

**ON  
BIRDS AND FLOWERS**

*(Nature Poetry of Assam and Orissa)*

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## PREFACE

Treatment of nature is a fundamental and almost universal phenomenon in literature. Indian literature right from the days of the Vedas up to the present times is rich with nature description. Literary works in the different regional languages abound with beautiful passages dedicated to nature both in prose and verse and a comparative study is a rewarding way of exploring the likeness as well as diversity among different authors.

Raghunath Choudhary of Assam is famous for his nature poetry and is commonly known as the 'Bird poet'. Nandakishore Bal of Orissa too goes to nature for his predominant theme and is reputedly known as Orissa's 'palli Kavi'. Both of them come from a middle class background, and being born roughly at the same time share the same social, cultural and political heritage of India. Their deep feelings for the picturesque natural beauty of their respective home states distinguish their poetry. A student of literature finds in them an ideal pair for comparative study, and their likeness as poets of nature to the English romantic school prompts a comparison with Wordsworth.

Though both Raghunath and Nandakishore are highly versatile and gifted poets and volumes can be written on each of them, I have confined this study to some of the aspects of their poetry that are common to both. The chapters have been likewise divided on the

basis of common themes and ideas, and a comparison with Wordsworth has been made at relevant points.

I am grateful to Dr. Indira Goswami of the Department of Modern Indian Languages who not only taught me Assamese language, but also guided me in my study of Raghunath. She gave me valuable suggestions and supplied me with original texts and critical essays on Raghunath which are not easily available in Delhi.

I am thankful to Prof. Harbhajan Singh, Prof. R.K. Dasgupta and Dr. (Mrs.) S. Karandikar of the Department of Modern Indian Languages for their kindness and encouragement.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nature has always been a source of delight and inspiration to poets and writers of all languages and of all races and regions. Of course their emotional responses have been varied. Nature has been treated in one way by one poet and in a different way by another poet. A comparative method is, therefore, an invaluable way of studying and evaluating poets of nature.

This dissertation is concerned with a comparative study of nature as treated by Nandakishore Bal of Orissa and by Raghunath Chaudhary of Assam. Since both of them are essentially nature poets, it is relevant and rewarding to compare them with Wordsworth who ranks high among the nature poets of English literature. Both Nandakishore and Raghunath are products of the early twentieth century and are essentially romanticists. Their nature poems are simple free from artificialities, and like Wordsworth's poems, they are written in common day-to-day speech. Like Wordsworth, they also choose incidents and situations from common life,

throwing over them certain "colouring of imagination". No doubt both Nandakishore and Raghunath came under the influence of Sanskrit poets, Sanskrit being the fountain-head of all the literatures of India, but their work is strikingly akin to the romantic nature poetry of English literature, so much so, that Nandakishore openly admits his indebtedness to the lake poets. Both of them are poets of birds and flowers, of simple rustic life and serene woodland and find spontaneous pleasure in free open air life.

In Indian literatures, nature assumed a different colour in the romantic period and started being treated as something living and animated rather than just a backdrop for drama or poetry. This does not mean that we did not have any robust nature poetry in our ancient literature. An imaginative delight in nature is found in all early writers of Indian literature and they often express their <sup>love</sup> ~~joy~~ of nature in a genuine way <sup>not-</sup> ~~un-~~complicated by intellectual or moral considerations.

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CHAPTER I

TRADITION AND DEVELOPMENT.

NATURE IN ANCIENT SANSKRIT LITERATURE

The first poetry according to Indian myth was uttered by Valmiki as a result of his deep sympathy for a pair of Krauncha birds. The Rigveda abounds with hymns dedicated to different deities of nature, the Sun and Moon, Fire and Forest, Night and Dawn. Take for an example, these few lines from the Vedas where 'Usha' or morning is worshipped.

There Heaven's Daughter has appeared before us,  
The maiden flushing in her brilliant garments.  
Thou sovran lady of all earthly treasure,  
Auspicious Dawn, flush here today upon us.  
In the Sky's framework she has shone with splendour  
The goddess has cast off the robe of darkness.  
Wakening up the world with ruddy horse's,  
Upon her well yoked chariot Dawn is coming.<sup>1</sup>

The nocturnal sight and atmosphere is brought out in detail and most effectively by Valmiki in the Ramayana in the following passages;

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1. English rendering by Arthur A. Moedoneill; History of Sanskrit literature, (London, 1928) p 83

"Motionless are all trees and shrouded the beasts and birds and quarters filled with the glooms of night. Slowly the sky parts with evening and grows full of eyes; dense with stars and constellations it glitters with points of light; and yonder with cold beams rises up the moon and thrusts away the shadows from world gladdening the heart of living things on earth with its luminousness".<sup>1</sup>

Here every detail is carefully selected to produce a certain effect, the charms and weirdness of descending night in the forest. Every epithet, every verb, every image is sought out and chosen so as to aid this effect.

Nothing can surpass Kalidasa, who is a past master in description of nature. His descriptions are full of beauty and variety. Here is an illustration from Meghadutam.

"Having seen the Kadamaba flower greenish yellow because of the filaments half grown, and the plantain trees with their first bud manifest in the vicinity of the marshy lands,

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1. English rendering by Sri Aurobindo; Vyas and Valmiki, (Pondicherry Ashram, 1st Edition, 1956) pp 28, 29.

Having smelt the odour of Earth, all the more  
fragrant in the burnt up forests, the deer will  
indicate the path of you, the showerer of drops  
of water\*. <sup>1</sup>

Bhababhuti also while describing different scenes  
in the forest gives vivid description of nature with  
perfect skill and mastery in his 'Malati Madhav'. This  
is what he writes while describing the scene of the  
Vindhya Range in the ninth act.

