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READING CORNE

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Niyogi Books wishes you a happy 2023! Have a novel new year.

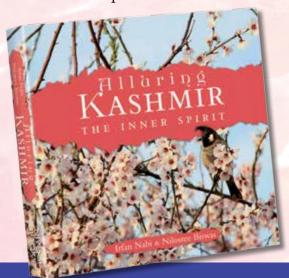


THE CRANE'S CALL

Extracted from 'Introduction: The wooden crane', Alluring Kashmir: The Inner Spirit by Irfan Nabi & Nilosree Biswas

The wooden crane was a gift from an aunt who had visited Kashmir three decades ago and on her return had brought my mother sundry gifts—a Kashmir shawl, some walnuts and this crane made of wood, neatly packed in a cardboard box.

The crane somehow created a build-up of anticipation and wonder about Kashmir and I realised I had a strong urge to visit the place.



I waited for an opportunity and then one day my work brought me to Kashmir. I landed at Srinagar airport on a pleasant and crisp October morning.

From my research, I was aware of some well-known facts about Kashmir. The Pashmina shawls and the rolling green meadows of Gulmarg, of the Kashmiri carpets—each piece a sheer work of art; beautiful handicrafts that were a part of society and legacy. I knew about Kashmir's rich economic and cultural history as a significant part of the discourse related to the Silk Route, of Emperor Jahangir being in love with the Valley and Henry Cartier Bresson, a legendary French photographer, visiting the Valley to record its life and people in

the last century. I also gathered facts that were more public and common knowledge—about the movies of the 1960s, 70s and 80s which had been shot in Kashmir, that it snows heavily in winter, that the people are rice eaters and their houses look as beautiful as they do and least to say, their world famous apples and walnuts.

With this essential packet of information I started my relationship with Kashmir. There wasn't any guide for me and my relationship started from scratch. I was lucky that my imagination was not laced by cinematic projections of Kashmir and nor by the media inputs. Yet there was a large sized blob of fantasy which I was keen to check out once I landed in Srinagar.

My first trip of 10 days was in a professional capacity and I was

back after a brief stint. Few apparent things and moments got imprinted like the first encounter with goshtaba, which I now know is locally called goshtaabe, a delicacy of mutton being pounded into meatball and cooked in yogurt, and the culture of handmade breads. Also, the unforgettable softness of the autumn light that seemed unreally textured and mellow of which I had no earlier memory other than in the novels of Franz Kafka. I settled back in my daily life but Kashmir by then had created a pull in me and I knew I would



Nilosree Biswas

go back.

Whether bought from a street market for a few rupees or excavated by archeologists from historical ruins, objects serve as containers of memories and desires. A simple wooden crane compelled the writer to visit the beautiful valley of Kashmir which she fell in love with; while Garry Weare associates yet another object with his memory of Kashmir—the iconic Kashmiri houseboat.

MAKING A HOME IN THE HOUSEBOAT

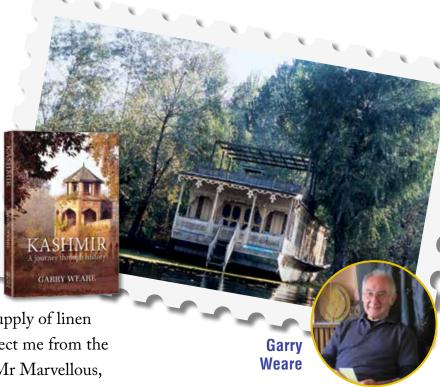
Extracted from 'Prologue: Where Three Worlds Meet', Kashmir: A journey through history by Garry Weare

The intricately carved houseboats of Kashmir were an enduring legacy of British visitors at the turn of the 20th century, who, prohibited from owning land in Kashmir, headed to the water instead. My houseboat was moored on the backwaters of Nagin Lake, about 8 kilometres outside Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. 'New Maharajah's Palace' (a name that was registered well before I assumed occupancy) was neither grand

nor luxurious, but it suited my needs, with a lounge and two bedrooms, one being converted into a study. Much to the consternation of the houseboat family, I removed the net curtains, ornate coffee tables and display cabinets, the walnut bureau and the glass chandeliers found on most deluxe boats, whose general decor was set in a time warp circa 1930s. They were replaced with comfortable cane furniture specially ordered

from Delhi, bookcases with shelves packed with accounts of Himalayan travellers and explorers, a threadbare rug that covered the wooden floorboards

and an ample supply of linen curtains to protect me from the prying eyes of Mr Marvellous, the Flower Man. Most mornings I would be awoken with 'Good morning Mr Garry, I am bringing your flowers for you'.



