



Locating Manmathanath Ghosh in Japan during the High Tide of Indian Nationalism

Aisheedyuti Roy

Independent Scholar

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Abstract— *The Partition of Bengal in 1905 ushered in a new current of national mobilization which found expression in a nascent yearning among Indians to be self-sufficient in terms of infrastructure, industries, and education. Manmathanath Ghosh, a lesser-known figure in the Swadeshi struggle visited Japan during this nationalist effervescence. This essay aims to resurrect him and reevaluate his importance in terms of his contemporary age, the historical relationship between India and Japan, his observation of Japanese society, and the inherent patriotism that had already germinated in the psyche of the ordinary Bengali. In terms of mass movements, history remembers the leaders but more often than not, it fails to remember the same revolutionary fervor among the followers. Ghosh's account not only provides testimony to foreign journeys for the purpose of freedom but also gives voice to the very sentiment of Swadeshi present in the ordinary Indian.*

Keywords— *British imperialism, Japan, nationalist Movement, orientalism, travel, women*

I. INTRODUCTION

At the height of British imperialism, in an attempt to seek out avenues for collective resistance, many colonies turned to other nations to gather pluriform forms of knowledge which would be beneficial for their adamant journey towards self-determination. Institutions such as pan-Asianism and Pan-Islamism based on cultural and neo-historical pride developed between nations which were a response to the West's colonialist vehemence. Pan-Asianism corresponded to the people living in dominions as a beacon of inspirational liberty and national identity, with many looking at Japan, China, and Turkey as States emancipated from foreign despotic regimes. India, standing on the precipice of the nascent Swadeshi movement was not alien from the Pan-Asianist cause. Solidarity with Japan following the Russo-Japan War paved the way for the solidification of transnational relationships. The late 19th and early 20th century was a time when Indians made voyages to Japan, on account of reasons ranging from learning about the fundamentals of governance from a sovereign nation, gathering technical know-how, personal

reasons, conjugal alliances, and others. The most memorable of them are Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Hariprabha Takeda, Mohammad Barkhatullah, and Priyamvada Devi among others. Tagore's words on the delicate pages of ogi (folding fans) - "The butterfly counts not months but moments, and has time enough" reverberate in the pages of Indian literature to this day. This paper however orients academic attention to a lesser-known individual, Manmathanath Ghosh whose visit to Japan in 1904 may open a fresh approach to the contemporary 'glocal' understanding of Indian nationalism. The preference for the word may come as a surprise, considering the subject of the paper dates back a century earlier but Ghosh's appearance in Japan during the peak of the nationalist movement itself is a manifestation of the global and local currents influencing the cause of Swadeshi. That being said, the local aspect was the patronage received by the zamindar of Naldanga, present Bangladesh to gain industrial knowledge for the development of indigenous industries against British monopoly over commerce while the Indian leadership's increasing emphasis on cementing

friendships with anti-imperialist forces (in this case Japan) illustrate the global vision of the movement. Out of the ones mentioned above, it was Ghosh who has written most extensively on Japan yet his presence has been seemingly kept elusive both in history and literature. Camouflaged by the enduring visage of travel literature, the text is not just a delineation of patriotism but also structured around an insightful commentary on the contrasts between Indian and Japanese society, a depiction of an alternative Asian gaze countering the oriental gaze, his immersive views about the status of women, all of which welcome a discussion on the enduring relationship between India and Japan.