The mountain with its towering rocks delights  
The eye; its peaks grow dark with gathering clouds,  
Its groves are thronged with peacocks eloquent  
In joy; the trees upon its slopes are bright  
with birds that flit about their nests; the caves  
Reverberate the growl of bears, the scent  
Of incense trees is wafted, sharp and cool,  
From branches broken off by elephants. <sup>2</sup>

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1. Kalidasa's Meghadutam ; Edited by R.R.Deshpande and T.K. Tope. (Bombay, 1947) Shloke-22.
  2. English rendering by Arthur. A.Macdonell; History of Sanskrit Literature (London, 1928) p 364

In most of Sanskrit poetry, nature, especially the plant and animal world, plays an important part and is treated with much charm. Various birds to which poetical myths are attached (Chataka, Chakravaka) are frequently introduced as furnishing analogies to human life and as Macdonell puts it "In most of Sanskrit lyric poetry, the bright eyes and beauty of Indian girls find a setting in scenes brilliant with blossoming trees, fragrant with flowers, gay with the plumage and vocal with the song of birds, diversified with lotus ponds steeped in tropical sunshine and with large eyed gazelles reclining in the shade".<sup>1</sup>

With such a vast canvass of nature descriptions in Sanskrit literature it is but natural that both Assamese and Oriya poets like any other regional poet, will draw their inspiration from Sanskrit. Raghunath was a great Sanskrit scholar and Nandakishore knew the language well. That is why inspite of their modern technique and innovations, their language is at times markedly Sanskrit oriented. Especially in their use of similes and metaphors, they often follow the ancient pattern.

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1. Arthur A. Macdonell; History of Sanskrit Literature, (London, 1928). p 343.

NATURE IN ANCIENT ASSAMESE AND ORIYA LITERATURE.

Though both the poets were considerably influenced by Sanskrit, it is important to mention here that they were equally moved by the writings of the ancient poets of their own regional languages. Both Assamese and Oriya literatures have got past heritage of beautiful nature poetry and no doubt both Raghunath and Nandakishore drew their inspiration from them.

So far as Assamese is concerned, the Vaishnav poets all excelled in nature painting. Shankar Deva in his Harmanan brings before us the enchanting view of a celestial garden with detailed description of different flowers, Sirisa, Sewati, Malati, Labanga, Sewali, Polash, Kunda, Kurubaka and many others. The description is full with the Bhramar sipping nectar from flowers and the swans swimming in the water of the lovely blue pools.

Prior to Shankar Deva, Madhav Kandali in his Ramayana, also gives a perfect picture of the month of 'Sravana' when black threatening clouds cover the sky, the southern breeze blows carrying the fragrance of fresh blossoms and the peacocks start dancing spreading their plumage with real royal splendour.

Assamese folk literature is equally rich in description of nature. Take for example the Bihu songs:

" 'Fagun' breeze has started blowing,  
Golden paddy grows in the field,  
The trees are bedecked with leaves,  
Flowers are in bloom;  
In the meadow they sing and dance,  
Come thither, my dear one, cast aside the gloom".<sup>1</sup>

or the lines

" A thousand doves cloud the sky,  
One alights on the grassy land;  
At thy fingers' tip I wish to die,  
In the hollow of the palm of thy hand".<sup>2</sup>

Nothing can be more realistic than these descriptions of golden paddy fields, trees bedecked with fresh green leaves and a thousand doves clouding the sky when the whole season of spring with its gaiety and festivity comes alive before us.

Ancient Oriya literature is equally rich with rare passages of beautiful nature description. Take for example the lines of Upendrabhanja:

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1-2 English translation of Sri S. Barkataki: 'Assam',  
(National Book Trust, 1961) pp 100, 103.

"Remember, Darling, that time  
when it was heavily raining  
From a darkened sky  
which flashed with lightning,  
And how, with the howling of the winds  
was mingled,  
The croak of frogs  
and the cry of peafowl?  
It was midnight,  
And the winds wafted into our chamber  
the scent of neepa flowers."<sup>1</sup>

This is a typical description of a stormy night in Orissa where the howling of the wind, the darkened sky, croaking of frogs and scent of neepa flowers all combine to give a vivid picture of the natural beauty of Orissa.

Fakirmohan, the father of Modern Oriya Literature while speaking of his departed wife remembers the serene natural back ground against which they enjoyed each others company and writes;

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1. English translation by Dr. Mayadhar Mansinha;  
History of Oriya Literature (Sahitya Akademi, 1962)

: 10 :

"At night, when the world was quiet,  
And just we two  
Sat on the terrace of our house  
Or in the garden,  
And observed the moon and the stars  
Float slowly up above in the sky,  
Shedding heavenly light all around,  
I did feel, darling - didn't I - in those  
quiet moments, that,  
We too, were twin stars,  
Like those up in the sky".<sup>1</sup>

So it is apparent that both Raghunath and Nandakishore were much influenced by their own ancient literatures that preceded them.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE POETS.

Both Raghunath and Nandakishore were born at about the same time, Nandakishore in 1875 and Raghunath in 1878. Both of them grew up under the same political and social conditions prevailing in India at that time. Of course, Nandakishore died rather a premature death at the age of fifty three in the year 1928, where as Raghunath lived up to the ripe old age of eighty nine

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1. Mayadhar Mansinha ; Fakir Mohan Senapati,  
(Sahitya Akademi, 1976 ) p 51.

and died in 1967, which naturally gave him scope to devote himself to literature for the extra thirty six years. But surprisingly, Nandakishore in his limited life span has written more poems and in more varied forms and metres than Rathunath. Raghunath's writing though of very high standard has been relatively sparse. Short biographies of both the poets and names of books written by them will not be out of place here.

While giving sketches of their lives I shall mainly emphasise upon the situations and incidents that moulded their personality and shaped their poetic sensibility as other points are irrelevant to our dissertation.

#### LIFE OF RAGHUNATH.

Raghunath was born in the year 1878 in the Village Laopara on the bank of river Brahmaputra. His father Shri Bholanath Chaudhary was a well to do man but modest and humble in nature which no doubt was inherited by his son.

It is strange that though Raghunath was born on the auspicious day of 'Ganesh Chaturthi' and Lord Ganesh is considered to be the remover of all obstacles according to Hindu mythology, his life was full of

mishaps and unfortunate incidents right from the beginning. When he was only nine months old, he fell down and because of the accident broke his leg. His right foot was never set right and left him an invalid for the rest of his life. It is nothing but an irony of fate that the poet who was deeply in love with mother earth could neither dance nor play freely on her lap during his childhood. The troubles follow one after the other. When he was only four years old, his mother Dayalata died. Raghunath was too young to understand his loss, but all throughout his later years, he had missed his mother tremendously and this agony is expressed in his poem 'Matrudevi'. After a week of his mother's death, both his elder brother and sister also expired. The mental pain and agony of his father Bholanath at this period can very well be visualised. During this period, baby Raghunath was looked after by one Sri Jaypal Das of his Village. In the meantime, Bholanath regained his mental composure a little and brought back the four years old Raghunath to him. Young Raghunath started learning his alphabets under the guidance of Shri Kasiram Das, a local primary school teacher. Afterwards his cousin Gargaram Choudhary

brought him to Gauhaty where he was admitted to the Government School.