A sales pitch that he would repeat in his sing-song voice as he advanced up the wooden steps leading onto my boat.

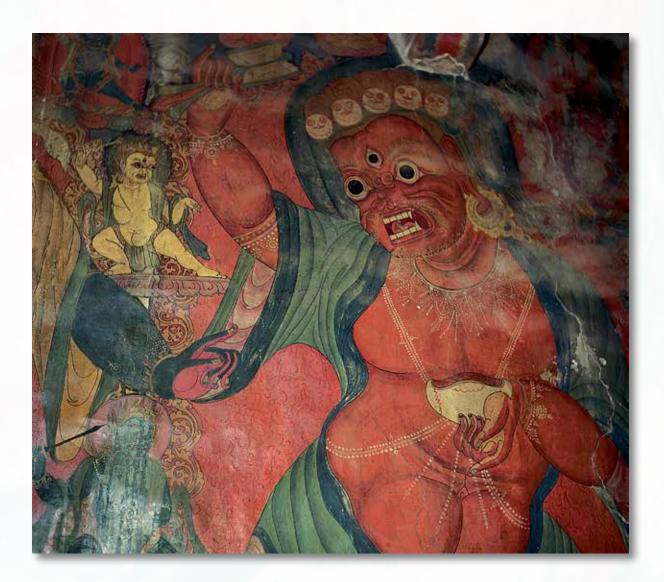


The Terrifying Beauty of Vajrabhairava

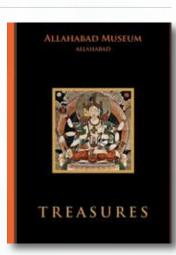
Vajrabhairava's appearance is as formidable as his name. With nine faces, sixteen feet, and thirty-four arms possessing destructive weapons, Vajrabhairava is a form of Yamantaka, the destroyer of death. However, the majority of Vajrabhairava's following comes from the sects Gelukpas and Sakyapas of the Tibetan region.

Tibetan exegesis interprets the characteristics of Vajrabhairava as follows: the ascetic topknot, standing up, means that he is one with the five mystic gnoses. His terrifying aspect drives all hostile forces (Mara) away. The sixteen feet of Vajrabhairava signify the sixteen kinds of insubstantiality. The erect phallus signifies his eternal state of bliss. The thirty-four arms signify the thirty-four coefficients of enlightenment. The knife slays ignorance, the pestle signifies the concentration of awareness, the razor slays sin, the axe cuts off the mind's error, the spear annihilates false theories, the club breaks down the veil derived from Karma, and so on...

If scrutinized as a historical and cultural artifact, Vajrabhairava's paintings are a profound peek into Tibetan culture and art, and brings to light the often overlooked but highly intricate artistic heritage of the region.







The Banned **Books of Olden** Calcutta

It was the latter half of the nineteenth century. As the urbanization and infrastructural development of Calcutta grew, so did the number and variety of criminal offences. Determined to put a stop to all activities that threatened societal morality, the authorities started to take strict measures against prostitution, brothelkeeping, trafficking, printing of obscene advertisement like those promoting Kamoddipan (lust-stirring) oil, and the sale of lewd books and pictures. The homegrown printing presses, which had come to be known collectively as the Battala press, became a threat to this project as they kept pumping out lurid and obscene books.

Multi-religious Coins of the Kushans

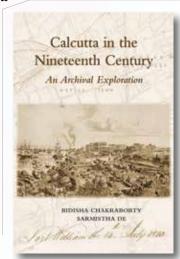
The coins that were in circulation during the reign of Kanishka have been a topic of great interest amongst scholars. Kanishka was a ruler of the Kushan Dynasty in circa first century CE. Coins from this time provide a deeper insight into the sovereign's psyche, religiosity, beliefs, and philosophy.