After a stay in Japan for more than three years, he published three books detailing his experience, between 1910 and 1915, *Japan Probaash*, *Noby Japan* which form the core of this paper, and *Supto Japan*. The emphasis of this research is a result of the navigation of four inadvertent themes underlying the work which have been found intersected in the comprehensive expanse of its scope. These include a reflection on the Indo-Japan relationship through Ghosh's diurnal interactions, the oscillation between contrast and semblance in the culture of the two nations, Ghosh's wondrous admiration for Japanese society and culture, and finally, the purpose of Swadeshi which was the governing factor for his elongated stay in Japan. The text was written in 1906 AD, the year after the infamous Partition of Bengal, 1905 AD. Undoubtedly, it can be demarcated as one of the defining moments within the trends characterizing the Indian Freedom Movement. The streets of Calcutta were overflowing with an effervescence of protests advocating boycotts, picketing, and the immediate development of swadeshi industries, institutions, and consumer enterprises. There were candidates voluntarily traveling abroad to advance their industrial learning, guided by the aim of making the motherland self-sufficient. Being a product of this new nationalist ebullience, the primary concern for Ghosh was to gather effective industrial knowledge because his purpose was the dissipation of the same on his return, which is not surprising considering he left his academics at a young age to be a swadeshi worker, as reported by the editor of the text's third edition, Subrata Kumar Das. It never ceases to astonish that the examination of forgotten texts can give access to an array of raw information that can transform the prevailing patterns governing historical understanding. The existing image of zamindars as a composite class of sycophants enjoying British approbation can be contested on grounds of exceptional incidents. The distinct Swadeshi savor is eminent in the dedication of the work under review. Ghosh praises his patron, Pramathabhushan Deb Roy of Naldanga, Jessore whose inclination towards the best interests of the nation is accented. Amvikacharan Mukhurji's 1911 chronicle of the Naldanga royal household is a

testament to the zamindari and associated endeavors of Raja Pramathabhushan. He is recorded to have been a passionate champion of the cause of widow remarriage, a promoter of religious harmony, and an advocate of education who initiated generous charities, supported infrastructural developments, funded famine relief works, and encouraged brisk growth in agriculture (Mukhurji, 115, 116). The Raja was a visionary who used scriptural shlokas to prove that high-caste Hindus had the sanction of plowing the field. At the Siddheshwari Temple in Matbati, the family priest, with the blessings of the Raja, set an example by engaging in plowing (Mukhurji, 120). Further, along with esteemed personalities such as Rabindranath Tagore and Jagat Kishore Acharya, the Raja served as a member of the Board of Directors of Mohini Mills, which hints at his association with indigenous textile industries. Unfortunately, Mukhurji has not left behind any relic of the zamindar's political undertakings but the latter's socio-economic foresight is enough to understand that he was not alienated from swadeshi pursuits, irrespective of Ghosh's corroboration. Similarly, the zamindars of Contai stood rigidly against the Partition of Bengal, and encouraged picketing and boycott activities, going as far as to forbid the shopkeepers in their estates from importing British merchandise (Das, 2). According to Basanta Kumar Das, their physical presence accompanied by inflammatory slogans rekindled the patriotic spirits of their subjects (Das, 3). In Abanindranath Tagore's short essays, one can find indications about the landed aristocracy's involvement with the freedom movement. Tagore's family had a pleasant relationship with the Raja or zamindar of Natore, Jaganindranath, and were guests at his place during the time the Congress Provincial Conference was held at Natore. Therefore, it cannot be abandoned that although meager in number, there were zamindars who had been patrons of political mobilizations against the British, which further reimposed that the struggle for sovereignty was transmitted to gather the fervor of diverse localized forces.

It was a time when the fervor of nationalism, spreading incessantly, had enveloped the psyche of the Bengali middle class. Ghosh, coeval to the marked enthusiasm of this age is not untouched by the shared purpose of colonial defiance. Before the commencement of their voyage, the ones on the ship unanimously chanted 'Vande Mataram', the slogan from Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Anandamath* which was illegitimately forbidden by the British administration. Immediately after, the author gets submerged in a regretful lament that India had attained the impeccable apogee of the civilizational ethos at a time when the entire world was engulfed in mayhem thereof the lack of order and ethics. It calls to attention that this period witnessed a blitzkrieg of nationalist

