar, few call it as Kamaleswar too.(plate no. 55,56) The inscription mentions it as Kamaleswar (plate no: 326) In Rameswar Siva temple, there is a framed calendar picture of Siva, put on the wall behind the idol (Plate no. 52). Just after these three temples, there is temple garden with a closed west facing entrance. (Plate no. 57). The path in front of Rameswar Siva temple shows the way to the main temple too and an open courtyard. (Plate no.43, 59) This open courtyard has drinking water arrangement (Plate no.50) and rest -place under a big tree it is decorated with plants pots, which empty up during festival. (Plate no. 59)

The main temple has two *nat mandirs*. Both the *nat mandirs* are the later construction of the temple. These are simple in design, flat roof, square pillars. One appears in-between three Siva temples and the main sanctum. (Plate no. 61)The *nat mandir* has panels of oil paintings, depicting the stories of Sarbamangala idol which I discussed in the previous chapter. These panels are painted by unknown painters. These reflect certain amateurishness in handling the oil medium and drawings. (Plate no. 62-67) Another one is in the east side of the sanctum, larger than other one. (Plate no. 60, 68). This *nat mandir* has terracotta plaques (Plate no.69, 70) of various forms of Durga, Dasvatra, scene of Krishna's life etc. These plaques are Kali, Tara, Chinnamasta, Shoroshi, Bhuvaneswari, Dhumabati, Bagala, Tatangi, Kamala, Bhairavi ,Matsya, Kurma, Baraha, NriSimha, Parshuram, Bamana, Rama, Krishna, Balarama, Kalki , Mahadev, Annapurna,

Ganesh, 'Krishna steals dresses of gopis, Shailaputri, Bramhacharini, Chandraghata, Kusmanda, Sandamata Navadurga, Katyani, Kalratri, Maha Gouri, Sidhidatri (Plate no. 71-103). The devotees could relate to these terracotta plaques than those which are on the facades of the temples. They do not stand in front of the temple to see the terracotta plaques but to have *darshan* of the deity or the god. In the *nat mandir*, they rest, relax, speak, after finishing the puja and they see these terracotta plaques. The names of the icons are put under each plaque to make 'seeing' smoother. In short, these terracotta plaques are not for identifying the icons, but understand world of the gods and goddesses, beyond specific denominations. In this sanctum *kumari puja* is conducted on the day of *astami* of Durga puja. (Plate no.104). At the west of this *nat mandir* is the main sanctum; in the west south corner *bhog ghar* appears. (Plate no. 32, 134) The northern area of this *nat mandir* is cultivated as kitchen garden. From this *nat mandir*, two storyed rest house of the temple and in the south *manat tree* and the path way are visible. In short, this *nat-mandir* gives the wider view of the temple premises. That's why, *Kumari puja* is conducted in this *nat mandir*.

The main sanctum of the temple has three doors and an arched porch on the south and east. (Plate no. 105,107) The south facing door is the main door. (Plate no.106)The priests sit there to take *puja* items like flower, sweets, fruits, cashes, sari or red cloth as (sign of *vastra*) and so on. (Plate no. 116) The incense sticks and candles are not accepted. There is a separate place to burn incense sticks and lighting the candles. (Plate no.112) The east facing door (plate no.108, 110, 40) is used for offering *puja*, by those people

who are acquaintances to the priests. However, the devotees prefer the other one since the goddess is facing that door. (Plate no. 105, 111,113,114) Moreover, there is an open space between the *nat mandir* and south facing door of the sanctum that, allow the devotees to do *sashtanga pranam* by facing the idol. Once *puja* is conducted by the priests, the fresh garlands of *jaba* flowers are put outside through east door. The young boys who hang out in the temple premises, collect the fresh ones and sell them to the shopkeepers outside. (Plate no.115)The shopkeepers resell those. The third one is behind the goddess's *asana*, used by the *pujari* only. This door leads to a small room behind the sanctum. It appears always closed from outside. The sanctum is a small square room, which has all the elements of *puja*, the *asana* and the deity. (Plate no. 117-130). A narrow passage in between the main sanctum and *bhog ghar* allow circumambulating the main sanctum or the deity. (Plate no.109)

Behind the main sanctum, there is *bhog ghar*, where meals of the goddess are cooked. (Plate no. 131-134) The goddess goes there to have her meals and then it is distributed as *bhog prasad* to the devotees. (Plate no. 135-138) After the daily *puja* the main idol is carried in that room to perform the ritual of lunch. (Plate no.139-140)The devotee needs to buy ticket from the office of the temple trustee board (Plate no.46) to have *bhog* of the particular day.

The south facing entrance of the Sarbamangala temple is also widely used. (Plate no. 24, 25, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11) This entrance opens up to a large open courtyard. (Plate no.142) On the left, there is Sarbamangala Yatri Nivas, guest house. (Plate no.142) The two south facing Siva temples appear in the courtyard. (Plate no.143) The Siva temple on the east side is known as Chandreswar. (Plate no.151,161) The inscription²²⁸ on the temple confirms that it was built up by Changeswari, the wife of Burdwan raj Chitra Sen Ray²²⁹. (Plate no.145) The Siva temple which is in the west is known as Indreswar. (Plate no.144) The inscription²³⁰ on the temple mentions that it was built up by Indra kumari, wife of Burdwan raj Chitra Sen Ray. (Plate no.146) Besides the Indreswar Siva temple, Sarbamangala, a post office is located. (Plate no.144, 147) A narrow passage leads to the premise of the *manata* tree. (Plate no.148)

The Sarbamangala temple is in *navaratna* style.²³¹ (Plate No.107,108,149,150,163) Amongst the north facing three Siva temples, the middle one, Mitreshwar is in *ratna* style. (Plate no. 53,298) The other two, Rameswar and Baneswar are in *rekha* style. (Plate no. 51, 55) Furthermore, the other two, south facing Siva temples – Chandreswar and

²²⁸ The inscription reads in Sanskrit, using Bengali script : *sthapitang chitrasenesya nripaterjyadya I rangya changakumaryyash-lingang chandreswaravidham II* (Plate no.145)

²²⁹ (1740- 1744) see Mukhopadhyay Rakhil Das: *Bardhaman –rajbanshanucharit*, Calcutta, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad; (1321), 1914

²³⁰ the inscription reads in Sanskrit, using Bengali script : *sthapitang chitrasenesya bhumivatturdvitiya I mahishyandrakumarshyas-lingamitrendrasvavidham II* (Plate no.146)

²³¹ Refer ‘Bengal Religious Architecture in late medieval period’ in the first chapter

Indreswar are in *chala* styles. (Plate no.152) The idols of all the temples in the premises are subjected to the *nitya puja*, but only Sarbamangala temple enjoy the elaborated *nitya puja* .

All six temples have terracotta plaques on their façades. (Plate no.105-106,160, 162,198-199,298, 325 The plaques show the figures of the gods and goddesses, person or couple engaged in day to day activities or seating idly, group of people occupied in a festive occasion, armies are in parade or in action., birds, animals, plants etc.(Plate no.153-159,164,165,169-197, 201-297,299-323 and 326-399) The terracotta plaques of the Sarbamangala temple, the north facing three Siva temples - Rameswar, Mitreswar and Banewar are the oldest ones. (Plate no.169-197, 201-295, 299-323 and 326-399) The surface and treatment of the clay give an idea of the early and recent terracotta plaques. Both early and recent are fixed side by side. A broken plaque is replaced by a new one with similar kind of image or any image in to the plaque. There is not such rule in choosing certain image of the plaque. The selection of the image today is arbitrary, but visually connected with the figures in the plaque. The icons of gods and goddess, such as Siva, Visnu and the figures of commoners are also juxtaposed without any sequence. There is no narration in the images. In case of these three temples (Sarbamangala, Rameswar, Kamaleswar and Banewar) the ways the plaques are fixed, at first glance it appears that there is a narration. Each rectangular and square terracotta plaque is one unit of image. (Therefore, if one plaque breaks off, it definitely disturbs the sight such as Rameswar and Banewar Siva temples, (Plate no. 201-295 and 326-399) but in seeing

each image of plaque is not disrupted since there is no sequence, no narration. However, stories build up, once anyone starts interacting with the daily users. (Plate no. 141) Thus, the temple space is like anthology of the stories of various known, unknown individuals, groups, associated with the temple premises. The pattern and frame of the terracotta plaques on the facades of the Chandreswar and Indreswar temple(Plate no.153-159,164,165,) are different from Sarbamangala, Rameswar, Mitreswar and Baneswar (Plate no.169-197, 201-295, 299-323 and 326-399) It is mentioned earlier in this chapter that the *nat-mandir* on the east of the main sanctum also has terracotta plaques inside.(Plate no.71- 103) These plaques are larger in size, are made taking references from Sarbamangala, Rameswar, Kamaleswar and Baneswar temples, in terms of images and frame. The plaques of all these six temples and *nat mandir* are the examples of the studies, undertaken by Zulekha Haque in ‘Terracotta Decorations of Late Medieval Bengal: Portrayal of a Society’²³². As I mentioned in the first chapter that she does not trace the connection of the various kinds of images on one surface of the temple with the people who access the temple spaces. The terracotta plaques could not be seen separately or could hardly be expected to be deciphered: these are only regarded in passing. These were always understandable for the average spectators. These plaques were the spectacles rather than instructions. In short, these terracotta panels were like floating images. Today the advertisements banners, hoardings, donors’ plaques are on display in the premises along with these terracotta plaques. The type of the advertisement banners are from garments’ shop, State bank of India, jewelry shop, centre of *yogi* etc. (Plate no.21,27,31,39,41,44,45,50,59,166). The hoardings also display the instruction of the