One of the rare characteristics about Kanishka's coins is the range of gods they depict. From Hindu and Greek deities, to Iranian and Bactrian, Kanishka's range is almost sweeping, especially considering that he was himself a Buddhist and convened the fourth Buddhist council.

There are at least three very important revelations in the present artifact. First, it clearly establishes that Kanishka created a new era, because it is dated in year one. Second, it shows Kanishka to be a

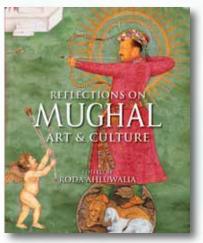
nationalist: he explicitly states that he is recording this inscription in the Arian (or Bactrian) language. Greek had been the lingua franca of the region and indeed the first coins of Kanishka carry Greek legends like that of his forebears. Third, it suggests that at least

at the time his reign started, Kanishka was a follower of Iranian religion since he gave prime place among the listed pantheon to the Goddess Nana, but nevertheless honoured deities from different traditions.



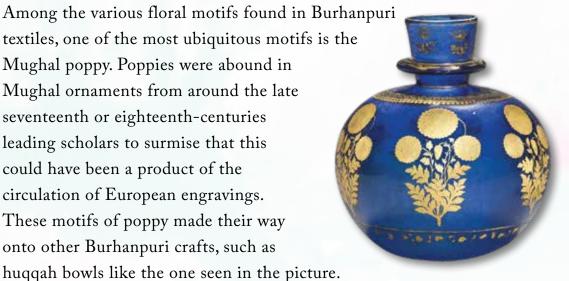
The Indulgent Mughal Huqqah Bowl

hough existing research on Burhanpur is few and far between, from European travelogues to Persian & Hindi works, many contemporary textual works attest that the city held a special position in Mughal history. Known for its textile and expansive markets selling Malwa opium, tobacco and cotton, it was a city of consumerism where young Mughal nobles were sent away from the imperial court on short military assignments. Burhanpur provided these young nobles with the reprieve they desperately sought. Jahangirnama notes that both Prince Daniyal & Shah Navaz Khan drank themselves to death on such assignments. This hedonistic nature of the city is reflected in its arts & crafts as well.



ARMS & ARMOUR

Among the various floral motifs found in Burhanpuri textiles, one of the most ubiquitous motifs is the Mughal poppy. Poppies were abound in Mughal ornaments from around the late seventeenth or eighteenth-centuries leading scholars to surmise that this could have been a product of the circulation of European engravings. These motifs of poppy made their way onto other Burhanpuri crafts, such as



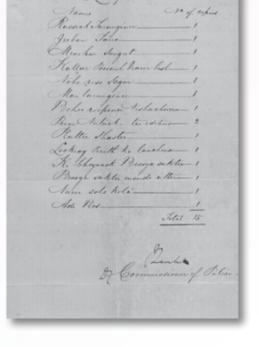
The Explosive Gunpowder Flasks of Rajputana

Meant to store barut or gunpowder, these unique carved priming flasks are made from the horns of Chinkara or Indian gazelles. Though they bear many resemblance to seventeenth-century Mughal ivory flasks, which had multiple animals carved onto their unpainted bodies, the painted bodies and the shape of distinct animals in these flasks firmly place them as late-eighteenth or nineteenth-century Rajput priming flasks.

The Chinkara-shaped flask possesses a black painted upper body and unpainted lower section. The animal wears reins and saddles indicating that it is a domesticated chinkara, the kind which are seen pulling small carts in Mughal and Rajput miniature paintings. The other flask, painted green, is carved in the striking shape of a makara or alligator swallowing a boar whole which holds the stopper in its mouth. Interestingly, the makara flask attempts to capture an aggressive wild moment, and while the Chinkara is portrayed as domesticated, the

craftsman has taken care to emphasise the masculinity of the animal.

In 1874, the government proscribed fifteen obscene books of Battala publication and booksellers were arrested for hawking improper books. This list included some hilarious yet scandalous titles like Kuller Purush Narir Bosh, Ki Bhoyanok Bessya Suktee, and Adi Ros among others. Ironically enough, to ascertain how much damage these books could have wrought, the government had the most obscene portions of these books translated into English and evaluated by an Englishman who felt that reading these portions were "no enviable task..." These frantic attempts to suppress obscene literature testify to the amount of importance given to social morality by the British administrators.