Right from the beginning of his student career Raghurath was interested in literature. It was his second teacher Shri Brajanath Chattopadhyaya who initiated him into reading Bengali and it was through a Bengali paper 'Sanjivani' that Raghurath had the first glimpse of the works of renowned Bengali writers. <sup>1</sup> During this period, he had established a Club, named 'Suniti Sancharini Sabha' and opened a library with the help of his friends which showed his keen interest in books.

In the year 1896, he had started his English education in the High School. He was a very good student and there was keen competition between him and other students for topping the class. <sup>2</sup> But he soon left the school, independent minded as ~~was~~ he was, following a tiff with the teacher.

In the year 1898, he was appointed a teacher in Ujan Bajar Girls School, Gauhaty. After the Closing

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1.2. Sri Tarunachandra Bharali; 'Kavir Jeevan Katha', Chaudharyr Sahitya Pratibha, (Savita Sabha, Gauhaty, 1964), pp 8, 9.

down of the school, he learnt Sanskrit under the guidance of Shri Dhireswar Bhattacharya and also Shri Balmukund Jha who was a famous scholar of Mithila. Raghunath with the in-born sensitiveness of mind towards the wonderworld of poetry drank deep of Sanskrit literature and this clearly is seen from his poems where the influence of Sanskrit writers is obvious.

'Maramar pakhi' was his first poem to be published in 'Jonaki' in 1901 and was shortly followed by the publication of 'Priya Bihangini', which brought him instant fame and he was appointed Sub-Editor of 'Jonaki' the same year. In the year 1904, he went back to the village 'Birkuchi' twenty miles from Gauhaty and spent many years afterwards in this place occupying himself with farming and agriculture. A real connoisseur of the beauty of nature, he found in it, a friend, philosopher and guide. The green fields and the common people around him were a clean soothing balm for his sick, lonely soul.

He remained a life long bachelor and fought althroughout his life against in-justice and oppression. He took active part in the 'Non-cooperation movement',

participated in the 'world peace conference' in Calcutta in the year 1952 and always served people on humanitarian ground. His whole life was devoted to the upliftment of his native tongue and among the ones who demanded special status for the Assamese language and Assam State, he stands foremost. It was under his endeavour and interest that the journals Jayanti (1937) and Surobhi (1940) had started. He was closely connected with the literary and cultural movements of Assam and was elected president of the Sixteenth Session of Assam Sahitya Sabha held in Tejpur in the year 1936. He expired on 18 November, 1967.

Leaving aside his unpublished works, different editorials, speeches, critical essays and unpublished poems, he has got five published books to his credit;

	<u>Books</u>	<u>Year of publication.</u>
1.	<u>Sadari</u> Collection of poems	1910
2.	<u>Keteki</u> A long poem	1918
3.	<u>Karbala</u> Short epic	1923
4.	<u>Dahikatra</u> Collection of poems	1931
5.	<u>Navamallika</u> Collection of prose works	1958

LIFE OF NANDKISHORE

Nandakishore was born in the year 1875, three years before Raghunath's birth, in the village Kusupur on the bank of river Birupa. His father Bhajananad Jena was a religious man of noble character. Kusupur is a beautiful village with the hill ranges of Alatigiri and Udaigiri in the North and Lalitgiri in the East. It is striking to note that both Raghunath and Nandakishore were born on river banks and in villages with ideal picturesque setting which seem to have stamped lasting impressions on their sensitive minds.

Nandakishore, like Raghunath, lost his mother when he was very small and was brought up by his aunt Janaki Devi. He gave up his parental title 'Jena' and used the title 'Bala' instead, as he was adopted by his aunt.

Nandakishore had started his learning in the ancient method in the village school, the vivid description of which is found in his book 'pallichitra'. After passing his upper primary examination, standing first in the whole district in 1890, he joined the Town School and then the Collegiate School at Cuttack. It was here that he came in contact with Shri Biswanathkar, *Kar*,

and Shri Madhusudan Rao, Headmasters of both these schools respectively, who were both writers and poets of high calibre and they shaped his out-look, poetic sensibility and personality considerably. Under Madhusudan's spell he was attracted towards Brahma religion. As such, his brother transferred him to Kendrapada School from where he matriculated in the year 1897 in first division.

It was at this time he was married to Smt. Kokila Devi. The dormant poetic feelings of young Nanda'kishore now flourished with the bliss of wedding life and many of the poems of 'Vasanta Kokila' were written during this period.

During his student career, he was attracted towards the modern trends of western and Bengali literature and participated in various literary organisations like 'Cuttack Alochana Sabha' etc. In these literary gatherings he had come in contact with Shri Radhanath Ray, one of the renowned poets of the then Orissa and used to discuss the various problems of Oriya literature with him.

Most of his life, he spent as a teacher and was well known for his sincerity and integrity. While posted

as a teacher at Balasore, he was in the close companionship of Shri Fakirmohan Senapati, the father of Modern Oriya literature and spent many happy evenings with him. The account of these meetings is nostalgically recalled by Fakirmohan in his autobiography.

He was appointed as the Inspector of Schools of Puri District in the year 1920 and retired in 1927 on ground of indifferent health. Like Raghunath, he was also a patriot and was a member of 'Utkala Samilani' which tried hard for the cause of a separate Orissa State. Many of his poems of 'Janma Bhumi' show his deep sympathy and love for his mother land in general and for Orissa in particular.

Even after his retirement, his literary output did not stop. Because of his weak eye sight and ill-health he was unable to write and he dictated many poems which were taken down by his daughter Saraswati.<sup>1</sup> Few poems of 'Prabhat Sangeeta' and 'Sandhya Sangeeta' were written like this. He dies on 1st July in the year 1928 leaving his dear Orissa for good whose glory and beauty he had celebrated in all his poems.

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1. Suryamani Jena; Introduction of Nandakishore granthabali  
Ed. H.K. Bal (Cuttack, 1955).