historians guided by their willingness to reincarnate the lost opulence of ancient India, oriented their erudition towards the nation's forgotten history which was termed the 'Golden Age'. In Bankim Chandra's famed novel *Anandamath*, the image of the motherland as a deified personification is evoked before Mahendra in her past glory, present decrepitness, and her future ferocious resurgence. This kindred portrait of the country as a goddess reverberates in the poems of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio as well. In 'To India- My Native Land', Derozio mourns for the present deplorable state of a once adorned deity. Ghosh sometimes familiarizes his readers with the drawbacks of his native country. He remarks on the absence of commercial museums in British-governed India in contrast to Japan's harbor of the same. His remorse is evident as he regretfully mentions the ignorance and inattentiveness of British governance but he, however, does not adhere to the onus of India's social collapse on British imperialism alone but to impenetrable societal rigidities. Ghosh's clement protest against social stringency within his travelog can be inferred as an outcome of his Brahma religio-cultural background. The Brahma Samaj is celebrated for its uncompromising liberal stance against the maladies that were diluting the fabric of Bengali protestant socio-religious pan-Indian movements to have recognized the ungodly plague of immoralities such as Sati, the absence of female education, caste hierarchy, and the spiritual epidemic that had permeated into the people of Bengal. He goes as far as to suggest in *Nobyō Japan* that the diversity of linguistic traditions in India is a detrimental force that precludes the aspiration for national integration among its people. Ghosh's reflection on the very incommensurability restricting his motherland from achieving glory is a facsimile of the quintessential Brahma sentiment of the time.

To locate the nature of the transnational history between India and Japan in the nascent years of the Twentieth century without acknowledging the presence of the Indian student diaspora would be an act of dissociation. Ghosh recounts his visit to the Oriental Association, composed of Indian students in Tokyo. Swami Vivekananda's counsel to Indian students to pursue education in Japan to learn the development strategies of the Meiji Government seems to have been well-received by his target audience (Vishwanathan, 3). Aravind Ganachari has illuminated the existing scholarship with a list of Indian students on Japanese soil such as K.D. Kulkarni, L. Barthakur, S.C. Ray, J.J. Sawant, and J.B. Bidyant among others. Many students quickly followed K.D. Kulkarni, and enrolled in Tokyo Higher Technological School, the Tokyo and Kyoto Imperial Universities, and the Sapporo Agricultural College. The growing number of Indian students in Japanese cities and the increasingly promising

new opportunities for transnational developers in the field of industry, trade, and education necessitated the vision for a collaborative body committed to the amelioration of the student community. They were fortunate enough to benefit from the support of erstwhile Japanese noble bureaucrats like Count Okuma and Baron Takahashi, president of the Yokohama Specie Bank who was instrumental in the establishment of the Indo-Japanese Association (Ganachari, 793) "The Indian students under the aegis of the Oriental Youngmen's association also hoped that Japan would become the hub for Asian students to exchange ideas, provide mutual encouragement and on finishing their studies would be the pioneers in bringing about development and enlightenment for Asia" (Vishwanathan, 3). Arpita Mathur has observed that the Pan-Asian solidarity of the Oriental Youngman's Association was a haven for infuriated Indian students, abhorrent of the imperial dogma (Mathur, 4). The Indian youth initiated political mobilization to procure encouragement for nationalist orchestrations, often involving the support of students from other Asian nations. There is an instance of Indian students' invitation to powerful Japanese politicians like Count Okuma and Chinese students for a Tilak-inspired Shivaji Festival (Fischer-Tiné, 336). According to Prasad, Okuma's alleged efforts at reorienting the event into a pan-Asian cause led to interference from the Government of British India (Fischer-Tiné, 336). Any discussion on the developments of student-led patriotic ventures would be incomplete without alluding to the eminence of the Tokyo India House founded by Govind Narayan Potdar. (Ganachari, 794) With the blessings and collateral influence of Shyamji Krishna Verma, the India House in Tokyo would go on to shelter students from diverse parts of India as well as Ceylon (Tiné, 337). Pan-Asianism in its multifaceted nuances was a weapon of self-expression that could resist the West. For Ghosh, education is a recurring element in his musings, which he holds at par with national unity and mission, intertwined in resemblance, going to the extent of praising the Japanese government for working towards its promotion, which, on the other hand, the British Indian State is negligent in. To Ghosh, the lack of government impetus followed by a scarcity of altruistic youth and the inability of the motherland in idolizing an ideal nation are the contributing factors to the deplorable condition of the state.