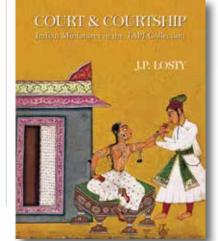




The Subversive Sensuous **Paintings**

This iconic painting was created during the era of Raja Man Singh (1550-1640) who was quite fond of erotic subjects in art and was frequently presented with nazars or gifts by his subjects who sought his patronage or goodwill. When viewed with this knowledge, the painting points towards the tendency of the monarch towards voyeurism. The voyeur exists not just outside the painting, looking at it as a work of art, but also inside, as if the women's drinking session is being intruded by the male gaze.

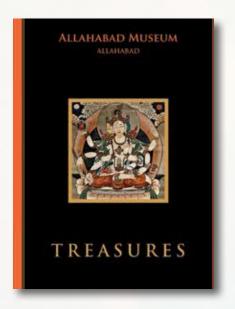
The embrace has an unmistakable air of homoeroticism to it, which is heightened by the wine flask & the cup held by the woman on the right, who assumes the stereotypically masculine role through her emboldened gesture, but simultaneously acts as a wine server who were always women, hence resisting the reductive interpretation of the relationship through the lens of the male-female binary. The woman on the left assumes the more passive role through her modest attire and her expression.





The Gun of Chandrasekhar Azad

The day was 27 February 1931. The young Indian man who had been exchanging bullets with the police since dawn, in the Alfred Park in Allahabad, finally succumbs to the onslaught and goes down in history as a martyr. Azad was drawn into the Indian national movement at a young age when his participation in Gandhi's non-cooperation movement landed him in jail. The 15-year-old Chandra Shekhar Tiwari had told the police that his name was Azad (Urdu: 'Free' or 'Liberated') and his address was "prison". Known for his organizational skills, Azad played a key role in reorganizing the HRA as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association.



Despite being constantly on the move to avoid imprisonment, Azad was betrayed to the police when he went to meet a fellow revolutionary at the Alfred Park. After battling the police force alone to give his companion a chance to escape, Azad embraced martyrdom. Fiery debates exist on whether he was felled by the bullets of the police force or shot himself in order fulfill his pledge of always remaining 'azad'; but the gun that Chandra Shekhar Azad wielded on that fateful day, his Colt Model 1903 Pocket Hammerless semi-automatic 0.32 bore, now resides within

a bulletproof enclosure at the Allahabad Museum, built right next to the Alfred Park, which has been renamed to 'Azad Park' in his honour.

Through the Painted Glass

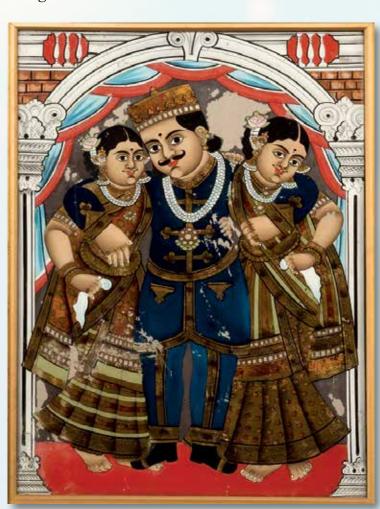
'Reverse Glass Paintings' – the name sounds peculiar, much like the art the medium depicts. The artwork is painted on a transparent glass such that it may be viewed from the other side through the glass. The technique originated in medieval Europe and was mainly used to depict religious works; its popularity in medieval Europe led to artform's dissemination in India, China, and Japan.

By the early nineteenth century, the technique had already found a firm footing in the subcontinent and Indian artists had adapted it to reflect Indian culture.

One of the most prominent features of the painting is its colour. The hues are of darker shades, done consciously to complement the setting –possibly of a courtesan's abode. While the origin of the artform lay in religious depictions, this painting by an

Indian artist not only secularized the form by negotiating with a non-religious theme, but subverted it by choosing a subject matter that could be considered scandalous and controversial.

Often relegated to folk art, this obscure artform deserves more recognition than it has received.





Spoons, cigarette cases, ashtrays, jewelry boxes, *paandans*, and perfume containers are among the incredible variety of items created through the delicate art of filigree by the silversmiths of the Kareemnagar region in Telengana.