During his short span of life, he has written a considerable number of poems which signify that his pen worked incessantly inspite of his pre-occupation with Government service. Leaving aside his numerous literary essays as well as lyrics published in different journals during his lifetime, the following select list of his books shows his versatility:-

	<u>Books</u>		<u>Year of publication</u>
1.	Nirjharini	Collection of poems	1900
2.	Pallichitra	-do-	1900
3.	Krishnakumari	Epic	1901
4.	Seetabanas	-do-	1901
5.	Vasanta Kokila	Collection of poems	1901
6.	Charuchitra	-do-	1902
7.	Janmabhumi	-do-	1903
8.	Nirmalya	-do-	1903
9.	Lakshmi	Long story	1913
10.	Nanabayageeta	Lullabies for children	1915
11.	Sarmistha	Epic	1916
12.	Kanaklata	Novel	1925

WESTERN INFLUENCE

WESTERN INFLUENCE ON NANDKISHORE.

We see that both the poets were teachers and had ample opportunity to come in contact with books and students. Of course academically speaking Nandkishore had better education being a B.A., B.T. of that time whereas Raghunath never went to the doorstep of a college. He was none the less well acquainted with English. So far as the influence of English language is concerned Nandkishore freely admits his indebtedness to English poetry especially to the lake poets and quotes abundantly from English poetry at the beginning of many of his poems. He was an ardent admirer of Wordsworth's simple and natural style and many a times refers to Wordsworth not only in his poetry but also in his criticism and prose works. In one of his critical essays he has said "Simple writing is also appreciated by the learned ones. Otherwise who would have read the poetry of Burns, Goldsmith, Scott, Wordsworth etc. who wrote poetry in a natural style".<sup>1</sup>

There is evidence that he generally appreciated Wordsworth. He not only translated poems of Wordsworth, but also quoted passages and stanzas from his poetry in his writings. He was highly impressed with Wordsworth's

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1. Nandkishore Bal; Chithira Uttara (Reply to a letter),  
Nandkishore granthabali (Cuttack, 1955) p 1099

comparison of daffodils with little shining stars of the milkyway and quoted six lines from the poem in one of his critical works.<sup>1</sup> He not only read and enjoyed Wordsworth but also accepted him as a guide for his literary career. Shri Nilakantha Das in his introduction to the complete works of Nandakishore, writes;

"At that time we used to discuss English poetry in relation with Oriya poetry. I knew from that discussion that he had great regard in his heart for the lake poets. Once he had commented that the lyrics of the romantic poets, coming after the more learned and long poems of Dryden and Pope, gave English poetry a chance to breathe. Similarly, after the archaic and artificial medieval Oriya poetry, it was necessary that a change be made in the literary tradition of Oriya poetry".<sup>2</sup>

It is apparent from this statement how strongly Nandakishore felt an affinity with Romanticists of English literature who fed his imagination strongly with their ideals of poetry. Any one who goes through

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1. Nandakishore Bal ; "Chhandamala", Nandakishore granthabali (Cuttack, 1955), p 1021.

2. Sri Nilakantha Das; Introduction, Nandakishore granthabali (Cuttack, 1955) p vi

his essay "Kavi Radhanath O Tadiya Kavita" can find him quoting extensively from English poetry and referring to English literary theory to judge good poetry from bad. 1

WESTERN INFLUENCE ON RAGHUNATH.

While Wordsworth had a direct impact on the mind of Nandakishore, in case of Raghunath we do not get any such proof. Academically, Raghunath did not get much of English education but it is surprising that throughout his writings certain significant Wordsworthian qualities are found. Wordsworth's principal object was to select incidents from common life and to describe them as far as possible in the language really used by men. This is very true in case of Raghunath. The single solitary flower in a marshy land, the lonesome girl fetching water from the river, the lovely maiden sitting unmindful at her loom or a beautiful lotus in the still blue water of the lake, all have their access into his realm of poetry. To me, it seems, though Raghunath was not directly influenced by Wordsworth, English romantic poetry certainly had its impact indirectly upon him. He belongs to the 'post jonaki age' in the literary history of Assamese literature and is one of the followers of the traditions of romantic poetry.

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1. Kavi Radhanath O Tadiya Kavita,  
Nandakishore granthabali, (Cuttack, 1955) p 950.

"Raghunath Chaudhary is the famous poet of the romantic age. Usually he is known as bird poet or the nature poet. These titles speak of his unique characteristics. The moment we hear the notes of cuckoo or keteki, the moment we see a rose or a girimallika, we are reminded of Shri Raghunath's poetry".<sup>1</sup> This is how Raghunath is described by Shri Kamaleswar Sharma who establishes the fact that Raghunath was essentially a romanticist and a famous nature poet of Assam.

By the time Raghunath started writing, the romantic age, a pan Indian movement as a result of the western learning, had already started. The precursors of romanticism in Assamese literature were Shri Lakhminath Bezbarua, Hemachandra goswami, Chandrakumar Aggarwal, Benudhar Rajkhoma, padmanath gohain Barua and many others. These writers were much influenced by English literature through their English education and their mode of writing took a different turn and established a new romantic trend in Assamese literature. Raghunath who came after them followed the new trend and started a new chapter in the field of romantic poetry. He was also sub-editor of the famous magazine 'Jonaki' which was the chief mouth piece of romantic poetry of that period.

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1. Sri Kamaleswar Sharma : Navanyas, Chaudhary Sahitya pratibha (Savita Sabha Gauhati, 1964) p 85.

Raghurath was also conversant with Bengali poetry which certainly contributed much to his thought process. Sanskrit and vaishnav literatures had a strong imprint on his mind also. The ancient vaishnav poetry stimulated his feeling of love and appreciation of nature, and in many poems, the influence of Kalidasa is apparent. With all these traditional influences, however, we note that there are striking resemblances in his poetry with the poetry of Shelley, Wordsworth and Keats and that there is strong similarity of ideas and expression between him and the English romantic poets which will be elucidated in the following chapters.