The entire text is a manifestation of Ghosh's unconstrained, often innocent adulation of Japanese etiquette, as he traverses around the urban industrial loci of the island nation. He is liberal in his employment of affirmative adjectives in his recount of Japanese values. In the very introduction itself, he extends his admiration for his host country when he refers to the Japanese as an

empathetic, free-thinking, and tolerant race. He marvels at their intrinsic skill of maintaining decorum in the myriad cacophony of a marketplace which is a contrast to the bazaars of his native land. Praising their inherent stoicism, modesty, and joviality, he makes an interesting observation that the Japanese scarcely reflect any shade of distress. The author's summation is a result of being witness to the Japanese experience with the demise of family members and, yet not succumbing to abysmal despair. He betrays astonishment as he watches an approximate number of fifty houses being burnt to ashes but their residents remain naturally composed and stolid without succumbing to plaintive disconsolation. Another instance would be his recount of a Japanese lady committing suicide so that she would not be a barrier between her son and his military ambitions. Before her death, in a letter addressed to her son, she reprimands him for compromising his duty towards the nation for maternal obligations. Ghosh further narrates, not withholding his awe, about the maidservants who would save money and their share of rice for the soldiers during the Russo-Japanese war. Although the prominence of the samurai had been assuaged by then, their spirit of bushido was translated to citizens' collective passion for their country, which was a contributing factor towards the Russian defeat. Gauging him from the recent scholarship of the debatable ideology of modern nationalism would be a fallacy because it must be remembered that Ghosh was contemporary to an era where nationalism was the ignition that would enable colonized states to covet their independence.

Early nineteenth-century travel literature has a saturation of Eurocentric exposition in its rendering of the Orient. With a distinctly unfamiliar world, now devoid of trepidation, following the incessant imperialist currents, the Orient unwillingly personified and entertained the Western lens of enlivened fascination. The genre is replete with a pervasion of European and American travelers who exploited the opportunity of exploration, expedited by the forces of colonialism thereby engaging in a monolithic archetypal delineation of the Asian and Middle-Eastern world. The French poet Gérard de Nerval, the English author William Makepeace Thackeray, British diplomat James Justinian Morier, and the explorer of Oxiana, Robert Byron were early travelers in the Orient who not only unclothed a new, dissimulated world before their European readers but also furthered Edward Said's later discourse on Orientalism. Travelogues capacitated the Occidental reader to drift into escapism, one of literature's finest virtuosity, the essence of the latter inflated with the concurrence of foreign exoticism. The term, first coined in the nineteenth century was not to define objects but to refer to a sentiment of nostalgia in the mind of the beholder (Mason, 167).