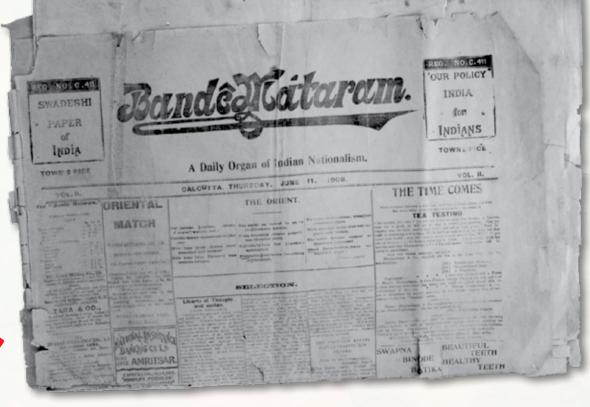
The artisans twist the delicate silver wire into loops and patterns to produce intricate lace-like appearance. The craft flourished during the reign of the Nizams of Hyderabad as the craftsmen were offered patronage and urged to create gorgeous silver plates, elaborate trays (like the leaf-shaped tray seen here), and paandans.

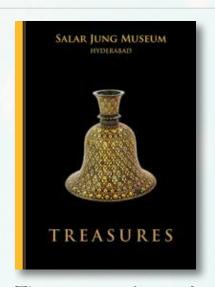


A 1908 Issue with Swami Vivekananda's Message

The phrase Bande Mataram emerged from Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's Ananda Math and took root so inextricably in the Indian consciousness that it has since become synonymous with the very idea of India.

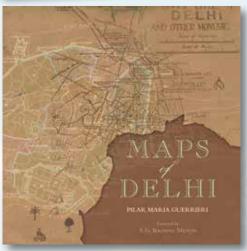
Vivekananda's relationship to the concept of matram or 'mother' is not just biological and filial, but deeply spiritual, owing to his teacher Ramakrishna who worshipped the deity Kali as well as his wife Sarada Devi as divine mothers.





The ancient tradition of chewing paan or betel leaf is as integral to Indian culture as is the tea ceremony to Japan. The ornate silver-filigreed pandaan is only one of the various exquisite dishes and containers created by artisans for the preparation of paan.





Sri Aurobindo was the editor of the newspaper Bande Matram that began in 1905 in collaboration with Bipin Chandra Pal. Its undaunted criticism of the exploitation by the British led to the oppressive censorship of the press through the Press Act 1910 and was pivotal in setting the stage for later milestones in Indian journalism.

"Liberty of thought and action is the only condition of life, of growth and wellbeing. Where it does not exist, the man, the race, the nation must go down."

The echoes of J.S Mill are unmistakably heard in this phrase, but the point that Vivekanand is indicating at is perhaps this: if it is acceptable for the colonizer to champion the liberty of thought and action as their basic right, why is it a crime for an Indian subject to strive for the same?



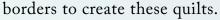
The Joint Water & Sewage Board came into existence in 1926 and was responsible for the operation and maintenance of waterworks in the municipalities of Delhi. The map on the left provides the layout of the 'Trunk Mains', essentially the larger-diameter distribution pipeline network that transferred water from one general area to another. Primary amongst these is the 'Board's Mains' line, which, much like a central artery, dissects the map, beginning at 'Wazirabad Water Intake Works' and terminating at the 'Cantonment Reservoir'. Along its course, it passes through several waterworks and reservoirs, namely 'Hindu Rao Reservoir', 'Mutiny Memorial Reservoir', 'Jhandewala Reservoir', and 'Talkatora Reservoir'. Demarcation of the individual zones or sectors located along the main water channels and strategically supplied by these reservoirs or waterworks is affected by a color coded 'reference' at the top of the map.

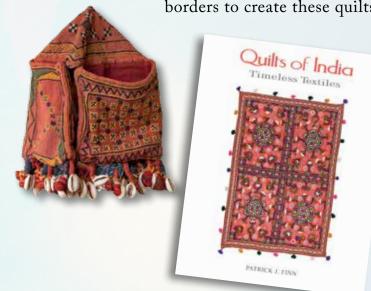


The Vivid Quilts of Karnataka

Though the colourful quilts of Karnataka are a fascinating sight for tourists, for the quilters, it is no different from other utilitarian objects. Made from scraps of recycled clothes, they characterize the Indian attitude of not wasting anything. The Banjaras, a nomadic tribe of Rajput lineage, quilt squares of forty to fifty centimeters incorporating into their quilts techniques they encountered on their journeys such as *kasuti* (an ambroidery style), applique, ornamentations, and even block printing.