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CHAPTER II

LOCAL COLOUR

I have already mentioned that both Nandakishore and Raghunath were born almost at the same time and shared the same social and political heritage of India. Both of them were born in villages and grew up amidst identical natural surroundings in their childhood. Raghunath was born in a village on the bank of the Brahmaputra and Nandakishore on the bank of river Birupa. Raghunath's poetic imagination was kindled by the sheer loveliness of the natural heritage of Assam. Nandakishore came of a class, that is closely attached to the soil. This and his early upbringing in his native village made an indelible impression on his sensitive mind. Recollection of his childhood memories and the village life is the basis of many of his poems that he wrote afterwards. As childhood memories and scenic backgrounds of the lake counties stamped a lasting impression in the mind of Wordsworth, similarly, the rich natural heritage of both Assam and Orissa, the beautiful landscape, lovely maidens, colourful birds, and sweet smelling flowers of their respective States found expression in the poetry of Raghunath and Nandakishore. Assam with all its local colouring appears through Raghunath's poem and similarly

Orissa's picturesque villages with their green paddy fields and misty winter mornings are portrayed by Nandakishore. Wordsworth's poem 'The prelude' is a beautiful topographical poem with many vivid descriptions of the countryside, and one notices similar topographical elements in the work of both Raghunath and Nandakishore.

LOCAL COLOUR AND TOPOGRAPHY IN WORDSWORTH'S POETRY.

Personal experience and local colour are pre-eminently common features in both Raghunath and Nandakishore as in Wordsworth. Wandering through the fields and woods of Cumberland and Westmoreland used to stir Wordsworth to poetic ecstasy. Actual scenes and incidents of his own life in the countryside filled his mind with pleasure and reflection and formed the core of his poetic experience. When we read the lines;

"My heart leaps up when I behold a  
rainbow in the sky"

Or

"Oh there is a blessing in this gentle  
breeze",

It is about his own experiences that he is speaking about. The rainbow and the breeze are what he had actually seen and felt.

The 'vale of Esthwaite' is described by him as "a long poem running on my own adventures and the scenery of the country in which I was brought up".<sup>1</sup> Of 'An Evening walk' he said "There is not an image on it which I have not observed, and now in my 73rd years, I recollect the time and place where most of them were noticed."<sup>2</sup>

He quotes one of them;

"And, fronting the bright west,  
Yonoak entwines.

Its darkening boughs and leaves,  
In stronger lines".<sup>3</sup>

His poetical life begins, he tells us, on the banks of the Derwent in Cockermbouth, when he was a babe in arms;

Was it for this?

That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved  
To blend his murmurs with my nurses' song,  
And, from his alder shades and rocky falls,  
And from his fords and shallows,

sent a voice

That flowed along my dreams?<sup>4</sup>

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- 1.2. Helen Darbishire; The poet Wordsworth (Oxford University Press, 1966) pp 13,15
  3. William Wordsworth; 'An evening walk', Wordsworth Poetical Works. Ed. Thoms Hutchinson (Oxford University Press, 1969) p.5.
  4. Wordsworth; 'prelude', Wordsworth Poetical Works, (Oxford University Press, 1969) p 498

Like Wordsworth being nursed by the Deerwent Raghunath was nursed by the water of the beautiful Bramaputra and Nandakishore by that of the enchanting Birupa and these rivers are portrayed in all vividness in their poetry.

LOCAL COLOUR IN RAGHUNATH'S POETRY AND COMPARISON WITH WORDSWORTH.

Both Nandakishore and Raghunath are social poets and poets of community in the sense that they bring the fragrance and smell of their native states into their poetry. In the poetry of Raghunath there are numerous references to the soil and scenery of Assam. His landscape is the lush green landscape of ever green Assam. His birds and flowers are local. In his poem "Bahagir Biya" we find a description of the marriage ceremony of Assam through beautiful nature images. Spring is described as the bridegroom and the month of Bohag is the bride. When the groom arrives, it is customary to receive him with blowing of conch shells and beating of drums. The singing of birds and sound of thunder as described by the poet provide the necessary music for the reception. Bohag, the bride is described in the same manner as an Assamese bride. The morning sun is the vermillion mark and creepers are her bangles. The champak flower adorns her hair, dalim flowers serve as the earrings and the bright peacock feathers are the colourful costume of the bride.

In the poem "Chhayachitra" he describes a beautiful maiden bringing water from the river. This, faithfully draws the picture of an Assamese girl wearing typical riha and mekhela and bringing water in a pitcher from river Luit. Raghunath being born on the bank of Brahmaputra was perhaps acquainted from the very childhood with such picturesque scenes which he depicted in his poems. His poetry abounds with references to birds and flowers of Assam. The birds Dahikatra, Keteki, Kurua, Maupiya, Tuni, Kapou, Sakhiyati are typically the birds of Assam and Seyaly, Mallika, Karavira and Madhavi are also the flowers of his own place. The nature of Assam is interwoven quite deftly with the poetry of Raghunath and he seems to be always interested in recreating in his poetry the natural beauty of his native State.

Weaving is a common feature of Assamese life. Assamese women weave their own clothes on the handloom. There is a beautiful description of this village scene in Raghunath's poem 'Keteki'. Speaking of the cooing of the bird, he says that;

"Hearing thy song, the bashful bride,  
stops mid-way in her loom,  
Speechless she remains,  
The shuttle held idle in her hand,



"Swiftly turn the murmuring wheel,  
Night has brought the welcome hour,  
When the weary fingers feel,  
Help, as if from faery power,  
Dewy night O'ershades the ground,  
Turn the swift wheel round and round." <sup>1</sup>

With the 'Lyrical Ballads' Wordsworth had clearly become a champion of domestic industry, the loss of which spelled ruin for the rural society of the lake country. The pictures of different aspect of domestic industry in "Michael" and the "Brothers" are familiar to all. In another sonnet also wordsworth speaks of the use of the spinning wheel expressing a sincere love of the occupation and writes lamenting its disappearance:

Venerable Art,  
Torn from the poor; yet shall kind Heaven protect  
Its own; though Rulers, with undue respect,  
Trusting to crowded factory and mart  
And proud discoveries of the intellect,  
Heed not the pillage of man's ancient heart. <sup>2</sup>

In respect of topography and local colour there is much similarity between Wordsworth and Raghunath. We can take a few lines of Wordsworth:

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1. Wordsworth: 'Song for the spinning wheel', Wordsworth

2. Ibid, p 203

And see the mist, as warms the day,  
From the green vale steals away,  
Yet round the mountain top it sails  
Slow borne upon the dewy gales,  
And on yon summit brown and bare,  
That seems an island in the air,  
The Shepherd's restless dog I mark  
who, bounding round with frequent bark,  
Now leaps around the uncovered plain,  
Now dives into the mist again.<sup>1</sup>

The images are true and clear. Wordsworth's keen eye is on his object. The scene depicted is essentially local and describes the country in which he was brought up. The mist, the green vale, the dewy gales, the mountain top, and the shepherd's dog all combine to give a clear picture of the English countryside.