Exoticism, a deliberate intensification of the Western enchantment towards a preconceived 'otherness', in this case, the East, pervaded through literature, music, fashion, painting, and upper-class colloquy in variegated artistic movements such as the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Romantic Movement. Exotic elements included the romanticized objectification and appropriation of Eastern quintessences. Cherished elements of a mystical, almost clandestine 'otherness' included sages, veiled women, habiliments, geishas, traditions, the dialect, snake charmers, the natural world, and harems which accentuated the European covetousness for the pedestal of aggrandized Occidental precedence. Orientalism enabled the West to rejoice in its concocted propaganda of superiority to the fancied East, which although exquisite was deemed 'backward' in civilizational edifices. The Far East was not detached from the multifarious torrent of exotic literature. Ever since the island nation's 'opening up' to Commodore Perry in 1853, Japan proceeded to adorn the pages of French and German literature. The Western audience was entranced and fixated by the vast spectacle of materials that came to emerge from this recondite nation. The ukiyo-e woodblock prints, ceramics, and tranquil aesthetics fomented an obsession for the same in the amateur and professional French artistic and literary clique, which Elwood Hartman has described as the phenomenon of "japonisme". Japonisme which at first was the unionization of Japanese influences into French motifs soon became an imitation of Japanese styles which would later impact Marcel Proust and Stéphane Mallarmé as well (Hartman, 141-142). The publication of Pierre Loti's *Madame Chrysanthème* in 1887 towards the end of the nineteenth century was a watershed in the exoticism of Japan. "Although Loti's novel is more sophisticated than what is often assumed, the tradition he created in literature and art resulted in a cliché of Japan that is still influential today. It is the image of Japan reduced to that of the 'geisha' as Western men fancied her in their erotic fantasies, an image similar to that of women of other 'exotic' countries" (Schepers, 10). Schepers has further elucidated that German artists and writers like Max Dauthendey and Bernhard Kellermann have portrayed Japan through the prism of clichéd imaginings of the country which they had seen in the popular paintings of the age rather than their lived experiences of the same. In a letter to his wife, Dauthendey declares that he would be compelled to call Japan 'boring' and 'sad' if it had not been for his memories of its beautiful materialization in European motifs (Schepers, 16). The disentanglement of the Occidental illusion is a result of the collision between romanticism and the reality behind the exotica. The Japanese response to the Western perpetuation of exoticism is echoed in the words of the nineteenth-century art critic and advocate of the East,

Okakura Kakuzō. In his own words, Tenshin Okakura has displayed disappointment at the misconception and ignorance of Western audiences regarding Japan in spite of the plethora of information available at one's command. Proceeding to voice his reprehension about the sordid racial prejudice among the common masses, he blames the men of letters for the oriental distortion and their unwillingness to acknowledge the East's awakening (Nishihara, 242). In an incredibly polarized world, countries are distinguished from one another by the celerity of their development patterns. Much has been spoken on travel narratives from the formulaic lenses of the 'advanced' nations but the diaries of travelers from the 'transcendent' Orient, especially India, claim a comprehensive discussion. Travel, which had been frowned upon by a once conservative Hindu religious diktat, towards the later part of the nineteenth century gained a new momentum within the educated Bengali male youth who were now determined to prove their claims of modernity engineered on Western principles. The names of Dwarkanath and Rabindranath Tagore, Pandita Ramabai, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, the pioneer Gujarati female doctor Anandabai Joshi, Maharaja Jagatjit Singh, and Brahma Samaj leader, Durga Mohan Das et al are enshrined in the history of Indian sea peregrination. A unique feature of Ghosh's text is the inclusion of the names of his fellow travelers as footnotes in the initial chapter Kolkata Bondor, from which one learns about Rathindranath Tagore, Surendra Mohan Bose, Rai Mohan Dutt, Abaninath Mitra, B.D. Pandey, Dinesh Chandra Majumdar, and the rest. Although not all of the accounts can be demarcated as travelogues, they attest to the Eastern observance of the Occidental world. An inspection of the works of Brahma Samaj stalwart, Shivanath Shastri and the Hindu revivalist monk, Swami Vivekananda furnish ample testament to the oriental treatment of a Western society unscathed before Indians slowly adapting to foreign environs outside their known realm. The remarks gathered from the observations of these modernized, upper-class Bengali travelers leave a fresh palatability because, unlike the Western gaze, they scarcely indulge in a preconceived romantic contingency. For instance, Shivanath Shastri's autobiography, *Atmcharita*, has a section dedicated to his stay in England which rests on a coherence of tangible human reflection. Although Shastri hailed from an erstwhile British colony, he did not succumb to the clamor of bitter resentment. Interestingly, in his essay, Shastri employs the usage of bullets to present an almost saintly, utopian profile of the English race, one that treats all classes with dignity, one governed by individual duties, a race far removed from the austere despotic verisimilitude back home (Shastri, 418). The orientalist paintings that decorated museums and flamboyant imperial courts across Europe provoked