Geometrical shapes like triangles, circles and irregular patterns rendered in dramatic contrasting colours on loosely woven cotton dyed in indigo or madder come together with meticulously sewn





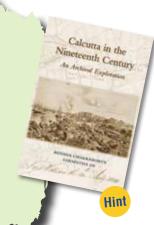
Q1. Who of the following was accused in the Alipore Bomb case? A. SURENDRANATH BANERJEE B. JATIN DAS C. AUROBINDO GHOSH D. BIPIN CHANDRA PAL Hint

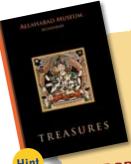
Q2. Amul's 'Butter Girl' has become one of India's most beloved advertising icons, but she was not a part of Amul's journey from the beginning. In which year was the 'Amul Girl' first created?

> B. 1994 A. 1966 D. 1956 C. 1949

Q3. Lord Minto, the Viceroy of India, wanted to invite Rajen Mookerjee to dine at the Bengal Club. He was not allowed to do so because the club allowed only white people. As a result of this incident, a club was founded with a membership policy not dictated by race. Name the club.

B. BENGAL CLUB A. CALCUTTA CLUB D. CALCUTTA GYMKHANA C. TOWN HALL **TENNIS CLUB**





Q4. The Gandhi Memorial Vehicle was a large lorry designed for a procession to be taken out for the immersion of the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi after his death. Where is this car now?

B. ALLAHABAD MUSEUM A. THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON C. NATIONAL MUSEUM, DELHI D. INDIAN MUSEUM, KOLKATA

Q5. Vajrabhairava is a deity featured significantly in Tibetan art. He is also one of the forms of Yamantaka, the destroyer of death. How many arms and legs does Vajrabhairava have?

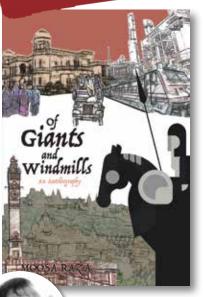


A. 25 HANDS AND 10 LEGS **B. 34 HANDS AND 16 LEGS**

C. 20 HANDS AND 8 LEGS C. 30 HANDS AND 15 LEGS

> Please send in your answers at broadcast@niyogibooksindia.com by 25th February 2023

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

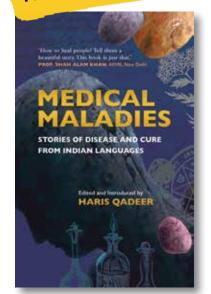


Of Giants and Windmills is an elaborately layered account of an IAS officer's experiences and encounters with maharajas, politicians, tribals, tigers and a variety of other inhabitants of the country. With tongue-in-cheek humour, the author details his head-on collisions with public figures, gold smugglers and bureaucrats, and his attempts to deal with them with tact while trying to hold his own. Raza describes well-known figures, including C.V. Raman, Morarji Desai, Indira Gandhi and others, with a lot of wit, honesty and empathy—they live again in these pages.

More often than not, those who have had anything interesting and relevant to say in their memoirs have been the ones who defied, dared, and delivered despite all odds. Of Giants and Windmills is one such book by former Indian Administrative Service (LAS) Officer Moosa Raza.

Saurabh Sharma, Business Standard

FICTION | TRANSLATION



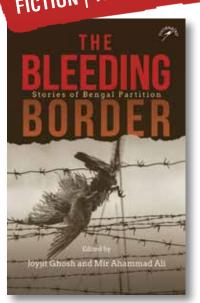
This pioneering anthology brings together 19 short stories by authors including Tagore, Premchand, and Manto, as well as medical practitioners such as Rashid Jahan and Shirin Shrikant Valavade. Translated into English from Indian languages— Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Kashmiri, Marathi, Malayalam, Punjabi, Odia, and Urdu, it offers a new understanding of the interrelationship of literature and medicine by demonstrating a spectrum of medical cultures in India.