Compare the above with Raghunath's description in a poem about rural life:

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1. Wordsworth ; 'The Vale of Eshwaite'.  
Quoted by Helen Darbishire in the Book 'The poet Wordsworth', ( Exford, 1966 ) p 15.

"The Dahikatara bird has got your tune by heart  
And in the intoxication of love,  
It is singing with an open heart.  
At the same time,  
It is dancing in various measures.  
From the water's edge down in the 'Beel' (Lake).  
The "Dowk" bird joined the song.  
And it drew out melodious notes as well,  
From the Mewa and the Sarali Birds".<sup>1</sup>

Anybody acquainted with Assamese rural life can visualise the whole local scene by reading these lines. The mention of the Beel, the marshy paddy fields, and the cooing of the Dowk and Sarali birds and essentially Assamese colour to the picture. Such full and detailed description of the natural life of Assam is not found in any other poet. We find references to dhol, banhi, been, dotara etc., the names of different Assamese musical instruments, in his poems. There are references to the dresses of Assamese girls (riha, mekhela), to different types of dances of Assam (Ojapali, Bihu), and to Tamol, Gamocha, Sarai etc., typical examples of Assamese culture, in his writing. Raghunath was so much overwhelmed by the natural beauty of Assamese countryside

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1. Keteki, English rendering by Prof. T.K. Bhattacharya,  
Preface, English version of Keteki, (Gauhati, 1961) pp VI  
VII.

that he felt a strong urge to express his emotions in intensely vivid descriptions and his poems are nothing but his full hearted response to nature and his monologues with different elements of it, the flowers, the fountain, the sky, and the spring season etc.

LOCAL COLOUR IN NANDAKISHORE'S POETRY AND COMPARISON WITH WORDSWORTH.

Coming to Nandakishore we find the same characteristics. Though rising high above the limitations of his society and culture, Nandakishore still remains essentially an Oriya in his heart. The heart of Orissa speaks through his poetry. One thing that can be said emphatically about Nandakishore is that unlike his predecessors, he was not content with landscape painting of Orissa but went much farther. It was the village with its serene and quiet atmosphere and with its life of abiding beauty and peace that formed the background of his poetry and earned him the coveted title "pallikavi". The critic Mayadhar Mansinha writes about him -

"For the first time in Oriya literature a country bred poet, inspite of the university education and residence in urban areas for the most part of

his official career, sang of the village folk and wrote lyrics, lullabies, odes and ballads. He brought the fragrance of soil and the village into the sophisticated atmosphere of modern poetry. Most of the poems of Nandakishore, especially 'pallichitra' is a real pageant of Orissa village life ench antingly and nostalgically worked into a befittingly slow moving metre and simple elegant diction. The different village scenes, the folk festivals, the people, the scenery pass before our minds eye with such vividness creating such situation of humour and pathos that make his poems treasure in the memory of every Oriya".<sup>1</sup>

An illustration of the poem "The Village Barn" translated by Dr. Mansinha giving his minute portrayal of village life is the following:

"At the end of the village are the barns where the harvest is gathered for threshing. The farmer guards the harvest at night, sleeping away from home in a temporary loft in the barn. He freely

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1. Dr. Mayadhar Mansinha; History of Oriya Literature (Sahitya Akademi, 1962) p 197.

spins yarns about his experiences of the night, when he meets other folk next morning. Close to the common barn lies the large village tank with red water lilies in full bloom. The melodies and colours of the various waterfowl add to its enchantment.

The village folk generally gather there in the mornings for a dose of gossip, and some smoke, some relate stories and other listen, some sneeze with the snuff they put into their nostrils and some wash their teeth at the waterside. The barber, busy with his craft, tells stories of all lands, the old talk of sastras and ethics, others talk of domestic matters, while some come to blows over trivialities.

The harvest lies scattered on the ground in sheaves still halfwet. The poor farmer worries as he looks at them, for they are the meagre source with which he must support his wife and children, meet the demands of the mahajan, and pay rent to the government as well "2

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2. English rendering by Dr. Mayadhar Mansinha; History of Oriya Literature (Sahitya Akademi, 1962) p 197

Though much of the charm and beauty of the original poem is lost in translation, still one can have fair idea from it about Nandakishore's keen power of observation of the rural life of Orissa and his realistic way of expression.

In his true affection for the rural people Nandakishore bears a close resemblance with Wordsworth. Like Wordsworth he was concerned with feelings that were natural and homely. Wordsworth had made the peasant world in very large measure the world of emotion and passion. While interpreting humble and rustic life, Wordsworth was creating a new popular aesthetic, which located the world of passionate feeling not in medieval castle or renaissance palace, but rather in the cottage, on the soil of common life. It can further be noted that wherever in literature the poet can character of common life has been recognized, we may claim something of a Wordsworthian influences. True to this, Nandakishore who admits being loyal to Wordsworth in many important ways goes to the village for the main source of his inspiration. He describes not only the exquisite beauty of the rural Orissa, but also presents before us the whole countryside with its pageant of different characters. As Wordsworth took for his heroes, tramps, beggars, and pedlars so

also Nandakishore chose for his subjects the village Brahmin, the widow, the ~~farmer~~ farmer and the sculptor. In his wandering on the country roads he found in the humblest human beings a strength and energy that surprised him. Wordsworth found the elementary feelings, the essential passions of the heart at their purest and simplest in humble and rustic people. Similarly, a solitary traveller, the talkative barber, the village minstrel, the sorrowful widow, and the Brahmin, all attracted Nandakishore more than the sophisticated educated person. Some of the realistic characters that Wordsworth painted were taken from his own experience. He tells us:

"The countenance, gait and figure of Peter were taken from a wild rover with whom I walked from Bulth as far as Hay. He told me strange stories. It has always been a pleasure to me to catch at every opportunity of becoming acquainted with this class of people" 1

Wordsworth inherited from the eighteenth century of faith in the essential goodness of human nature. What he knew of Shepherds on his native hills inspired his love and reverence for human beings. Nandakishore who was attached to the soil of Orissa by birth and by class

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1. Helen Darbishire; The poet Wordsworth (Oxford University Press, 1966) P 10

knew his characters equally well. His book *Pallichitra* deals with not only the exquisite beauty of rural Orissa, but also presents before us the whole countryside with its pageant of different characters. Its broad compass offers the poet the scope for not only landscape painting but also for character painting. Wordsworth always felt nostalgic about his own country and there was a strong binding factor between himself and the lake country. Nandakishore felt equally attached to his native village, the beautiful Kusupur on the bank of river Birpua, and expressed his deep nostalgia in his last wish to "die peacefully in my native village".<sup>1</sup> His description of the familiar scenes and characters of his village are presented with remarkable depth and authenticity. Nandakishore's language and diction are as fresh, pure, and spontaneous as the rural life of Orissa. The rural life which was almost banished from the sophisticated world of literature for ages, came back to the province of poetry and throbbed with life with the magic touch of Nandakishore.