undercurrents of voyeurism, sexualization of Ottoman women, and the stereotyping of African women as attendees to chaste Caucasian females while being replete with motifs such as carpets, hookahs, Turkish bathhouses, and a harlequin of opalescent attires. One merely has to take a glance at Jean-Léon Gérôme or Eugène Delacroix to notice traits of depersonalization on their canvases: naked, adolescent boys with gigantic snakes wrapped around their malnourished frames, expressionless characters among tenebrous harem walls, sensual gazes of undraped women as if to entice the illicit longing of the invisible European viewer. In these paintings, the characters are not meant to have an agency of their own and hence emit a divestation of their individualities. By contrast, if we are to study Swami Vivekananda's picturization of the Japanese, his epistolary expositions present a different perspective. In his letter to Alasinga Perumal, dated 10th July 1893, Swami Vivekananda frames his travels in Japan into perspicacious insights. His interpretation of the Japanese or their nation is not through the facile vitreous kaleidoscope of superficial aesthetics. Japan impresses him with its industries, its work ethics, its discipline, and its beautiful orderliness. In one instance, Vivekananda appreciates their remote vision in apprehending the ineffability of modernization (Swami Vivekananda, 215). He appears to be struck by their autonomic endeavors in their attempt at the eradication of civic paucity. This is where he reiterates his prevailing cogitation that the Indian youth should visit Japan to develop their outlook. Similarly, the present texts in this analysis adulate the Japanese for their hospitality, adaptable psyche, and their spirit of amelioration. Akin to both Shastri and Vivekananda, Ghosh has referred to his contemporaries such as Keshav Chandra Sen, J. C. Bose, the Tagore patriarchs, and P.C. Ray among others, and credited their long stay in England as propulsion for their dedication towards their motherland. He regrets that in the two hundred years of English rule, his fellow Indians have only adapted the lamentable qualities of the former while failing to incorporate their virtues. Since the very ideological vestige of Orientalism was dependent on the escarpment of the allure and the perceived threat of the East, it proselytizes the dangers of misinterpretation. The East, representing the spiritual, is delicate and skeptical of modern values while the West maintains its extravagance of material evolution. As opposed to the orientalists, Eastern travelers reflect an aching sense of synergy in their assessment of foreign countries. Bereft of fetishism and exoticism, their words harbor goodwill, community covalence, reverence, and harmony.

Japan Probaash can be analyzed as a sublime detail of compassionate human connection. The readers can assume that Ghosh would reveal a feeling of alienation in a

foreign society, miles away in the Far East. However, he does not show his struggle in finding resonance with the new world. Perhaps this is owing to the generous kinship he felt from his intimacy with the individuals during his stay. It can be supposed that his sanguine interactions with his hosts, his employers and co-workers, and encounters with ordinary people prevented a stranger's sense of dissonance on foreign soil. This begs for the mention of instances of his experience with people that have molded his optimistic perspective of Japanese society. Towards the very nascency of the text, during his stay in Tokyo, he narrates about his visit to a commercial museum of trade and industry. Being a stranger in a new country with its structural norms and conventions, the first stimulus was to ask for directions. To the veritable startlement of Ghosh, he is met with a person who was not merely willing to show him the way, but also escorted him to the location and paid the tram fare despite not committing whatsoever. I will illustrate this argument further by citing another delicate example. The author visits Awaji islands for official purposes but is astonished to find a little boy belonging to the outcaste eta class, willing to guide him towards their intended location. The boy, earning a meager living as a shoemaker, chose to adjourn his profession for a while, to help the author and his colleague. His reason for assisting them was so benign that it intensified the author's reverence for the Japanese. The boy insists that he must aid Ghosh because he had experienced similar help on his visit to Kobe from strangers who had accompanied him to his intended venues, despite his lower stature in the social hierarchy. These separate incidents elucidate his attachment to and veneration of Japan and her people. Unfortunately, the second episode also divulges the appalling face of Japan's social pyramid. The segregated eta community from the traditional Japanese class system, consisting of tanners, leather workers, and the like, has always been persecuted by the orthodox state.