²³² Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dacca, 1980

temple trust and town map, including instruction 'seeing goddess' known as *matri darshan*. (Plate no.105, 110,423,424) These all create a visual culture in the temple premise. At the same time, the terracotta plaques and the advertisement hoardings on the various parts of the temple premises are the information for the worshippers and visitors of the temples. In the hoardings and advertisements images and informative texts can not exist without describing 'how /what/ when/ it is', but all the spectators (worshippers or visitors) are not interested in knowing of each image (whether it is in terracotta plaque or painted on the wall) 'how /what/ when/ it is'. The spectator chooses to know about the image according to need. Thus, here seeing process is complex by seeing-reading dichotomy. The heavy reliance on the worshippers (readers) recollection of displayed textual matter is replaced in the viewing process by a movement of the eye that leads to the recognition of the forms (image) as people and things. Moreover, when the worshippers (reader) view these images as illustrations of the information, he or she fuses the visual process with the verbal comprehension since the figures are identified with the characters and the places with the locations in the text. In this identification process, the worshippers (reader) cannot help but become conscious of the disjoint between the text and the images every time the two lead to diverging perceptions about the characters, places or events. J. Hill Miller highlights exactly this communicational dichotomy between the two: "The word evokes. The illustration presents"²³³. Anyway, today the regular users (devotees, priests etc.) of the temple do not see the images of terracotta plaques or inscription closely, example: the inscription on the Rameswar Siva temple is covered with white wash coat.(Plate no. 200) These appear as mere intention put into the surface than as the elements itself. The

²³³ Miller, J. Hillis. *Illustration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Publication, 1992; p.67

plaques are perceived as no more and no less than the flower garland on the temples. The spectators who observe closely and carefully are the researchers and connoisseurs.

The visual appearance of the temples displays the attention, received from the people who access these temples, believe that these temples belong to them. The Sarbamangal temple (Plate no. 149,150,163), the south facing Siva temple – Chandreswar and Indreswar (Plate no 152,153,162) , and certain parts of Mitreswar (example Plate no.298) show that their structures are regularly taken care of through coloring, cleaning, restoring and so on. Here, I do not want to push the debate on whether I consider the coating of red oxide coat or white colour is required or good for the architecture or not. I rather focus on what I perceived through seeing, what is the popular understanding of local people about 'care and restoration of the religious structures that they use'. It is a fact that, general perception of the restoration and concern of the religious structures is like - touch up with cement or plaster on broken areas if it is manageable. If it is large, plastering the entire wall, fixing terracotta plaque, applying the red oxide coat on the plaque to give a striking look of terracotta, white wash on the plain wall are preferred. Hence, it happens in case of the Sarbamnagala temple (Plate No.149, 150,163), the south facing Siva temple – Chandreswar and Indreswar (Plate no 152,153,162), and certain parts of Mitreswar (Plate no.298, 318,319,321) several times. On the other hand, the north facing, *rekha* styled Siva temple – Rameswar and Baneswar (Plate no.198-297 and 325-399) obtain less attention and care. In case of these two temples, the decayed areas are just touched upon with mortar, but do not get the attention like other temples. The last considerable

renovation is not visible, but perhaps traceable. An inscription on marble plaque on the plinth of Baneswar Siva temple mentions “*the restoration of the temple is completed in 1323 bangabda (1917 CE), with the donation of Srisrimati adhirani rajrani Sriradharani Devi*’ (Plate no.367). Since the Rameswar and Banswar siva temple are less attended, these display the restoring of the limited areas of the structure. Thus, one can see the juxtaposition of old surface and touch-up areas of the temples which in turn discloses how these continue to exist. (Plate no. 328- 360)

However, my question is what could be the cause of marginalization of these two particular temple structures amongst the six temple structures (south facing Sarbamangala temple, north facing three Siva temples – Rameswar, Mitreswar and Baneswar, south facing two Siva temples – Chandreswar and Indreswar) of the same premise, within a boundary. As I have discussed in the previous chapter that popular tales, the writings of gazetteers, local authors and oil panels in the *nat mandir* (Plate no.62-67) somehow establish the belief that the Sarbamangala temple was built by one of the Burdwan raj, and widely believed that it was Kirtichand Ray²³⁴, father of Chitra Sen Ray . The inscription on the Chandreswar and Indreswar Siva temple visual prove that these temple were built up by the wives of Chitra Sen. The other three Siva temples do not show any inscription on restoration, except the marble plaque (Plate no.) that points out the restoration of Baneswar temple. In the previous chapter, I also mentioned that there is hardly any discussion on the inside space of the religious structures. Simultaneously

²³⁴ See chapter II, page no. 76, 81, 82 & 83

Jajneswar Chaudhury in '*dekhi puri Bardhaman*' mentions that these three Siva temples are built at the time of Maharaj Tej Chand²³⁵. The author assumed this because of the restoration-plaque in Baneswar temple. It seems that Tej Chand had eight wives and all of them were addressed as 'maharani adhirani'²³⁶. In the plaque, the donor Sriradharani is addressed as 'maharani adhirani' which encouraged Jajneswar Choudhury to think that three Siva temples (Rameswar, Mitreswar and Baneswar) were built during the period of Tej Chand (1770 -1732). The inscription on Rameswar Siva temple says that it was built by Burdwan raj, but does not confirm the name or period of the temple. (Plate no. 200). Furthermore, the history of Burdwan Raj family discloses that Mahatab Chand Bahadur (1832- 1879) first adopted son in Burdwan Raj Family was the son of Paran Kapoor, minister cum secretary of the Burdwan raj. After that the Burdwan raj family had number of adopted sons. Thus, Mahatap Chand Bahadur and following descendent of the Burdwan raj were not the direct of descendant of Abu Rai and Kirti Chand Ray who establishes the zamindari in Burdwan.²³⁷ Moreover, there was a court case, popularly known as 'Jal Pratap Candra Mamla' in colonial period. In this case, a person claimed as Pratap Chand Roy descendant of Abu Rai and heir of Kirtichand Roy, Burdwan raj who was declared dead by Paran Kapoor family. Ultimately, in the colonial court it was proved that the person was fake claimer.²³⁸ What I suggest here is that, after the court

²³⁵ Chaudhuri Jajneswar ; 1994; p. 359

²³⁶ See Mukhopadhyay Rakhal Das: *Bardhaman –rajbanshanucharit*, Calcutta, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad; (1321), 1914

²³⁷ See Chapter I , pg.no.42, 43 and Chapter II, pg.no.75, 76, 81, 83

²³⁸ Though it was proved in court that the person claimed as Pratap Chand Ray, was fraud there was a controversy regarding this court case on Burdwan Raj. A popular tales evoke that he was the true Pratap Chand, example hit popular Bengali film '*sanyashi raja*' (1975). See Mukhopadhyay, Rakhal Das:

case, the descendent of Burdwan Raj who are heirs of Kapoor Family, attempted to disassociate themselves from Abu Rai family of Burdwan raj. In one hand, the poor maintenance of the three Siva temples (Rameswar, Mitreswar and Baneswar) are perhaps the reflection of this discord in the family history. On the other hand, lacks of convincing records²³⁹ of these three Siva temples make it easy to dispossess these three Siva temples. Pranab Chand Mahatap, heir of Burdwan Raj (heir of Kapoor family too) told me in the interviews of December 2005, that nobody knows who built these three temples. He just guessed a number of his distant ancestors' names. The donors of the restoration of the temple are devotees or the temple trust board. The descendent of the Burdwan Raj is one of the members of the trust board. The trust board gives the preferences to those temples which have the confirmation of their establishment by anyone from the Burdwan Raj. In case of other donors, they prefer the Sarbamangala temple first. If a donor just donates without preferences, use of donation is decided by the trust board. Furthermore, if the donation is not bulk or heavy, the donor himself or herself does not get the choice to decide the use of his or her donation. Thus one can notice that the 'preference' arises in conserving the temple structures, situated within the same premise. In short, though the six temples exist within one boundary line of the temple land, there is a 'preference' by the users of the temples in restoring them, which in turn, allows them to live and exist

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

²³⁹ It is interesting to note, the court case of *Jal Pratap Chand* (fake Pratap Chand) of Burdwan raj family in colonial period initiated the followings descendent of Burdwan Raj to speak about or on the history of their family with evidences and proof.

temple are devotees or the temple trust board. The descendent of the Burdwan Raj is one of the members of the trust board. The trust board gives the preferences to those temples which have the confirmation of their establishment by anyone from the Burdwan Raj. In case of other donors, they prefer the Sarbamangala temple first. If a donor just donates without preferences, use of donation is decided by the trust board. Furthermore, if the donation is not bulk or heavy, the donor himself or herself does not get the choice to decide the use of his or her donation. Thus one can notice that the 'preference' arises in conserving the temple structures, situated within the same premise. In short, though the six temples exist within one boundary line of the temple land, there is a 'preference' by the users of the temples in restoring them, which in turn, allows them to live and exist through the years. For the daily users of the temple, the more than dates and uniqueness of the structure, the myth, faith and belief govern their mind which is the beginning of the preference, selection as well as marginalization. The most of the worshippers come to give *puja* in the Sarbamangala temple, thus, the donation is widely preferred in case of that temple first. Today, these three Siva temple (Rameswar, Mitreswar and Baneswar) are marginalized in terms of renovation; at least Mitreswar gets attention sometime, because of its position. It is the only Siva temple that is facing the deity of the sanctum of the Sarvamangala temple directly. It is generally read by devotees and priests; the Siva of the Mitreswar temple is sitting face to face positing to his consort, the Sarvamangala. Therefore, during the sacrifice of the *astami puja* in *Durga puja*, a special arrangement is made to keep the space empty from the crowd. It is said that after killing *mahishasura* (buffalo demon), the goddesses eyes meet the eyes of the Siva, her consort.