Delineating a range of diseases, healing, and allied concerns in India, Medical Maladies depict modern medical professionals such as doctors,

nurses, surgeons, as well as traditional practitioners such as vaids, hakims, kavirajs, quacks, and folk healers.

The stories in this book look at how the different cultural norms and superstitions in India influence the way we think about diseases and medical procedures, the unique dynamics between doctors and patients, and the nuances in women's healthcare in a patriarchal country such as ours.

FICTION | TRANSLATION



When Cyril Radcliffe was asked by the British rulers to draw a line of demarcation for two communities living in India, hardly a living soul could imagine the vast devastation it would bring upon the people of India in its wake and how the Partition tragedy will pan out.

The Bleeding Border is an anthology of twentyfour partition stories written by both prominent and lesser-known authors from West Bengal and Bangladesh (then, East Pakistan). The poignant descriptions of various forms of violence, tension, and anxiety at the porous border of the two countries make these stories disturbing reading.

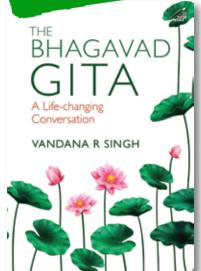


Joyjit Ghosh is a Professor of English, at Vidyasagar University and is an avid translator.

Mir Ahammad Ali is an Assistant Professor of English, pursuing doctoral research on the Partition.



SELF HELP



For most of us the Gita evokes an image of Krishna addressing Arjuna who is dutifully kneeling before him with folded hands, with a chariot and the battlefield as a backdrop. We have seen versions of this image on wall calendars, diaries, amateur paintings, and on walls of religious spaces. Year after year, our exposure to the Gita remains limited to these fleeting visual engagements as they become part of our muscle memory as we go about our chores.

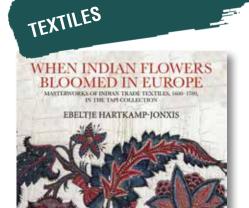
The Bhagavad Gita: A Life Changing **Conversation**, as the title suggests,

is a modern-day life lesson from each section of the Bhagavad Gita. Far from cramming a few didactic verses, this narrative comes out of the scripture of the holy book, and presents it as it is, in the backdrop of modern interpretations. And guess what? This book is introduced from a non-believer's perspective who connects the teachings of the Gita with current concepts of life skills.

> Vandana R Singh is an author, translator, editor, and a PhD in Indian writings in English.

During the nineteenth-century in Bengal, the leading men of society began questioning some of the pernicious customs such as sati. Rammohun Roy campaigned for its abolition, and he, along with Swami Vivekananda and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar among others, spearheaded major religious and social reform movements. This period is referred to as the Bengal Renaissance, but it had far-reaching effects on the entire Indian subcontinent. In this milieu, some families, while still adhering to the custom of early betrothal, encouraged the education of their daughters, as was the case with the author.

Jyoteermoyee Devi Sen born in 1894, in the princely state of Jaipur, during the time of the British Raj in India, was also an



Discovering how Indian handcrafted textiles made their way to Europe and inspired European textile manufacturing, the volume is an in-depth study of unique textile items from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the TAPI Collection, as well as similar pieces in museums around the world.

When Indian Flowers Bloomed in Europe Masterworks of Indian Trade Textiles, 1600-1780, in the TAPI Collection takes us on a tour of the 30 masterpieces of Indian textiles from the

TAPI Collection, commissioned by European patrons.



GENDER | TRANSLATION

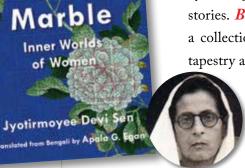
Behind

Ebeltje Hartkamp-Jonxis is a Dutch art historian specialised in European tapestries and Indian trade textiles.



early widow. Returning with her children to her parents' home, she wrote under the pen name Jyotirmoyee Devi and became one of the earliest women writers of modern Bengal. The lives of women in royal harems that she had been deeply impressed by while growing up in Rajasthan now found their way into her stories. Behind Latticed Marble: Inner Worlds of Women is

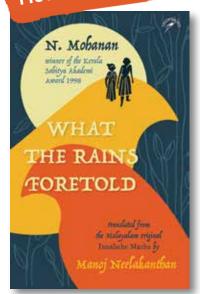
a collection of stories set in Rajasthan that create an elegant tapestry amidst the backdrop of Rajput grandeur and chivalry.



