THE CONTROVERSIAL VERSE FROM THE PRABODHA-CANDR = ODAYA

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0.1 The following chart offers an analysis of the controversial II.7 of the Prabodha-candr=odaya, a Sanskrit drama by Kṛṣṇamiśra (ignoring variants, like bhūri-śreṣṭhika or bhūri-śraśṭhika for bhūri-śreṣṭhaka etc., minor for this purpose):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole</th>
<th>&gt; Part</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Al - 3 [bārāte]</td>
<td>&gt; gauḍam</td>
<td>rāṣṭram = an-uttamam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 A4 - 7 tatr=āpi</td>
<td>&gt; rāḍhā (-) purī</td>
<td>= nir-upamā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Bl - 3 (tatra)/0</td>
<td>&gt; bhūriśreṣṭhaka-nāma</td>
<td>dhāma = paramam</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 B4 - 7 tatra</td>
<td>&gt; naḥ pītā [janah]</td>
<td>= uttamaḥ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{C1 - 7}</td>
<td>our father = &gt; &lt; = famed sons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 C89D teśām api ca</td>
<td>aham : (putraḥ) = prajñā-śila-</td>
<td>- viveka-dhairyā-vinay = ācāraír uttamaḥ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0.2 Non-comprehension of the fact that 1-5 single out the best from the rest successively is responsible for various misinterpretations from scholars (Bhattacharya 1979), of whom the last is Sen 1979-80, writing in reference to the former (wrongly, however, substituting bangali for raRher santan of its title and prefixing an additional bangiya to the name of the journal in which it appears). “Going to rectify his earlier mistake”, he commits blunders.

1.0 The mere absence of a tatra immediately after rāḍhā-purī (one least acquainted with Sanskrit poetic style and possessed of a literary sense will normally understand it; here, moreover, the next tatra can simultaneously be linked with what precedes as well as follows by repeating it: cf. the well-known kāk = ākṣi or kāk = ākṣi-golaka maxim, of which numerous instances are found in Sanskrit literature) inspires Sen to equate bhūriśreṣṭhaka-nāma dhāma paramam with rāḍhā-purī, explaining bhūri-śreṣṭhaka literally, adjectival to paramam dhāma,
ultimately qualifying rāḍhā-puri. The verdict of the compounded noun -nāma ‘name’, deciding the first component of the compound to be a nomenclature—which becomes superfluous owing to the presence of another place-name rāḍhā-puri (as also paramam owing to nir-upamā and dhāma owing to -puri)—, negates the possibility of the equation: this Sen gets rid of by taking nāma as an ornament of speech, an indeclinable used in the sense of ‘indeed’ etc.

1.1 However, the second foot up to paramam must only be read either as bhūriśreṣṭhaka-nāma dhāma paramam, or even as bhūriśreṣṭhaka-nāma-dhāma paramam. But as the indeclinable does not admit of compounding, in his exposition Sen offers a third alternative, bhūri-śreṣṭhaka nāma dhāma paramam. This is an impossibility; if nāma is indeclinable, one expects an inflected bhūri-śreṣṭhakam—as is the form preceding it in the example Sen himself (!) chooses from Kālidāsa, without exact reference (Kumāra-sambhava V. 32)—, unless Kṛṣṇamiśra be accused as ignorant of the basic norm of Sanskrit: n=ā-padām śāstre pra-yuṇjīta. The resulting metrical defect, however, discards the possibility of bhūri-śreṣṭhakam being (and it is logically nowhere found as) a variant.

1.2 If the printing mistake in II. 7B1 in Bhattacharya (p. 30) is responsible for Sen’s idea of this alternative is not known; and, if it be (it certainly is not !) a misprint for the first or second alternative even in Sen, how he forgets the non-compoundability of the indeclinable is inexplicable.

The introducing analysis also discards Sen’s first interpretation of the adjective uttamaḥ of foot two as a proper noun. This is further corroborated by the fourth foot, where, in the same condition, it has to be taken as an adjective.

1.3 Not quite sure of the existence of rāRuli (village-name derived from rāḍhā-puri) Sen cannot locate it. There is at least one village, if not more, of that nomenclature, at p. o. the same—on the river Kapotakshi under p. s. Paikgachha in the Sadar subdivision of Khulna district in Bangladesh—, the birthplace of the Bengalee scientist Prafulla Chandra Ray. This Raruli,
however, has, except etymologically—if at all: for an alternative etymology, vide Mitra (p. 686)—, nothing to do with rādhāpurī, as the latter denies equation with bhūriśreśṭhaka.

1.4 How Sen, after himself taking bhūri-śreśṭhaka to be an adjective, surmises that Kṛṣṇamiśra probably knew the name Bhūriśreśṭhaka (along with Rādhāpurī)—but vaguely (and thus indirectly seeks to disapprove what Bhattacharya has taken pains to establish with arguments, viz., Kṛṣṇamiśra’s Bengalee origin), is also puzzling. Had bhūriśreśṭhaka been a place-name to him, Kṛṣṇamiśra, whether or not his knowledge of its location was vague, would surely have added, in conformity with Sen’s argument, a tatra after rādhāpurī!