As I said that the maintenance of the temple depends on the grants of the donors. The names of the donors appear in the marble plaques in the various places of the temple premises. (Plate no. 111,112,114, 400-416) Usually the donor plaques are dedicated in the memory of the demised person's name. It is a common cultural practice to put the chandrabindu or issar sign of Bengali alphabets to indicate the death of the person. In many cases the year of birth and death are also written. It carries the name of the demised persons and the donors. Simultaneously, the temple authority itself puts the plaques, writing the series of the names of the donors. (Plate no.400) Early donor's plaques are found inside the *nat mandir* in front of the sanctum. Furthermore, the donor can decide the place of the plaque on the basis of the amount of donation and connection with the temple authority. The only plaque, set up in July 2003 in memory of the donor's wife, placed underneath the inscription of Chandreswar Siva temple is the example. (Plate no. 145) Earlier, the texts in marble plaques for the donors were being done in Calcutta, by the temple trustee. Now Sakti Marble Traders Trust of Burdwan does it, since it has developed almost a permanent contract from the temple trust board. The small businesses are visible outside the temple, where as the large dealers like Sakti Marble Traders are searched when the amount of donation is large.

Sometimes the donor mentions the amount of the donation in the plaque (Plate no. 403, 407) and the purpose of the donation. For instance: in a plaque it is mentioned as, -"in the memory of late Dhirendranath Chakrabarty (1918-1978), rupees twenty thousand and one

has been donated to renovate Kamaleswar (Baneswar) Siva temple with the blessing of Sarbamangala Mata by us - Srimati Shantilata Chakaravarty, Dr. Ajit Chakaravarty (orthopedic surgeon, Bardhaman), Srimati Kumkum Chakravarty, Rakhi Chakravarty (Kiti), Ishan Chakravarty (Tito), A/53 Lake Gardens, Kolikata -45". Here the amount and purpose of the donation is not only mentioned, but also the donor's profession is also written. The names are arranged according to the position of the person in family structure. Simultaneously, it reveals the kinships of the donors²⁴⁰. The demised person is the husband of Srimati Shantilata Chakaravarty, father of Dr. Ajit Chakaravarty, father-in-law of Srimati Kumkum Chakravarty, grand father of Rakhi and Ishan Chakravarty. At the same time, the pet names (Kiti and Tito) of Rakhi and Ishan Chakravarty are also cited. This particular plaque reflects the character of a nuclear Bengali family, which grew in cosmopolitan culture of Calcutta. First, most of the donors whose names are written in the plaques are from Bardhaman district, very few are from other parts of the world. The citation of the pet names is rare in case of donors' plaques. Somewhere it is noticed in case of a primary donor, because in that particular case either the pet acts as an official name or the person is widely recognized by the pet name. There are name of grandsons and grand daughters as donors who are from different parts of the states, as we find the names of donors' places. But nowhere, are their pet names cited. At the same time, mention of the pet names of grand daughters and grand sons in the plaque of their late grand father certainly suggest touch of cosmopolitan urban culture. Thus the donors' plaque reveals the structure of Bengali family in term of their location.

²⁴⁰ for kinship of Bengali Culture, see Inden Roland B. and Ralph W. Nicholas: *Kingship in Bengali Culture*, New Delhi, DC Publishers, (1977), 2005

Sometime the plaques tell about the expired persons. For example, one plaque reveals that the expired person was a freedom fighter and member of Anushilan Samiti²⁴¹. In this case the donor is the son. Another one is more interesting. The text of the plaque is addressed by the donor. (Plate no. 406) The donor says that there is nobody of my own in this three world (*tri-bhuvan*), that is why I remember you. You, *trilok tarini*, *narayani*, are my only companions----I dedicate my life on your feet. --- do not bring me back in this world where honesty is tortured, criminality wins, *sati* does not have food, *asati* gets gold.— I would leave this capital with your strength. I take oath; I would not be back here. Please fulfill my wish that is your wish too: Yours, distressed daughter. After twenty nine years I am leaving *Banga desh* . Year 1337 *bangabda* 13th *aswin* month (1930, 28th September) Tuesday. *Bandemataram*” There is no name of the donor. The writing reveals that it is a female donor. The text says that she was leaving *Banga desh* (undivided Bengal) with bitterness, distress as she repeatedly cries that there was no justice in *Banga desh*. That is why she did not want to come back in *Banga desh*. She did not indicate where she was going. At the end she used ‘*Vandemataram*’ which was a common slogan for the freedom fighters before independence. In fact the date suggests the time of nationalism. The point I want to make here is that, the donor ends the text saying *Vandemataram* that means ‘I salute thee mother’. Simultaneously she expresses

²⁴¹ Anushilan Samiti is the Swadeshi secret society, where organized physical culture was combined with moral and spiritual instruction in the Ramayana, the Maha-bharata, the Gita and the doctrines of Vivekananda. See Sarkar, Sumit : *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengali :1905-1908*, New Delhi, People's Publishing House,1973,p.465 Bandhopadhyay, Sekhar: *From Plassey to Partition, A History of Modern India*, New Delhi, Orient Longman; 2004, p. 250

sufferings due to her unlawful condition of her motherland (*Banga desh*) through out the text and she was leaving the land because of that. The *Vandemataram* in the period of nationalist movement is used to address the mother land. It is not clear she is using *Vandemataram* for the goddess or for mother land or for both. Hence, it clearly indicates a geographical dislocation, perhaps migration.

As I mentioned that all the plaques bear the names of the places, location of the donors, sometime full addresses. For instances, in a plaque it is written that “ Dhirendra Chandra Sarkar, Ilasree, Khalui *Bil matth*, Pratham *goli* , Bardhaman” . Here, first is the donor’s name, then the name of his house. Khalui *bil matth* indicates a name of an open ground beside or next to a lake name khalui. *Pratham goli* is the first narrow lane. Another one depicts the name of the donors - son, daughter in law and grandsons, the names of the parents, and name of the place – London. It is interesting to note that the front of the name of the place (London) is much larger than any name or words

The text of plaques are neither for reading, nor for seeing but appear as revealer of ‘temple being’ through years. The plaque itself does not have any functional and physical existence. Once it is fixed on the wall, it becomes a part of the wall. These look like murals on the wall. It is the donor or family member of the donor who sometime searches the plaque, if the donor is not a day to day worshipper of the temple. As I mentioned that most of the donors put the addresses on the plaque. These addresses thread the lines

which map number of geographical locations (donors' places). A temple can not exist without the users who are connected with the temple through various functions and professions. The existence of the temple depends on them that I am discussing here. Thus, the donors' plaques are the textual cartography of the temple which unfolds the history of the identification of its 'temple being'.

Diana L. Eck in 'Darsan: Seeing the divine Image in India'²⁴², comments "when Hindus go to a temple, they do not commonly say 'I am going to worship', but rather, 'I am going for *darshan*'²⁴³." Here, I want to add that the act of '*darshan*' and '*puja*' (worship) of the Hindus are rooted in the practices of the community in particular geographical location. What I want to stress here, is that the geographical location of a Hindu community sometimes change, shift and transform the religious practices of the Hindus. Example is the celebration of *dol* in Burdwan, discussed in the previous chapter. Here, I would take the discussion further. The Bengali Hindus²⁴⁴ say that they are going to temple to give '*puja*' (in Bengali language it is '*puja deyoa*', since the *pujari* is involved in the whole act of *puja* between the worshipper/ devotee and the god. Furthermore, the Bengali Hindus say that they are going to do *puja (puja kara)* which suggest the act of

²⁴² Third edition, Colombia University Press, New York., pp.3-10

²⁴³ author's italics

²⁴⁴ In my thesis, the Bengali Hindu refers the Bengali Hindus of the West Bengal State of India. The geographical location is responsible for forming and transforming the rites, practices , habits of the community and the religion. Furthermore, today no geographical location exists without polity of the people, inhabits there.

puja is performed by the worshipper or devotee. Here any *pujari* (Brahmin) is not engaged, the worshipper becomes *pujari* to do *nitya puja* of the god of his or her own house. Moreover, the act of doing *puja* (*puja kara*) is usually performed in the ‘*thakur ghar*’ (the room of the god) which is part of the residential (domestic) space of the person. They say *darshan kara* to indicate ‘seeing the deity’, usually addressed as ‘*thakur darshan*’ or ‘*matri darshan*’ (in case of various forms of sakta cult such as Durga, Kali, Sarbamangala etc.). ‘*darshan kara* happens in the temple (*mandir*) not in case of *thakur ghar*. Furthermore, ‘*darshan kara*’ may be part or act of giving *puja* (*puja deyoa*) or may not be. In fact, it absolutely depends upon the worshippers. The worshipper can do ‘*darshan*’ (*darshan kara*) without giving *puja*. Anyway, the act of *darshan kara* has various connotations, such as it could be ‘being blessed by god’ , or ‘to make a wish (*manta*)’ and so on. There is another aspect of *darshan* in the community. It is ‘*darshan deyoa*’ (giving *darshan*). The example can be drawn from the popular myth of the Sarbamangala temple which is discussed in the previous chapter. According to a myth, Devi Sarabamangala gave the *darshan* to the king in his dream. Furthermore, mostly during *durga puja*, *kali puja* and so on, people say that they are going to see *thakur* (*thakur dekhte jaoa*). It does not indicate the *darshan*. It suggests the practice of an outing to see various arrangement, decoration, presentation of the god and goddess, and lighting the *pandel* . It has a sense of entertainment and pleasure to see which is different from *darshan*, though in both the cases act of seeing the god are involved in the same space.²⁴⁵ In short ‘*thakur dekhte jaoa*’ is an act of seeing the gods and its accessories which do not have any sacred connotation, but happens in the so called sacred places. In

²⁴⁵ See for example Banerjee, Sudeshna: *Durga Puja: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*; Calcutta Rupa and Co. 2004

other words, every act of seeing the god in his or her premises may not suggest '*darshan*'. Thus, I point out that even within a community 'seeing the god' is not always a '*darshan*',. It is rather a practice which depends upon the intention of the viewer. It is the viewer who intends 'what act of seeing', she / he wants. In other words, 'each and every act of seeing god' is not *darshan* for the Bengali Hindus, even if it happens in the sacred premises like temple. Another example: in the second chapter I pointed that there is a tendency among the local author to construct an imaginary tour in Burdwan town, when tales of religious structure like Sarbamangal temple are the view points, 'subject and object of worth of seeing'. It is addressed as *darshan* to suggest an imaginary exclusiveness.