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1. Sri Suryamani Jena; Preface, Nandakishore granthabali published by H.K. Bal, (Cuttack, 1956).

CHAPTER III.

NATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY IN WORDSWORTH'S POETRY.

Apart from the local colour that we find in the poetry of Wordsworth as well as of Raghunath and Nandakishore, the next important thing that comes to our mind while going through their poetry is the divinization of nature. Wordsworth found in nature the anchor of his poetical thoughts, the guide and guardian of his heart. His passion for mute insensate things, for green grass and lofty mountains was often accompanied with deep spiritual feeling. In 'Tintern Abbey', he tells us:

I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with joy  
of elevated thoughts, a sense of sublime  
of something far more deeply interfused.  
Whose dwelling is in the light of the setting sun  
And the round ocean and the living air  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts  
And rolls through all things.<sup>1</sup>

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1. William Wordsworth; 'Tintern Abbey' Wordsworth poetical Works, Ed. Thomas Hutchinson, (Oxford University Press, 1969) p 164.

In his poem 'Intimation of Immortality' he takes for his central theme the immortal nature of the human spirit and he writes of the heavenly aspect of nature;

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream

The earth and every common sight

To me did seem

Apparalled in celestial light .... 1

Both Raghunath and Nandakishore have strongly felt this powerful sense of sacredness of the created world, the sense of dignity of the human spirit and of the spiritual affinity between nature and the human soul. In their pleasant as well as sorrowful moods both these poets draw inspiration from nature which helps them in discovering the true and abiding spiritual resources of life.

#### PHILOSOPHY IN RAGHUNATH'S POETRY AND COMPARISON WITH WORDSWORTH.

Basil Willey writes that "those who have felt more powerfully the healing influence of nature have often been those who were most subject in their ordinary moments to gloom and nervous depression".<sup>2</sup> This is true in case of Wordsworth, who in his lonely moments, amidst the din and

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1. Wordsworth; 'Intimations of Immortality'. Wordsworth Poetical Works, Ed. T. Hutchinson Oxford University Press, 1969), p 460.

2. Basil Willey : The Eighteenth Century Background. 6th impression, 1957, p, 257.

bustle of busy urban life finds great solace in nature;

"But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din  
of towns and cities, I have owed to them  
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet  
Felt in the blood, and, fell along the heart  
And passing even into my purer mind with  
tranquil restoration".<sup>1</sup>

In nature, Wordsworth finds an escape from social and personal gloom as does Raghunath in an equally significant way. Raghunath's personal life was marked with deep frustration and remorse, and in one of his poems he writes:

"The bitter sorrows and pains of life  
Rack my body so.  
In despair and weariness I fall  
How to carry on from day to day"<sup>2</sup>

and so the poet requests

"Lead me, O loving bird  
I won't stay in this world  
take me there where flows in hundred streams  
the river of love."<sup>3</sup>

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1. William Wordsworth: 'Tintern Abbey', Wordsworth Poetical Works, Ed. T. Hutchinson (Oxford University Press, 1969)  
p 164.

2. Keteki, English version by Dr. P. D. Goswami (Gauhati, 1961)  
pp 30, 31.

He is disillusioned with this world and turns to nature to find the expression of the Almighty in the smallest of things and this gives him the best possible anodyne.

Raghunāth lost his mother in his early childhood and nature was like a second mother to him on whose lap he grew up. His childhood, without the love of mother, brother, and sister, all of who died when Raghunāth was only four years old, was far from being happy. When Raghunāth was hardly nine months old, as a result of an accident his right foot became paralysed and was never set right. Young Raghunāth must have suffered tremendous mental agony and depression in his childhood as well as during his adolescent period. Being a life long bachelor, naturally he found in nature not only his sweetheart, but also a friend, philosopher and guide. He felt that

"Desire for matter and thirst for pleasure  
have dried up my throat,  
mirages then accost me,  
My way I do not find. 1

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1. Keteki, English version of Dr. P. D. Goswami  
(Gauhāty, 1961), p 30.

But he does not allow the bitterness of life to overpower him. It is nature which makes him conscious of the supreme power of God and the green blade of grass, a solitary star in the sky and especially the cooing of a bird inspire him to sing.

Though I was born a mortal  
Following the ways of the world,  
It was your song which taught me  
of divine love and affection. <sup>1</sup>

It is this divine love and affection that is expressed in most of his poems.

Basil Willey writes about Wordsworth that "he had exquisite regard for common things and he seeks nature with the longing of a sickman for the source of health". <sup>2</sup>  
The same thing can be said about Raghunath for whom nature acquires a great soothing and cheering power. Of course this does not mean that he was always didactic in his writing. He certainly did sing of the splendour in the grass and of the glory in the flower. We find two simultaneous trends in the poetry of Raghunath. As aptly commented by Dr. Maheshwar Neog, one of these two trends is the attraction for the earthly life, for its colour,

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1. Keteki, English version by Dr.P.D.Goswami (Gauhati, 1961) p, 9.

2. Basil Willey; Eighteenth century background, 1957 p 281

fragrance and beauty, and the other is the acceptance of the force of devotion and renunciation as reflected in the traditional Indian thought. He is of the opinion that though both these features seem to be in conflict with each other at the first sight, there is a beautiful coordination between the two in Raghunath's Poetry. <sup>1</sup>

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give".