Jyotirmoyee Devi Sen is among the earliest women writers of modern Bengal who won the prestigious Rabindra Puraskar.

Apala G. Egan is currently living in the US and devotes her time to translating and writing.

FICTION | TRANSLATION



What the Rains Foretold, a retelling of the origin myth of Kerala and its people explores the mind of the protagonist, Vararuchi, and the tragic scholar, sought to challenge destiny and overturn its writ. The conclusion that blends repentance and forgiveness provides a cathartic resolution.

In 2018, the tourism department of Kerla announced a tourism circuit project in connection with this legend to connect various spots, which are part of the legend, spread across Kerala.

The deep historic anchoring is one of the striking aspects that makes the legend immortal. It can

be seen that the names of many places in Malappuram, Palakkad and Ernakulam were derived from either one of the characters in the legend or an event in this story.

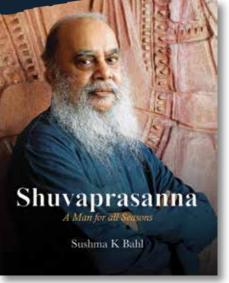


N. Mohanan was the Director of Cultural Affairs, and Managing Director of Kerala State Film Development Corporation.

Manoj Neelakanthan has a strong passion for translating and works as a design professional in a technology firm in Bangalore.







A prolific artist, Shuvaprasanna has been written about by several authors over the years. He has also penned articles and books in his own words, including an autobiography.

The author Sushma K Bahl have had the opportunity to write and critique the popular artist's work in essays. Given such a well-documented and published track record of his work, she wanted to be sure that something new or different could be achieved in this project.

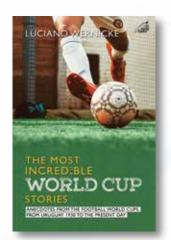
Shuvaprasanna: A Man for all

Seasons attempts to bring together the complete oeuvre of the versatile modern Indian artist Shuvaprasanna Bhattacharya, in a single volume. The book also traces his life and career and the significant events that shaped his artistic sensibilities.



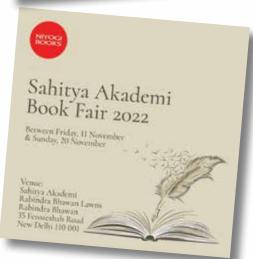




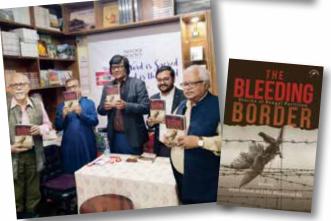


L-R: José Antonio Chachaza Pereiro, Managing Director, Laliga India, Ayon Sengupta, Editor, Sportstar, The Hindu, and H.E. Mr. Hugo Javier Gobbi, Ambassador of the Argentine Republic, at The Connaught, New Delhi.









L-R: Mr. Utpal K Shome, Dr. Joyjit Ghosh, Prof. Chinmoy Guha, Prof. Mir Ahammad Ali & Prof. Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee, at Niyogi Books Store, College Street, Kolkata



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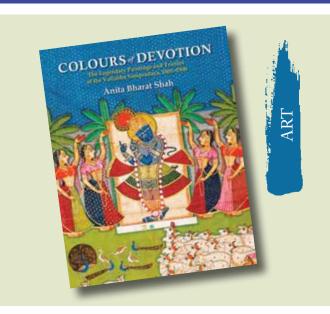


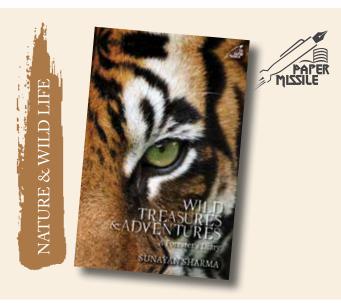
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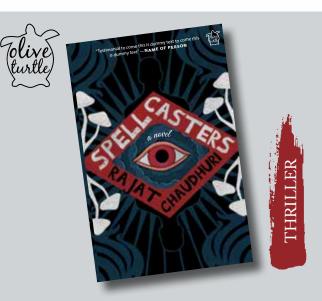
HISTORICAL FICTION

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