While interviewing the temple *pujari*, he mentioned that the goddess whom the worshippers and devotees do *matri darshan* is an image of the goddess. The goddess does not have any image. She is kept in a silver box. It is in ~~in~~ around form of a stone. The priest showed that to me. (Plate no. 417, 418) Thus *darshan* of the image is equal of seeing that round from, the goddess. All the rituals associated with Durga is conducted and performed in case of Sarbamangala. Thus, during *durga puja*²⁴⁶ in the day of *astami*, the sacrifice of animals are conducted in the space in between the *nat mandir* in east and the three Siva temples (Plate no. 47, 48). The whole performance is colloquially known as *boli charano*. The whole act of sacrificing looks same, since the act is performed by

²⁴⁶ see Banerjee Sudeshna: *Durga Puja : Celebrating the Goddess : Then and Now*. New Delhi, Rupa and Co., 2006. Rodrigues Hillary: *Ritual Worship of the Great Goddess: The Liturgy of the Durga Puja with Interpretations*, New York; State University of New York, 2003

sacrificing a buffalo first, then goats, rams and vegetable like green gaud, pumpkin and so forth. The first sacrifice is the part of the ritual of *astami puja* of *Durga puja*²⁴⁷. The space from the east entrance to main sanctum transforms into sequential plots of the narration. Here the narration is not the narratives of the '*durga* slaying *mahisasura*', but the priests are performing the sacrifice of buffalo that symbolize the *durga* slaying *mahisasura*. Furthermore, the priests do not represent the act, but perform the act to represent. The act of the sacrificing buffalo comprises of giving bath and putting attire like garland, turmeric, *sindoor*, *vastra*, worshipping him, offering food to him with continuous chant and playing of *dhak-dhol*. Thus, it is a performative representation of slaying *mahisasura* demon. The rest of the sacrifices are the offerings by the worshippers to complete *manat* (plate no.419- 449). The worshippers decide the sacrificial offerings. The animal sacrifice is not compulsory. The pumpkin, green gourds are also offered. It appears that the vegetables are selected to avoid the animal sacrifice. (Plate no. 449) The worshippers disclose that they usually offer things which they cultivate or can afford. Thus in most of the cases, the farmers wish to offer the largest vegetable to the goddess, unless until there is special *manta*²⁴⁸ and the person who has the farms of rearing animals such as goat, duck, chicken etc offer those. Though the fish farming is very common in the area, it is not offered, just because it dies without water and no dead-life is supposed be offered. Still I have seen the worshippers to offer *jiol* fish. After the ritual of sacrifice,

²⁴⁷ See Coburn, Thomas B.: *Encountering The Goddess*; New York; State University of New York Press;1991

²⁴⁸ It is part of tantric ritual that tantric priest asks the worshipper to sacrifice animal if *manata* is fulfilled. Nowadays, it is not directly said to the worshippers, but it is put in their mind that perhaps sacrificing animal is so- called more powerful offering to the goddess than any other thing.

*kumari puja*²⁴⁹ is performed in the *nat madir* of east side (Plate no.450). Both the rituals *boli* and *kumari puja* are acts of *darshan* by the commoners. A humongous crowd emerges to have the *darshan* of these auspicious events. The question is here – how much *darshan* of the whole rituals a person or a group can have or could have. The temple structure is not like an amphitheater, but the whole ritual of the sacrifice is structured. The temple authority demarcates certain space with ropes which act as a temporary boundary line within the temple premises. These boundary lines appear as fence. The person who has connection with temple authority or the priests or part of their PR group gets the favour to stand nearer to the space of the sacrifice to ‘see’. Thus an unplanned segregation of the crowd happens on the basis of connection, the preference of the position of the viewers in seeing this act is not created on the basis of privileged caste. The whole act of sacrifice and *kumari puja* is elaborated down through many years, as collective conduct of the religion. The whole act is *darshan* for the devotees. Furthermore, I have seen the worshippers bring their kids and babies to make them seeing the sacrifice.

²⁴⁹ Kumari puja commemorates the killing of Kolasur by the goddess Kali. According to legend, Kolasur had occupied the heavens and the earth. The helpless deities approached Mahakali for help. Responding to their appeal, she was born again and, in the form of a maiden, killed Kolasur. The rituals of Kumari puja and its significance have been described in detail in *Yoginitantra*, *Kularnavatantra*, *Devipurana*, *Stotra*, *Kavacha*, *Sahasranama*, *Tantrasara*, *Prantosini* and *Purohitadarpana*. No distinction of caste is made in choosing a virgin for Kumari puja. Any virgin can be perceived as a deity and worshipped, including one from the prostitute community. However, usually a Brahmin virgin is chosen. The girl, who can be anywhere between 1 to 16 years of age, is named according to her age: A girl of 1 year is called Sandhya, of 2 years Saraswati, of 3 years Tridhamurti, of 4 years Kalika, of 5 years Subhaga, of 6 years Uma, of 7 years Malini, of 8 years Kuvjika, of 9 years Kalasandarbha, of 10 years Aparajita, of 11 years Rudrani, of 12 years Bhairavi, of 13 years Mahalaksmi, of 14 years Pithanayika, of 15 years Ksetrajna and of 16 years Annada or Amvika. Kumari puja is believed to grant many blessings on worshippers. It is said to remove all dangers; feeding the maiden is believed to equal feeding all three worlds. See Pintchman Tracy (ed.) : *Women's lives, women's rituals in the Hindu tradition*; USA, Oxford University Press; 2007

The children start crying in seeing the whole acts. It does not matter to their elders, they console them saying that it is 'auspicious to see'. I realize before having the knowledge of the act, the children get to know that so called seeing sacrifice in Sarbamangala is auspicious. Thus, the practices of 'darshan' are passed down at infant and adolescent age, by their elders. Neither the sacrifice on *astami puja* is unique of Sarbamangal Temple, nor is it widely practiced in West Bengal during *Durga puja* except in a few cases. The *Kumari puja* is conducted in many places. Now, it is an event of 'seeing'²⁵⁰. At this juncture, it is pertinent to state briefly my position. I was born a Hindu and had a mixed Hindu upbringing combined with an 'alternative modern education' - enough experience in contemporary India. I work like an anthropologist, which means that I have tried to look upon my cultural heritage with an approach that stands in the twilight precinct between consideration and doubt, respect and repugnance. However, I still wonder is there any minimum definition of what it requires and means to be a Hindu other than in terms of birth, and that which can give me release? We judge our own rituals by one of their functions and the plurality of the functions of the same ritual leads to a frequent errors. Thus, I realized that the whole ritual of sacrifice and *kumari puja* was a spectacle for me. It is not a 'darshan' of an auspicious act of seeing for me and I distinguish 'self' from 'them' who practice religion as constitutive of the society in India.

²⁵⁰ Examples: *Kumari puja* is conducted Belur Math of West Bengal at the Ramkrishan Mission in Dhaka Washington Kali Temple, various temples of West Bengal

✓ Nepal - Kumari's residence at
 Hanuman obhoka square
 at Kathmandu.
 ✓ related rituals.

‘Since’ Eye Could See

I have discussed that it is the viewer’s intention to consider when his or her act of seeing god transforms into ‘*darshan*’. Moreover, I would also suggest that viewer’s intention in seeing inside a religious structure is governed by the geographical space and his or her identity. Sarbamangala temple, Khakkar Saheb Dargah, Jumma Masjid, Pir Baharam are the neighbours to each other. They share the common localities. From Sarbamangala temple, Khakkar Saheb dargah comes first. Two tiny shops sell the votive offerings outside the Dargah. There are only two shops, outside the Khakar Shah Dargah which sells the votive offerings like terracotta animals, candles, incense sticks. *nakuldana*, *batasha* (Plate no. 453-464) One is owned by Prabir Chakravarty. He started his shop in 1980. Another one is approximately seventy-five years old. Present owner Bappa Chakrvarty’s grand father Late Murari Mohan Chakarvarty set it up. Both the families migrated from east Bengal (present Bangladesh). Behind the shop there is Siva temple in *ratna* style (Plate no.465, 466). The residents of the street do the maintenance of this temple. The two shopkeepers say they do not need to sell anything for this temple. The shopkeepers worship Ganesha and Lokenath baba²⁵¹, Sri Satya Sai baba of Puttaparthi of Andhra Pradesh (Plate no.454), A simple entrance (Plate no. 346) opens into an enclosed space, where photos and calendar of *Ka’ba* in Mecca, the duties of *sebayit*, instructions of the visitors and the names of the Dargah committee have been hung up on the walls (Plate no. 469- 475). This small cubical just after entrance visually introduces the visitor about the Khakkar Shah’s world whom the person goes to pray. (Plate no.476-478)