2.0 One really doubts if Sen could find time at all to go through the preliminary draft of the paper. Neither does it go to the author’s credit to send it for publication, nor does it enhance the prestige of a journal to publish the same, though from a famed scholar; and that, too, not as a mere communication or the like, but as the leading article.

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Sen, Sukumar: “raRhapuri o bhurishreshthak”, ib, 1386 B. S., Shraban-Paush, pp. 1-2

Colophon
The help from Nrisimhaprasad Bhaduri, Nabawip Vidyasagar College, Tarapada Chakrabarti, Maniklal Bandyopadhyay and Debkumar Chakrabarti, Bangabasi College, Calcutta, Surendranath Deb, University of Burdwan, Bani Talapatra, Science College, Calcutta, Bishnupada Bhattacharya, Sanskrit College, Calcutta, Bishwanath Mukhopadhyay and Aruna Chattopadhyay, Bangiya Sahitya-Parishad, Calcutta, in writing the note, is thankfully acknowledged.

THE CONTROVERSIAL VERSE FROM THE PRABODHA-CANDR.-ODAYA 323
RABINDRA NATH TAGORE’S STYLES OF PRONUNCIATION

BHAKTI P. MALLIK

Any attempt at a discussion of Tagore’s pronunciation is not easy. Firstly, the pronunciation of an individual does not lend itself so easily to any discussion of it as does that of a speech community. What adds to the problem is the fact that Tagore is an institution in himself. Secondly, the discussion of an individual’s pronunciation presupposes his availability as an informant. To be explicit, it is necessary that his voice is recorded so far as Tagore is concerned we have been deprived of that too. We have neither any disc nor any taped version of single Bengali speech or talk or discussion of the great poet. All we have are a few songs and recitations in the poet’s own voice—thanks to the gramophone discs.

The general milieu of the Tagore family and Rabindranath’s own poetic temperament are responsible for the peculiarities of his styles of pronunciation.

Everything about the Tagore family of Jorasanko was distinctive—its culture, customs and manners, education and even clothes and costumes. So it is quite in the fitness of things that its speech also bore the same mark of distinction. It was Tagore’s forefathers who ushered this distinctive trend into the culture of Bengal. The poet was one of the most conspicuous representatives of that trend. It was through his influence that the family culture of the Tagores was transformed into the culture of the educated Bengali. A section of the Bengali educated class began to imitate the poet’s manner of speech and pronunciation. The few discs of Tagore songs of the poet’s time bear eloquent testimony to this. There were some whom the poet himself taught the art of singing and the purity of tune and pronunciation in their songs is remarkable. The
poet's own discs along with those of some artistes who were in touch with him may be taken as the yardstick for the Tagorean styles of pronunciation.

The language of the Tagore family, we shall say, was a social dialect. The dialect granulated around the two noted journals mainly—Bharati and Sabujpatra. It attracted and influenced the students and teachers of Santiniketan as well as others. Of course, the present style of Santiniketan speech is a transformed version of Tagore's style. We do not know of anyone to have influenced the educated Bengali speech community with his styles of pronunciation as did Tagore.

The age of Tagore marks a new era in the development of the Bengali language and literature. Rammohan, Vidyasagar and Bankim shaped and developed the literary language; it was due to Tagore that the Bengali language achieved a matured growth. In the wake of the Tagore era, not only did literary Bengali take a great leap forward, but Tagore's talent also enriched the colloquial form a great deal.

Calcuttans had a dialect of their own popularly known as the Calcutta cockney. The Calcutta cockney lost its ground to the onslaught of Tagore culture. May be, the cockney now exists nowhere except on the lips of some old ladies of the few old Calcutta families, and to find them out would require a good deal of investigation. Even Suniti Kumar Chatterji has not mentioned Calcutta cockney, in his The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language. Yet only a hundred years back, the cockney was a very much living language. It was Tagore's influence that caused its extinction and it was replaced by the modern colloquial (calit) Bengali. Whatever remained of the cockney vanished at the advent of the migration of the Hindu Bengalees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Besides, the radio, T. V. and the cinema, both the modern Theatre and the Opera and finally the educated youth, completed the process of its extermination.

The cockney is to be found now and again in the letters of Vivekananda. But the great bulk of Tagore's writing does not
give us any more than the sparse use of a few cockney words. Tagore very carefully avoided the cockney, now extinct but once in vogue, very badly needs a quick lexicographical rescue work, or else we shall lose track of it once and for all. It has gone; nevertheless, we must give it its due place in the history of the Bengali language. Needless to say, the responsibility devolves upon us.

Tagore culture has pervaded all walks of our national culture. Just as we now find an ideal man in Tagore, the cultured one of the preceding generation found the ideal in Tagore culture. Even the way the poet spoke was for him an ideal.