It goes without saying that Ghosh had been an ardent observer of Japanese society. He is sharp in his attention to detail because he takes note of the customs, food, religious beliefs, plight of women, agencies of entertainment, and other nuances of Japanese civil culture. He betrays astonishment and subtle envy at the radical emancipated position of women in Japanese society. One cannot blame Ghosh's feeling of complete bewilderment. He meets housemaids, carrying daily newspapers absorbed in ritual conversation about the nation's politics with the shopkeepers at the market. It has to be remembered that Ghosh's background was contemporary Bengal absorbed in the cacoethes for political, social, and feminine freedom, confined by concurrent traditional and colonial tyrannical institutions. As Geraldine Forbes has illustrated, indigenous law favored a balance between the protection of women and

the respect of women. Women could be vested with power and authority, but not autonomy. Only a few decades ago, a glamorized masculine defense of Indian women favored the justification of social malice such as Sati, female infanticide, polygamy, denial of female education, and early marriage of girls (Forbes,12). Ghosh was coeval to a time when Bengali women were still in the contingent process of metamorphosing into a composite identity. Their amorphous individuality was sketched by the patriarchal vehemence, drawing them towards the dubious dichotomy between embracing Victorian modernity and the Indian conventional idea of feminine domesticity. The unconscious consensus between the colonial state and the English-educated Bengali man directed its efforts toward the guided emancipation of the Bengali woman, modeled on the ideation of the virtuous wife. As Partha Chatterjee has deliberated in his seminal and oft-quoted "material" and "spiritual" discourse that while Western liberalism dominated the profane outer domain, the nationalist sentiment justified that it was the sanctum sanatorium of the inner domain that was sacred and hence vouchsafed women with a convoluted, deified expression (Chatterjee, 2,3). At the same time, "the educated Indian middle-class males, on the other hand, dreamt of the Victorian ideal of companionate marriage. In Bengal, the educated bhadramahila (gentlewoman) appeared as the ideal companion to the enlightened Hindu bhadralok" (Bandyopadhyay, 384). "The new domestic ideals that these reformers enunciated were undoubtedly informed by their sensibilities of the indigenous past, but they also borrowed selectively from the 'liberal' Western philosophies and Victorian ideology that these men had learned to appreciate as colonized subjects" (Banerjee, 459). Sekhar Bandyopadhyay reiterates that the new concept of the ideal womanhood was a fine synthesis of the self-sacrificing Hindu wife and the Victorian helpmate. As Samita Sen has opined, while uneducated women from the lower strata were perceived as obstacles in the way of community and familial prosperity, women with erroneous westernized education were thought to threaten the prized moral regulation (Bandyopadhyay, 384). The first decade of the twentieth century was replete with Swadeshi activities, further incited by the Partition of Bengal in 1905. The middle-class women, for the first time, left their homes to become vital participants in protests, possessions, and picketing. While the efforts of path-breaking stalwarts like Sarala Debi, Giribala Debi, Hiranmoyee Debi, and Basantabala Home were remarkable, education and political participation were still within the precinct of the middle or upper echelon. In this surreal milieu of contesting ideologies defining the woman's question determined by external forces of colonial infrastructure, the voice of the

educated reformers, and the Swadeshi appeal, to the eyes of an observer, it may appear to be an artificial praxis. On the other hand, to his astonishment, Japan presented to him a glimpse of early feminine modernity where he is an audience of the daily lives of women working in factories, women aware of international affairs, and maids reading the newspaper. There was something almost very naturally sovereign about this entire experience, a scent of spontaneous enterprise with the women, which he could never have anticipated. In Nobyo Japan, he has written that Japanese mothers, being educated, instill among their children core patriotic values. On the other hand, ordinary Indian mothers and grandmothers, still far distant from the virtues of education, entertain their progeny with folk and colloquial tales instead of stories about legendary figures like Shivaji, icons that the new generation of people could look up to. If women are the crux of society, in his own words, he acknowledges the severe scarcity of female education in colonial Bengal which inadvertently prevents the rise of sovereign aspirations. His thoughts are modern when he says that if women are constantly compelled to prove their chastity, why should men be spared? Why should the latter be treated as demigods on Earth? With boldness like that of Vivekananda, he comments that a race will eventually perish if it does not respect its women. While the Western lens has always painted Japanese women with a romanticized aura of elusive timidity, reticence, and subservience, Ghosh's account exhibits a fresh perspective, launching a new arena for the future study of the early Twentieth century Japanese female experience.