²⁵¹ Regional popular saint. see www.babalokenath.org, www.lokenathbaba.com

Then a long aisle takes the devotee to Khakhar Shah's tomb. (Plate no.476-478)The tomb is in a large square room (*hujra*). Just outside of the room , there is a small wash- area. It is compulsory for everybody to wash their feet, hands and face before going inside (Plate no. 479). The tomb is supported by a *chatgiri* and draped with a *nakshi chadar*. (Plate no. 481, 482) It is decorated with real and plastic flowers in brass pots, candles, terracotta votive offerings, semi precious and plastic bead chains, incense sticks and so forth. The objects are not the auspicious objects in strict sense. All these are offerings, displayed. The each object does not have any connotation. Thus, the ambience of all the offerings generates different implication which may not be articulated in words by the person who accesses the presence of the dargah every day. The speaker may, in fact, be mistaken , he can say too much or too little, miss what he/she wants to mean through the visual (Plate no.482-492)) Besides the tomb, a colossal tree trunk is protected, for tying *zunnar* and *manat suta*. (Plate no. 493-498)

People say that Pir Shah Khakhar used to sit under this tree. That has become wish making (*manata*) tree. It is a most popular Dargah in Burdwan. It is alive because of the faith. The visual representation of practices and faith which grew through years can be noticed in.²⁵² Nobody goes to see anything there, except a person like me. There is no attempt or act of seeing inside. It is 'I' like person see the things there, at the same time I

²⁵² see Roy, Ashim: *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal*; Princeton; Princeton University Press; 1983, Assayag Jackie: *At the Confluence of Two Rivers – Muslims and Hindus in South India*, translated from the French by Latika Shagal, New Delhi, Monohar, 2004

become sight of the people, perceived as an outsider, in spite of having common mother tongue and origin. People go there for blessings, praying and offerings. And *sebayit* communicate the wish, prayer or offering to him. (Plate no. 493, 499) Hajrat Khakkar Shah is the Pir. The dargah is maintained by belief, only one donor plaque (plate no.499-503) simultaneously a rich display of the tomb is the reason for such assumption.

The advertisements of the hair dresser, jewelers shop, ready made garments and slogans of the Bidhan and Lok Sabha election on the entrance wall have not left any empty space; somehow suggest the popularity of the Dargah. (Plate no.451, 465,466, 467, 468) Consequently I was puzzled in thinking of the juxtaposition of types of the texts, such as sarcastic political slogan and information about the products or the shops. Inside the dargah there is a sense of discipline in maintaining the ambience of the space as well as custom of the space the structure. On the other hand, the immediate the outer wall of the same structure screens the counter discipline of the dargah strategically, consciously and unconsciously. It is the visual worlds of everyday life of the dargah, people and the locality.

The popularity of Khakkar Shah Dargah is noticed both inside and outside the structure where as Pir Baharam tomb is more known, researched, discussed as a surviving example of architectural tradition of Bengal. The Archaeological Survey of India does its

maintenance. It has the instruction, set besides the premises.²⁵³ In short, a conscious visitor gets warning while reading that before entering. I had to take permission for its photo documentation, but nobody checks whether you have permission or not. People click their own photos and not of the monument. It is the place where the town people go for an outing at the weekend, young couple enjoy their time, the widows sit there for hours, the residents of its' surroundings do their prayers, the *sebayit* continues his family profession, local kids have fun by playing, the local Muslims use it as their burial ground. It becomes a place of an outing for a group of people, a family or a couple not only because of its tag as heritage building, but also for its picturesque view. It is the site of heterotopias²⁵⁴. (Plate no. 506 -510, 512)

After the entrance gate, (Plate no. 514, 515) there is an enclosed cubical space, with has sealed doors. (Plate no. 516 -518). Behind the sealed doors, there are rooms. Then it opens into an open long aisle. (Plate no. 519-521) On the left side of the long aisle the

²⁵³ The monument has been declared to be of national importance under Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, (24 of 1958) who even destroys, removes, injured, alters, defaces – misuses this monument shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend three months to nine months or with fine which may extend to five thousand rupees or with both.

Further under rule 32 of Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules, 1959 area up to 100 meters from the protected limits and further beyond it up to 200 meters near or adjoining protected monuments to be prohibited and areas respectively for the purpose of both mining operation and construction.

²⁵⁴ Foucault, Michel: 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias' in '*Rethinking Architecture*'; Leach, Niel (ed.) ; London, Routledge, pp. 350 -356

tombs of Sher Afghan and Qutub-uddin²⁵⁵ appear in a three side closed room (Plate no.522 -525). Behind the tombs of Sher Afgan and Qutub-ud-din, there is a community prayer hall. (Plate no. 526)

The aisled path ends at the tomb of Pir Baharam. (Plate no.512, 527- 530)The tomb of Pir Bahram constructed in *ak gombuj* regional (one domed) style²⁵⁶. It is a square brick structure with octagonal turrets at each corner. The curved cornice is crowned with a single dome. (Plate no.531, 532,533) The restoration with plastering has wrapped a large extent of brick work. The restoration is undertaken by Archaeological Survey of India. It is important to note that the process of the restoring the building is just like the temples in the Sarbamnagala premises. The point I want to push here is that the local and popular understanding of restoring building does not differ from the so-called specialized institution like the Archaeological Survey of India in conserving Pir Baharm Dargah which is considered national heritage . In both cases the local masons are hired on the basis of the budget allocated. There is an inscription on the wall of the entrance of the Pir Baharam tomb.²⁵⁷ (Plate no.534, 535)The outside space of Pir Baharam Tomb has

²⁵⁵ see Chapter II , page no. 85 to 91,

²⁵⁶ see Chapter I, page no. 51 to 55

²⁵⁷ Karim Abdul: *Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscription of Bengal*; Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1993; pp 425-427. The inscription tablet was discovered by H.Blochmann. The slab bearing the epigraph was found fixed on the outer wall of the *Astana* of Pir Barham Saqqa. The inscription refers to the endowment of the village. Faqirpur for maintainance of the poor and indigent people attached to the shrine and appointment of Shaika Bakhtiyar as *Mutawalli* (custodian) of the shrine in the year 1015.A.H. The

been used for gardening (Plate no. 532) and cemetery of the deceased *sebayit* and *mutuwalli*. After 1958, Archaeological Survey of India prohibited the *sebayit* and *mutuwalli* family from using it as a burial ground. (Plate no.536-538) They were asked to use the public burial ground adjacent of Pir Bharam tomb. The *mutawalli* complains that it was given to Pir Baharam, but forcefully taken by people and government . However, in the public graveyard, the tomb of later *mutuwalli* is treated as privileged. A shrine like structure is constructed on the top of the grave and a boundary walls are also raised to separate it from the commoners' graves. (Plate no.538) The house of the *mutuwalli* is

language is Persian, except the Quranic verse. Translation of the inscription : "In the name of the Allah, the most Merciful, the most Compassionate In accordance with the holy verse (of the Quran) " And who give his love to kindred, and orphans and the poor, and the son of the road, (wayfarers), and beggars and those in the captivity", and in Majesty, the village Faqirpura, in accordance with the separate writ, is set apart on account of the *madad-l-ma' ash* (assistance in subsistence) of the poor and the meeting of the illuminated tomb of Pir Barham. And Shaikh Bakktiyar is appointed the *mutawalli* (custodian). Persons making alterations in the qarya (village) will be afflicted with Allah's curse and the prophet's abuse; in the year 1015 A.H. (1606-07 A.D.)"

The name of the reigning King, i.e., the Emperor Jahangir is not mentioned in the inscription, but reference to the Imperial Majesty shows that the endowment was made by the Imperial Government. During this time, this endowment was made. 'Ali Quli Istajlu entitled *Sher Akbar'* was the Jagirdar of Burdwan. In September, 1606 A.D. Jahangir appointed Qutb-al-din Khan Koka as the Suubahadar of Bengal vice Mansingh. Whether endowment was made after Qutb al-din Khan Koka joined or before cannot be determined, because the specific date is not mentioned. Blochmann, H." Contribution to the Geography and History of Bengal" in *Journal of The Asiatic Society of Bengal*; Vol.XL, 1971, pp. 251-52

Shamsud-Din-Ahmad (1960,p. 257-270) says "on hearing of Saqqa'a death news Akbar allotted the revenue of Bahram Bazar, now Purana Chowk (a part of the town Maharaj of Burdwan College is situated) and Mirzapur for the maintenance of the Shrine of the Saint ". The endowed property, the village of Faqirpura may probably be identified wit Muhalla Pir Bahram and the adjoining area. The Maharaja of Burdwan is "said to have been paying an amount of Rupees 41, two annas and 4 pieces to the Mutawalli of the dargah of Pir Bahram Saqqa ". Thus showing that the English government resumed the property endowed by the Emperor Jahangir and settled it to the Maharaja of Burdwan who included it into his Zamindari.

built up within the extended boundary of the Pir Baharam which is before the entrance. (Plate no.539)At the rear end there is a pond, part of Pir Baharam premise. (Plate no. 509)

There is an abandoned, but protected place, fenced by boundary wall opposite to Pir Baharam premises, (Plate no. 540) People says that it was the place of *yogi* Jaypal. Local people say that he became a Pir Bahram disciple and gave his place Pir Baharam's tomb is now and started staying opposite to present Pir Bharam Dargah. The dialogues between *yogis* and *sufis* have been reported in Sufi hagiographical tradition. A *yogi* could perform miracles merely on the strength of his austerity, but only to limited extent; and those among them who have achieved spiritual purity were certain to accept the Muslim faith. Shaikh Sharaf al- Dinof Maner is reported to have spoken highly of *yogis* who had acquired exceptional inner power by there sever austerity. I assume, *yogi* Jaypal was one of them who had achieved spiritual purity.²⁵⁸ Local people show the grave of *yogi* Jaypal to the people whoever visits the monument. (Plate no 541, 542)

The grandeur in maintaining the tomb of Pir Khakkar Shah is missing in Pir Baharam Dragah. It appears as if Pir Baharam Dragah is in exile. Local people think it is because of government protection. The superintendent of Archeological Survey of India at the

²⁵⁸ See Alam , Muzaffar ; *The language of Political Islam In India; c. 1200- 1800.*; Delhi, Permanent Black, 2004. Alhaq Shuja; *A Forgotten Vision – A Study of Human Spirituality in the light of Islamic Tradition*, Vol. I, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1997

Kolkata circle says that the monument is saved, because it is protected. It is an unresolved debate - how a monument from past (in case of my research it is medieval period) manages to survive. Is it because of musemification of the architecture or is it due to living practices?.