Hence, from the standpoint of sociolinguistic research, the need for a critical analysis of the poet’s style of speech. But a thorough discussion prevents itself as I have already said that the facts at our disposal are scanty. Nevertheless, the present attempt, however small, can claim to be based on scientific reasoning based on the science of Phonetics.

The most remarkable trait of Tagore’s pronunciation happens to be its clarity. He pronounced every word in every sentence without the slightest drawl, with utmost sharpness. One does not find it in the least difficult to follow the individual syllables in a word pronounced by Tagore, so marked was his pauses between every two syllables. Clarity, seasoned with sharpness, has made Tagore’s pronunciation so felicitous, lively and distinctive, and not for a moment dry and lifeless. Every word in his songs and recitations has been pronounced by him in such a way that it has been able to maintain its individuality without impairing in the least the quality of the whole. Nowhere does a word overlap upon another and lose its clarity. And we must not forget that the poet’s voice was first recorded when he was well over sixty. Old age could hardly tell upon his pronunciation. Yet the inert vocalisation of many of the present singers of Tagore songs rob the songs of much of their beauty and grace.

The pronunciation of the educated Calcuttan can be taken as that of the poet. There is no doubt of that. The Poet’s
pronunciation carried many of the pronouncing characteristics of his forefathers. The latter spoke in a language that was influenced by the dialect of Khulna and Jessore. The poet’s wife, Mrinalini Devi, also belonged to Khulna, and it just cannot be gainsaid that his wife’s pronunciation influenced him as did his forefathers’. His style of pronunciation vary according to geographical and social factors, it is of interest for sociolinguistic studies of Bengali.

A certain artificiality creeps into a song or a recitation when one is keen on maintaining “purity” of pronunciation. We have not heard Tagore speaking, and an analysis of the poet’s style of speaking would be easier if he were our contemporary. Yet though there are intonations more in keeping with the songs and recitations, the poet’s gramophone discs give sure evidence of his normal, ordinary pronouncing characteristics, a few important characteristics only are discussed herewith: It seems that phoneme | o | and the nasal phonemes were rather mid-low and weak respectively in the poet’s pronunciation. This is not normal in the pronunciation of Calcutta Standard speech, and in the poet’s time this was even more unusual. In standard pronunciation | o | and the nasals are very clear and sharp. Again, we find /kādā/ and /hāśa/ in the poet’s pronunciation, and they are typical of Calcutta. Probably the poet’s pronunciations were influenced by Calcutta on the one hand, and Khulna-Jessor districts of Bangladesh on the other. That is why the sound [o] in the poet’s pronunciation slants towards the ‘bibṛta’, and it also seems that he was not always in thorough command of the nasal sounds. According to the poet’s own Shabdatatwa, (1909) [a] in ‘ban’, ‘dhan’, ‘jan’, ‘man’ etc. becomes [o] in pronunciation. Yet in his own pronunciation [o] in such words tends towards [a]. Says the poet—“The word ‘ghana’ has no fixed pronunciation. Some say [ghano]-dudh, some [ghono]-dudh”. However, he himself pronounces it [ghano].

In standard pronunciation, the aspirates are sharp at the beginning of words, weak in the middle and even weaker or
almost slurred at the end. In Tagore's pronunciation, the aspirates are clear and sharp throughout. Lack of exertion due to old age causes people to pronounce aspirates like / kh, gh, ch, jh/ etc. as deaspirated / k, g, c, j / etc. But the poet was no victim to this shift in pronunciation, even in his old age.

Tagore pronounced a conjunct consonant formed by a consonant, 'r' (succeeding) by doubling the consonant preceding / r /. For example: 'samudra' > / somud-dra /, ‘pabitra’ > / pobit-tra /, ‘dharitri’ / > / dharit-tri /. But / niśta / to him is / nil-bhrita /. Some more such peculiarities of the poet's pronunciation:

‘hṛdayaspadan’/ / hridyas-spandan/, ‘aśrual’ > / oś-śrujal/. Words with bisarga (:) have been pronounced by him thus by doubling the consonant after (:) du: saha > / duś-šaho /, du: kha > / duk-kha /.

Juncture within a word or after a group of words is clearly marked. If singers of Tagore songs do not care to follow them meticulously, the verbal meaning of the songs may not be accurately conveyed. Without a correct idea of the treatment of suprasegmental and allophonic nature within words or in sentences, a song or a recitation must prove rather hard on the ear.

The songs and recitations in the poet's voice may be taken as part of phonetic education. But it is a pity that research on the linguistic aspects of Tagore's works is negligible though his poetic talent has attracted researchers in their scores.

Perhaps it will not be irrelevant here to say that singers of Tagore songs will be able to correct the inaccuracies of their pronunciation by sincerely following the poet's own songs and recitations in the poet's voice should be taken as a short guide to Tagore's styles to pronunciation.

Here I have tried faintly to throw some light on Tagore's pronunciation accordingly. However, this observation raises a variety of interesting questions. Sociolinguistic environments in which the poet's idiolect occur have yet to be satisfactorily described.