Drawing from the rich tradition of Indo-Japan congenial tradition, the influence of the Buddha in Japan cannot be overlooked. Notwithstanding the unelaborated details on racism, Ghosh's presence as an Indian from the land of Sakyamuni certainly worked in his favor. He is often met with curious spectators at gatherings wondering if he is from the Buddha's country. Ghosh's professional desperation to learn the science of celluloid making gets rewarded by the wife of a certain Urayama San, the owner of a celluloid factory singularly on account of the former's indic origins. Okasan speaks about the now imperialism-ravaged British colony with high esteem as she credits the normative and religious foundation of her country to Indian civilizational roots. There is a tone of gratitude in her voice when she reminds Ghosh that the existence of her country would be in peril if it had not been for the spiritual enlightenment emanating from India. One cannot help but be struck by her sincere command of words which beckon toward the fathomless tradition of India and Japan's ethereal, mystical associations. D. N. Bakshi, who was an unparalleled authority on the subject, has shown the influence of Indian divinities in the Japanese religious

pantheon. He has engineered an exhaustive list of Hindu divinities and sacred icons transmogrified in the Japanese empyrean, by analyzing numerous authentic texts like Ababaku-shō, Dai-ni-kyō, and Bishamonten-kyō to name a few. Therefore, Saraswati's Eastern counterpart became Benzai-ten holding a biwa against the traditional string instrument, Raghunatha veena, and Ganesha adopted the name Kangi-ten and Lakshmi crystallized into Kichijō-ten. Without engrossing much into the intricacies of Buddhist canonical deliquescence into Japanese philosophy, I will entail a brief sketch of the Japanese interest in India which was venerated as denoted by Hajime Nakamura as the "spiritual motherland" (Bakshi, 11). Since 810 A.D. vain attempts to reach India had been undertaken by Shinnyo Hoshinnō, Eisai, and Myōe Shōnin Kōben but the perilous nature of the journey was enough to deter hopeful efforts. Hence, China provided a feasible channel to the Japanese priests for the acquaintance of Buddhist philosophy, where they traveled "one after another and made thorough and prolonged studies of Sanskrit and Chinese...." (Bakshi, 12). Again Nakamura argues, in effect, the Japanese ardor for learning Sanskrit has preserved its wisdom for nearly fourteen hundred years in the educational colleges attached to the Buddhist temples (Bakshi, 12). It is well known that the South Indian priest Bodhisena visited Japan in 736 A.D. and performed the 'eye-opening ceremony' of Daibutsu or the Great Buddha. The meditative practice of dhyana was carried by the Indian Buddhist monk, Dharmabodhi to China, where it came to be known as chan, which later migrated to Japan and became an ineffable part of the Buddhist tenet, espousing the name zen (Chopra, 92). Vivekananda writes that Japan still has high thoughts about India and considers our nation great and high. Parallel spiritual beliefs create a sense of propinquity, an incorporeal closeness between nations which is often carried down through transgenerational memories. These lingering memories are responsible for structuring a kinship between people over transnational boundaries which resurfaces in rare moments and this is what the text personifies the most—the interpersonal connection between humans irrespective of national boundaries.

CONCLUSION

On his return, Ghosh had established a factory for combs, soap and mats, materializing the skills he had been educated in Japan. Ghosh's views, his musings, his patriotism testifies that the Nationalist Movement was more nuanced than it is perceived, demonstrating its various facets. His publications provide a rare insight into the dynamic institution that was the Freedom Movement, with unexpected actors being its staunch advocates, while simultaneously introducing a discussion on the historical relationship between India and

Japan which was reawakened during this period of tumultuous pandemonium.

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