Jumma masjid has got the attention of various scholars due to its architectural style. The scholars have described the significance of this masjid in the development of the regional style of Bengal architectural.²⁵⁹ It does not have an impressive entrance which would give its prominent visibility from the road in the rows of shops. These shops are clothing, watch repair, saloon, stationary etc. None of these shops are like those, set up outside the Sarbamangal temple and Khakar Shah Dargah. These shops are not dependant on the Jumma masjid. (Plate no.543) I was allowed to enter inside the masjid premises with the photographer. After the door one crosses a small cubical that opens onto an enclosed courtyard. (Plate no. 544, 545, and 546). The area of ablution is on the left side of the courtyard. (Plate no. 547 -540) On the right side, in the west there is the *idgah*. The *idgah* consists of seven-arched foyer which gives way to the prayer chamber. (Plate no.551) The foyer wall the time of daily *namaz*, *namaz* of Friday, *namaz* of *special* day, duties of the mosque people, some news connected with Islam or particularly this masjid are put up. (Plate no.552 -554) The foyer is covered with *charchala* vaults. Three domes

²⁵⁹ Wali, Abdul: 'The Antiquities of Burdwan', *Journal and Proceedings of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, XIII; 1917; p.187; Asher, Cathrine B.: "The Mughal and post-Mughal Periods" in *The Islamic Heritage of Bengal*, Michell George (ed.):AARP, UNESCO, 1984, Paris, p. 206

surmount the roof of the Jami Mosque. None of these domes is clearly visible either from the street or from the courtyard, unlike the Pir Bahram tomb. (Plate no.557)

I was not allowed to enter in the chamber. I could just peep through the door of the chamber. (Plate no.558) My photographer was allowed. Thus, I get to see the inside of the chamber through the photographer. I was allowed to enter in the mosque, because of the conversation I had prior to that. Their spontaneous, impromptus questionnaire had queries regarding my origin in terms of my geography and what religion I belonged to as discussed at the beginning of the previous chapter. I was allowed in, since I was with the photographer who is from Burdwan. on the other hand, I was not allowed to enter in the prayer chamber because I am a woman. I want to point here that, it is a unusual example that a Hindu woman (the people was questioning me, knew this), was allowed to enter in an active and alive masjid. They also knew that my photographer was Hindu too and allowed him to enter into the main prayer chamber. He was asked to wash his feet, hands and face and keeping a hand-kerchief on his head before entering into the prayer chamber. He was permitted, because they acknowledged him as part of them, since his home town is Burdwan. Here, I want to bring the discussion of the previous chapter. The photographer and I, were allowed to enter in the masjid not because of CPI has a largest number of the supporter in Burdwan or the communist government polity of West Bengal State, the secular state neutral through engagement, that is by being respectful towards all religions or through disengagement, that is by erecting a wall, as it were, between itself and the religious life of the citizens. It is because of the local community's conception of

the profession and practice of its religion.²⁶⁰ Thus, Rafikul Islam, popularly known by as Badar in Burdwan town was given the contract to restore the east entrance (oldest one) of the Sarbamangal temple (Plate no. 167) and the photographer is allowed to take the photographs of the prayer chamber in the masjid. Both the photographer and Rafikul Islam are recognized as part of the 'we-self' of local, where any kind of religious differences of 'us' and 'them' is overruled, ignored, overlooked. Furthermore, I, who had been perceived as an outsider was considered in the restricted premises, because of the local 'we-self'. Therefore, it was important to discuss this in previous chapter.

The position, identity and the subjective of experiences of the viewer are which manifest the objective understanding of visual culture inside the religious structure. The architectural style, various kinds of printed and painted images like, photographs, calendars, instructive texts, accessories, various crafts (such as plastic flowers, flower vases, floor mats made of regional grass, glass chandeliers, vessels) are apparatus of that visual world where 'the position of imaged 'I' introduces the position of the object, itself

²⁶⁰ "Secularism, understood as the attitude of mutual toleration among the religious communities comprising the nation, and of neutrality or non-discrimination on the part of the state in its dealings with the citizens, irrespective of their religious identity, apparently protects freedom of religion. On the basis of the Constitution itself, the Indian state has remained engaged from the very beginning with the religious life of its citizens and, what is more, in disparate ways-- Freedom of religion is an aspect of the liberal ideology of individualism, which, following the collapse of the communist alternative, is in today's world an ideal to strive for every- where. Understandably, although some- what paradoxically, freedom of religion is conceived broadly enough to include the freedom to profess no religion at all." For example See Madan T. N.: Freedom of Religion; *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 38, No. 11 (Mar. 15-21, 2003), pp. 1034-1041

separated and signifiable'²⁶¹. I 'see' the objects and spatiality of the chamber. It is the spatiality and the objects that appear in the photographs. These photographs are the productions of conversation between the photographer and I, the photographer's understanding of the space and objects and my queries. I suffered from prejudice regarding the objects inside the chamber. I had to explain to the photographer the visual documentation and had to repeatedly stress on the fact that I want to 'see' which I can not 'see'. Thus, the photographs of the inside space of the prayer chamber is constructed visually.²⁶² (Plate no. 559-563)

The door next to the Jumma masjid entrance looks like a facsimile copy of Jumma masjid's entrance. I stopped by *on-g/m* sign on the door. (Plate no.564) It is a house that belongs to a Hindu family. The spatial arrangement of the house is like the Jumma masjid. After the entrance there is an enclosed cubical that opens onto a courtyard. (Plate no.565-566) The courtyard has a *nat mandir*. (Plate no.567) There is a terracotta brick temple on the west side of the courtyard. The east facing temple has three-arched portico and a sanctum without idol. (Plate no. 567) One abandoned enameled copper *asana* is kept in

²⁶¹ Preziosi, Donald: *Rethinking Art History: Mediations on a Coy Science*, London, Yale university Press; 1989, p.68

²⁶² The operators of the apparatus – the researcher and the photographer perform an operation unlike that of the scientific draftsman in creating transparent or exploded views on data mass. Indeed, the primary task of the research might be seen as analogous to this later activity in its very pragmatics; establishing a stance from which the data mass is rendered transparent, its component parts displayed, and the logical connections between components described. Edgerton, Samuel Y., Jr. 'The Renaissance Artist as Quantifier.' in *The Perception of Pictures*. (ed.) Margaret Hagen. Vol.1; New York: Academic Press, 1980, pp.179-213.

the portico of the temple (Plate no.569). In one niche of the portico, lays a clay idol of Laxmi and a photo frame of Kali is up on the wall and worshipped on every Thursday. (Plate no.568) The façade of the portico, the sanctum and pillars of the portico are covered with terracotta plaques. (Plate no. 572-587)

The temple is in decrepit state and abandoned. The temple seems to be hundred years old.²⁶³ On the left side of the portico, the east has a boundary wall, which is the wall of the Jami mosque. In short, the rear wall of Jumma Masjid's prayer hall and the boundary wall of the house is the same wall. (Plate no. 566) In the south west side, there is a small, north facing Siva temple in *chala* style, built approximately forty to fifty years ago. (Plate no.588, 589) It is the *thakur ghar* of the house. The rooms of the residences are in the north. The temples inside the house are part of the domestic space not meant for public, not even for a person like me. Here, the structure I mention as 'temple' (house of the god), is not a temple but, is the '*thakur ghar*' of the house. I mention it as 'temple', because the structure looks like a temple. Moreover, I point that even if a structure looks like a temple or built in a typical temple style (*chala*, *rekha* or *ratna*), it may not be considered

²⁶³ Mr. Debdas Chattaraj is presently in residence. His father, Sri Easwar Ramkrishna Chattaraj, known as Habu thakur was the regular *purohit* of Radha Ballav temple of Burdwan Raj. Pranab Chand Mahatap, descendant of Burdwan Raj said that it was the Manmohini Gopal (relative of Burdwan Raj) *bari*. Manmohini deceased without a heir. The temple *purohit* used to stay in a room in their house. In short, the present resident of the house suffers from fear of losing the house, if any descendent of Burdwan Raj claims it. (Excerpt from the interview on 21st December 2005). I realized why I faced continuous resistance in seeing inside the house. Furthermore, the surname of the resident is Chatterjee. He introduces himself with Chattaraj and stress on the last three alphabets 'raj' of his altered surname, so that it appears and sound with a hint of link between him and Burdwan Raj.

as a temple, or independent house of the God (temple). In short, sometimes the use of the structure shapes its identity that is culture specific. Here, the temple like structure is the *thakur ghar* of the house. The activity in the *thakur ghar* happens according to the resident's daily schedule, except for some festivals. Furthermore, the *thakur ghar* reflects the economical conditions of the resident. For example, the present owner Debdas Chatteraj catches the train at 6:30 in the morning to go to Calcutta. He offers the food to god before that, except on Sundays and the days he does not go to Calcutta. Further more, it is interesting to note that this house (residence of an individual) and the Jumma masjid (public place for prayer) share a common boundary wall and same spatial plan. Moreover, it is important to note that the Sarbamangala temple, Khakkar Shah Dargah, Jumma masjid and the adjacent house and Pir Baharam Dargah have the similar spatial plan which is commonly accessible. (Plan no. 1, 2, 3, 4)

The Govind Das temple cum cultural centre neither is built in the typical Bengal brick temple style, nor does it have terracotta plaques on the façade like the temples, mentioned before. However, it is used as a 'temple' It has a *chala* type of *sikhara* (turret) on the roof (Plate no. 590) which gives its notable visibility in the landscape. Without the turret, the building does not have any separate identity. It merges with the residential houses of the local. (Plate no. 591, 592). The entrance opens into a large open ground that is used for festive gathering. (Plate no. 593- 598) After entering on the right side, a memorial pillar appears with a section of the controversial *Karcha* of Govind das. (Plate no.596) A section of the controversial Govinda Das *karcha* is inscribed in it. (Plate no. 597)

The architecture that is south facing appears on right side of the entrance. (Plate no. 598)The Govinda Das temple cum cultural centre has three rooms with an enclosed congregational hall and passages around the three rooms. (Plate no. 599-604) The middle room is for Radha, krishna, Chaitanya and Nityananda, painted clay figures with elaborate costume. (Plate no.605) Nikhil Pal, a potter had made these three figures. The side room on the west is the bed room of Radha-Krishna. (Plate no. 606, 608) Another room in the east is for Govinda Das, a seated figure, sculpted in wood. It is sculpted by Jateen Debnath, a carpenter by profession. (Plate no. 607, 609) There is a guest house in the west. I have already discussed why the structure has been named as 'Govind Dham'; I am addressing it as the Govind Das temple cum cultural centre. The nature of this quasi religious or cultural centre is displayed on the architecture itself. If any new component or element is added on the architecture it would be inaugurated by a social activist, political party leader (CPM) and government official, (Plate no. 612)

The donors' plaques are found on the wall of the architecture (Plate no.613-618). The pattern of the text in the plaques is almost like Sarbamangala Temple, but we do not find any mention on the amount of donation. The donors' plaques are fixed on the stair-cases and on the floor of the entrance of the main architecture. When the person dies of unnatural cause, the donors sometimes decide to put a plaque with the name of the person inscribed on the pathway, stair-cases, or on the floor. It is believed that the dust of a

number of devotees' feet would give relief to the soul of the deceased person and would free his or her family from the spell of bad luck. (Plate no. 618)²⁶⁴

The eleven days of *pancham dol* is the largest festival for Govinda Das temple cum cultural centre. The whole premises transforms into another structure (Plate no. 610, 611, 619) This center is not acknowledged by the primary centers of Gaudiya vaishnavism of Navadip, but they follow the modes and acts of the Gaudiya Vaishnavism. The persons who have *diksha* of Guadiya vaishanavism tries to hold the power and position in controlling the festival, ritual, programme and so on of *pancham dol*. (Plate no.623 -625) The *pancham dol* in Govinda Das temple cum cultural centre consist of celebration of Govinda Das's birth day , *kirtan*, cultural program, mass eating etc. (Plate no. 620,621,628) On this day, Govinda Das becomes a centre of attraction and celebration than Radha Krishna.

The celebration of Govinda Das's birthday appears as worshipping him as God. It starts in the morning with *nagar kirtan*. In *nagar kirtan*, a group of people (not necessary only vaishnavas, anybody can join) informs and reminds about his birthday through *kirtan* to the local inhabitants. First he would be awakened from sleep. Then he would be given a bath through a ritual and dressed with a costume of vaishnavite saint and presented in public with *mridang* , an instrument used in *kirtan* by vaishnavite devotee. He would be

²⁶⁴ One of the donors's narrated devastating experience of the death, when they were on the run as a refugee.



adored by *kirtan* and *arati* and offered breakfast, lunch and evening snacks, which is continuously distributed as *prasadam* amongst the devotees and gathered people in the premises. The Radha krishna , Chaitanya and Nityananda are also attired with new color and costumes. (Plate no. 622) It is important to mention that there is no such specific ritual to conceptualize the birth of Govinda Das. The potter (who made the figures of Radha- Krishna, Chaitanya and Nityananda) or any of his family members puts a new paint on the figures. (Plate no. 626) Even the carpenter who sculpted the figure of Govinda Das puts a new varnish coat on the figure. This act is imagined as newness of the festival.

Whole night *kirtan*²⁶⁵ is a mode of devotion and celebration. Simultaneously, they have a cultural program where the Municipality chairman and local MLA are invited to inaugurate the program. The cultural program consists of the songs and *giti natya* (play with song and dance) of Rabindranath Tagore, is²⁶⁶ performed by young boys and girls of

²⁶⁵ See Sanyal, Hiteshranjan: *Bangla Kirtaner Itihas* (History of Bengal kirtan), Calcutta, K. P. Bagchi and Co., 1989

²⁶⁶ Rabindranath Tagore (7 May 1861 – 7 August 1941) also known by the sobriquet Gurudev, was a Bengali polymath. He was a poet, visual artist, playwright, novelist, educationist, social reformer, nationalist, business-manager and composer whose works reshaped Bengali literature and music in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He became Asia's first Nobel Laureate when he won the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature. A Pirali Brahmin from Calcutta, Bengal, Tagore first wrote poems at the age of eight. At the age of sixteen, he published his first substantial poetry under the pseudonym *Bhanushingho* ("Sun Lion") and wrote his first short stories and dramas in 1877. In later life Tagore protested strongly against the British Raj and gave his support to the Indian Independence Movement. Tagore's life work endures, in the form of his poetry and the institution he founded, Visva-Bharati University.

the local residents. The mass eating is another significant act of *pancham dol* where, all the gathered, invited, wanted and unwanted people take food together. It seems the food which is offered to Radha- Krishan and Govinda Das are cooked in that system only. After cooking, the food is offered to Radha- Krishan and Govinda Das and the people together. It is not like Radha- Krishan and Govinda Das would have the meal first and then the gathered crowd. Radha- Krishan, Govinda Das and the gathered people take their lunch together on that day. Later on, the lunch of Radha- Krishan and Govinda Das is distributed as *prasad* to the people.

Kankaleshwari temple in Kanchan nagar is the neighbour structure of the Govinda Das temple cum cultural centre. This south facing temple is built in the *navaratna* style. (Plate no. 631, 632) Both have common users. The entrance of the temple is east facing, in front of *nat mandir*. The boundary walls and entrances are of a later construction. In fact, the temple has boundary walls only on three sides – east side of the temple does not have a boundary wall yet. In short, the precise temple premise is not demarcated yet. The temple has a quad between the *nat mandir* and the main structure. (Plate no. 653) The *nat mandir* is pillared, flat roofed, and is of a later construction of the temple premises. (Plate no.

Tagore wrote novels, short stories, songs, dance-dramas, and essays on political and personal topics. *Gitanjali* (Song Offerings), *Gora* (Fair-Faced), and *Ghare-Baire* (The Home and the World) are among his best-known works. His verse, short stories, and novels, which often exhibited rhythmic lyricism, colloquial language, meditative naturalism, and philosophical contemplation, received worldwide acclaim. Tagore was also a cultural reformer and polymath who modernised Bengali art by rejecting strictures binding it to classical Indian forms. Two songs from his canon are now the national anthems of Bangladesh and India: the *Amar Shonar Bangla* and the *Jana Gana Mana* respectively.

633,634) The main temple consists of three sanctums and a covered entrance. (Plate no.635 -637) The façade of the temple has terracotta plaques, like Sarbamangala temple. (Plate no. 638- 640)

The main sanctum has the idol of kankaleshwari in stone relief. (Plate no.637, 644, 645) Two sanctums, attached on both sides of the main ones have a Siva linga. (Plate no.646,647) Besides the main temple on the west side there is *bhog ghar*. (Plate no. 648, 658 -660) It was the room of Kamalakanta Parbrajak, (*sadhu* of Dumur dah Asram, 24 Pargana, West Bengal) Swami Birajananda Giri and Swami Dhubananda Giri , Swami Paramananda, transformed it into *bhog ghar*. (Plate no. 649- 652) Though the photographs of these *sadhus* are worshipped, they do not have any confirmed altar. In 2003 and 2004 I found these photographs were in the main sanctum and kept under the feet of the Kankaleswari . In 2007 those photographs were kept with a photograph of Kali in the *bhog ghar* which at one time was the room of these *sadhus*. In the east a little further from the temple, a shrine like structure seems to be established on *panchamundi asana*.²⁶⁷ (Plate no. 654-655). The living quarter of the temple *purohit* is behind the temple. (Plate no.656-657) The plaque, dedicated to Swami Birajananda Maharaj, (b. chaitra 1308-death 16th Poush 1388)²⁶⁸.by Srimati Durga Bala Singha (Plate no. 646) is fixed on the *asana* of Siva. In case of Sarbamanagal and Govinda Dham, we can trace the donor's relationship or kinship with the person on whose memory the plaque is placed.

²⁶⁷ Chapter II, page no. 72 to 74

²⁶⁸ In Christian era 1901 -30th December 1381.

I found a dilapidated temple in the open barren land, just opposite to Kankaleswari temple in 2004.(plate no.661) A temple like this could be noticed through various pockets of the Burdwan town. (Plate no: 662) Sometime, these temples are abandoned, sometimes rejuvenated with new idols. (Plate no.465-466) It depends upon the economical condition of the inhabitants nearest to the temple. For example, the rundown temple in the ground opposite to the Kankaleswari temple (plate no.661, 663) was reconstructed and renovated in 2007(plate no.664 -668). The nearest inhabitants of the temple surrounding were planning to put Visnu in the sanctum. It is significant to mark that the terracotta plaques on the face of the renovated temple have similarities with the Chadreswar Siva temple and Indreswar Siva temple of Sarbamangala premises. The point I already addressed in the discussion of Sarbamangala temple would be emphasized here once again. As I said that terracotta plaques on the temple façade now is perceived as an ornate on the temple. The typical, regional identity of the temple structure of West Bengal has already been established and wide spread as ‘terracotta temples of Bengal’.²⁶⁹ Thus, when a dismayed temple is reconstructed, attention goes to cover the façade of the temple with terracotta panels by maintaining the stereotypical identity of the ‘Bengal temple’. For the worshipper the act of *pūja* is more important. For them, the oldness (age)

²⁶⁹See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architecture_of_Bengal;

<http://www.tabblo.com/studio/stories/view/112746/>; <http://www.craftandartisans.com/clay-terracotta-of-west-bengal.html>;<http://www.anothersubcontinent.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=8935>

<http://cshyamal.sulekha.com/blog/post/2009/01/terra-cotta-temples-of-bengal-v.htm>, <http://www.team-bhp.com/forum/travelogues/55513-terracotta-temples-bishnupur.html>

of the temple could be established through practice. When the basic outlook is taken care of and if there is any anarchy in terms of style, technique, structures, between the old version and the renovated appearance of the temple, it does not matter to the day to day temple users. If it matters to anybody it is the researcher, connoisseur etc. Today's Kankaleswari temple was also in a decaying stage like the newly renovated temple in the ground, opposite to Kankaleswari (Plate no. 663-668) where *sadhus* used to practice their rituals. It used to be recognized as *asryam* and not temple. When the Kankaleswari sculpture was discovered, it was decided by the *sadhus* and local people to establish its *asana* there.²⁷⁰ The people started referring to it as 'Kankaleswari temple', because of its physiognomy appearance²⁷¹. On the top of that the living *sadhus* rituals are added to give. This is a common practice of the people to activate a ramshackle religious structure, anyhow, anytime.

Jagrayata is the word, which is commonly used to suggest the preference and popularity of the temple and its deity. The word means 'awake' which indicates that the idol is always awake and conscious. This adjective of a temple is spread orally. It has been connected with the concept of wish making, specifically when the worshipper starts believing that the deity of the temple fulfils their wishes. The Kankaleswari temple is famous as being *jagrayata*. However, in front of the gorgeous ambience of Sarbamangala temple, the Kankaleswari appearance in the landscape is docile. In short, there is no market that has grown outside the Kankaleswari temple. The maintenance is done by a

²⁷⁰ see Chapter II – page number 91 to 97

²⁷¹ I think it is a stone sculpture of Sen Dynasty.

committee, selected by local inhabitants. The presence of the trustee can be seen and sensed in the premises. In short, the authority of the temple is yet to be established in true sense. The devotees have to bring the elements of *puja*, since they are not available outside the temple.

Bon Masjid is not as popular as Khakkar Shah Dargah. It shared the similarities with Pir Bahram and Jumma masjid from the perspective of architectural features. It has not receive the attention like Pir Bahram Dargah and Jumma masjid. Very limited people use this structure. In short, it appears as minor structure of Burdwan. Bon Masjid is single domed mosque. After the experience in Jumma masjid, I was not surprised when I was allowed to see the prayer chamber. The masjid is built on an open podium and has a small prayer hall with *qibla*, and four minarets. (Plate no. 669, 670-671, 673, 674) The mosque got its name because of its landscape, not because of the historical figure that is believed to have built this masjid.²⁷² (Plate no. 675, 678, 672, 673) The architectural style of the mosque reminds sultanlic architecture. Besides the Masjid there is a small *mazhar* with flat roof and four pillars. It is open on four sides. (Plate no. 677, 678) People offer terracotta votive offerings as *manat*. (Plate no. 676- 680) This kind of terracotta votive offerings are categorized as 'ageless' by Stella Kramrisch, an eminent scholar in Indian sculpture, because of the forms which can not claim its period's identity .

²⁷² Refer Chapter II , page no.102

It is a tomb of Waiz Ali Sufi Shah, a pir. The *sebayit* of the *mazhar*, Hasan Ansari, migrated from Begusarai district of Bihar. (Plate no. 679) It is important to note that it does not matter who first built this masjid. It matters who is maintaining it. The regular users of the masjid reveal that Raj kumar Shah, owner of Nataraj Cinema Hall was the first donor of the masjid. It seems because of him the dome of the masjid has survived. After that, out of collective donation, the mosque was repaired. No donor plaque could be traced, but the name of the donors move orally and the name of the religious structure starts traveling. New history starts being added. Thus, it is said that there was only a room of the masjid. The Bon masjid is up and out on public donation. Construction started taking place since 1991.

When the donor name moves frequently through the daily users, it not only brings the popularity of the structure, but the commoner's psyche takes interest to trace the reason of the donation in case of a particular structure. This process brings more donations for that particular religious structure.

Here, I want to bring back the point, mentioned in the first chapter. In the first chapter I traced the scholarship on the Bengal religious structures and its historical and on a historical reading. Richard Eaton cited that 'Mosques *patronized* by ruler and wealthy patrons, *were typically monumental structures built of durable materials like brick or stone which explain why they have survived into the present*. On the other hand, there are

many more smaller and humbler mosques that have not physically survived into the present, and that were not endowed with dated inscription tablets. Built of ordinary bamboos and thatching, and *patronized not by court but by local gentry*, hundreds of such mosques appeared in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁷³ Two questions arise here. First, is it the durability of the materials is the surviving factor of the religious structures in Bengal (both West Bengal, state of India and Bangladesh, independent country), built in the past. Usually, 'the past' indicates the general understanding of ancient or medieval period, in case of religious structure. Second, is the court patronization is the safe guard for the religious structure of the past in order to exist today. When the court of the past (Ancient or Medieval or Mughal, whatever) is not there, who takes the position of the so called 'court's patronizations'. Is it the trust board of the religious structure or the donors, or the state polity or an individual's conscience or these entire agencies together? These questions are important, since they are responsible for shaping the identity of the religious structure today and for some clarification.

I point out here, that the trust board, the religious structure, the donors, the state polity or other political party and non-thinking everyday users hold the position of 'court patronization' today. These entire agencies together or in singular renovate and reconstruct the religious structure and manifest its age in the context of each agency's requirement. The religious structures, I have discussed— Sarbamangal temple, Govinda

²⁷³ italics mine. Eaton Richard : *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204- 1760*; (OUP, 1994), pp.230 – 231

Das temple cum cultural centre, Kankaleswari temple, Jumma masjid and its adjacent house, Pir Baharam, Khakkar Shah, Bon masjid are examples. The fabrication of the architectural style fills up the missing and broken area of the structure. As I mentioned, it does not matter whether the position can be dated back to Medieval or not, but it looks 'old'. Simultaneously, the durability of the material becomes insignificant to the extent of 'sustainability' and 'surviving' of religious structures. For example: A cannon of the Burdwan Raj was placed in the Sarbamangala premises in order to avoid the surrender of license as per the Arms Act of 1918²⁷⁴. While colonial officials proceeded to apply the Arms Act of 1918 Sri Kumar Mitra and his group (marked as *satyagrahi* in pre-colonial Indian and acknowledged as 'dedicated citizen' by Burdwan town now) protested on the religious ground. It was said that every year at *astami puja* of the *durga puja* begins with a firing of the cannon. It does not belong to any individual or a family (perhaps suggest Burdwan Raj), but a Hindu community. Thus the displacement of the cannon is an objection on religious rights and rites of Hindus. Considering the seriousness of the protest, the colonial government issued back the license with the order of permanent location of the cannon in the temple premises. In 1960 S. R. Das, district-governor got the license order from independent government of India, putting forward same argument. Furthermore, in 9th October 1997, as usual *astami puja* of the *durga puja* was planned with firing of the cannon. Unfortunately, the cannon blasted and a number of people died and the cannon was handed over to the government. This incident happened in a small town, but was not rare. For Instance, on August 3, 2008 rumours of a landslide in Naina

²⁷⁴See, INDIA.HLDeb 14November1918 vol.32 c c114-24,
http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1918/nov/14/india#column_116

Devi temple and on September 30, 2008, a stampede at the Chamunda temple of Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur during the Navaratri festival killed a number of devotees. Thus, the durability of the material of religious structure or object placed in the religious structure is not in doubt or debatable for its existence.

Furthermore, the existence of religious structures in terms of majority and minority has a string in the policies of the agencies such as the people who use structure in terms of devotion or prayer, the priests, *pujaris*, *mutuwallis* are the another group who control the devotion and prayer, the traders who deploy the existence of the structure and day to day worshippers, the state who authorize the whole system. (The managing board of the each religious structure has at least two people from Burdwan Municipality or district office). In T. N. Madan's words, it 'lies largely in the majority- minority conundrum which has acquired near-pathological proportions in India today. Nobody is in a majority, so conceived, or out of it, because of ascribed, or near-ascribed, attributes of race, gender, language or religion. Majorities based on such attributes are rightly judged to be unfair winners in political games. A questionable assumption, however, underlies the existence of majorities of this kind, namely that they are internally undifferentiated in terms of social customs, economic interests and political loyalties, and are, therefore, able to appear and even act as monoliths, as it were. No religious community of India is, however, internally so undifferentiated'.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁵ Madan T. N.: Whither Indian Secularism? In *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Jul., 1993), pp. 688-689