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears, and likewise Raghunath sang about the true glory of the apparently insignificant 'alphul' or 'Bhetkali'. When he sings of such small things, he finds in them the expression of the supreme consciousness. The snow white little solitary star (Punati Tara) appears to him as the embodiment of a divine spirit. That is why the poet who is chained in this gloomy world aspires to reach God by borrowing a little of the glow of the star. His poems 'prasasti', "Bibhuti", "Abhisar" "Anjali" "Madhuri" "Atrupta" and "Viswa" not only show his interest in the picturesque aspect of nature but also reflect his essential consciousness which finds the expression of the supreme being in different elements of nature. The world with all its

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1. Dr. Maheshwar Neog; Asamiya Sahityar Buprekha  
(New Book Stall, Gauhati, 1974) p 278.

splendour and fragrance is to him a divine gift of God (Bibhuti') and in the poem "Anjali", he compares this world with a divine temple and finds beauty and glory in abundance in it. The poem 'Jonaloi' is rather metaphorical and presents the idea that as the river longs for the moon but does not get it, similarly the poet wants to be united with God, but his aspiration remains beyond his attainment. In the poem 'Akankhya' he compares his life with a desert and aspires to acquire the blessing of God which alone, he feels, will give him peace and contentment. The poet is saddened with life and wants to be free from the bondage of wordly life ( vairagya Katha, Vanijar Katha ). He realises that if one has ultimate faith in God, one does not require any other thing and with this inner realisation he prays to God to strengthen his courage of conviction and his belief in the Almighty (Viksha).

PHILOSOPHY IN NANDAKISHORE'S POETRY AND COMPARISON WITH WORDSWORTH.

Coming to Nandakishore we find him philosophising or preaching in most of his poems. Of course he blends his preaching so deftly with his literary creation that it never appears dogmatic or doctrinal. In most of his poems such as "Upabana Bhavana", "Banapriya", "paushamase", "Kakabarata", "Nabaversha Bhavana", "Nishitha Sobha",

'prabhat Sangeeta', "Taraka", "Chitrotpala Tate", "sandhya" etc. nature and philosophy go hand in hand. Every small blossom or the tiniest star reminds him of its creator and he at once bursts forth into a philosophical monologue. His spiritual eye is like Wordsworth's;

In common things that round us lie  
Some random truths he can impart,  
The harvest of a quiet eye  
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

Like Wordsworth he finds deep spiritual truth in human life and nature, and for him man is not something apart from nature, but is the very life of her life.

Like Wordsworth he learned;

To look on nature, not as in the hour of  
thoughtless youth, but hearing often time  
The still Sad music of humanity.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Nandakishore, who is essentially a lyricist and sings in simple, spontaneous language about the humble humanity and the lovely pastoral beauty of

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1. William Wordsworth; 'Tintern Abbey' Wordsworth poetical works. ED. T.Hutchinson (Oxford University Press, 1969) p 164.

Orissa, should sing about the glory of God and deal with spiritual meditation has its own peculiar background. He was an ardent follower of Madhusudan Rao who was popularly known as ' Bhakta Kavi ', the devotional poet of Orissa because of his dedicated and mystic poems. Madhusudan was a teacher of Nandakishore and had tremendous influence on his pupil not only in terms of poetical thoughts but also in regard to his personal beliefs and convictions. Infact Nandakishore's religious faith was so much moulded by Madhusudan that he had even thought of embracing 'Brahmo' religion as Madhusudan himself was a Brahmo. In numerous ways Nandakishore's poetry shows his deep fascination for Madhusudan's ideals.

In a larger sense every poet is a teacher, for poetry opens windows for us upon a world of thought and experience otherwise hidden. The poet sees and helps us to see, knows and communicates to us his knowledge, feels and allows us to share his feelings, creates and shows for our delight the things he has made. Raghunath as well as Nandakishore like Wordsworth, are poets and teachers in this larger sense. In their nature poetry, they embroider philosophy so artistically into their creative work that the philosophy is not separate from their poetic vision but becomes an integral part of it.

So far as Nandakishore is concerned, in many of his poems, he comes very near to Wordsworth's philosophical

thought and openly admits his indebtedness to him. Wordsworth declared in his preface to the 'Lyrical Ballads' and continued to believe throughout his life that every poem he wrote was written with a purpose. He writes that "Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived, but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings that my description of such objects as strongly excite those feelings will be found to carry along with them a purpose"<sup>1</sup> He also ~~thinks~~ adds that "If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a poet"<sup>2</sup> He thinks that with seriousness of purpose a poet has to ponder over a subject considerably, and "poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subject but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, has also thought long and deeply". It is this meditative quality that marks most of Nandakishore's nature poetry as it does in the case of Raghunath.

Like Wordsworth, Nandakishore finds a kinship between man and nature which according to him glorifies life. He discovers that in every natural object there is reflection of the living God. Nature is everywhere transfused and illumined by spirit. In the poem "Upabana Bhavana" he

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1-2. William Wordsworth: 'preface to Lyrical Ballads'.  
Wordsworth Poetical Works. Ed. Thomas Hutchinson  
(Oxford University Press, 1969) P 735

reflects on the virtues and vices of life against the background of nature. He thinks that a real wealthy man must be humble as a sweet longesome flower in one corner of the garden. He sees another flower wither away and asks the people to beware of old age which would soon come to them. In the poem "prabhata Abakash<sup>o</sup>" nature makes him both pensive and happy as he consoles himself by saying that life is itself a combination of both pleasure and pain and he is determined to sing of new hopes and new aspirations. In the poems "Nisheetha Sobha" "Nisheetha", "Akasha" and "Barsha Avakasha"<sup>o</sup> he sees the reflection and personification of the Almighty and the sublime spirit in flowers, clouds and stars. He finds that a flower or a blade of grass is the natural symbol of the beauty and glory of the earth; and nature, which is the breath of God, always assures and comforts mankind.

In the later part of his poem "Birupa Tate" he compares his soul with a bird and depicts the eternal spirit as the sky where his soul tries to fly to. In the poems "Sandhya Chitra" he says that worldly pleasures and earthly beauty are nothing but temporary and the human being is described as a traveller who comes to this world for a few days only. He comes alone and goes alone. These lines of Nandakishore seem almost a reflection of Wordsworth's ideas in the 'Immortality ode' ;

We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind;

In the primal sympathy  
Which having been must ever be,  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering;  
In the faith that looks through death,  
In years that bring the philosophic mind.<sup>1</sup>

The same pensive mood is reflected in the poem "Pausha Mashe" where Nandakishore is enamoured with the beauty of the month of Pausha and remembers the day when he was born in the same month. He finds that his parents and relatives have left one by one and can foresee a future when he will no more be there. The last ~~xx~~ lines of the poem ring of resignation. In his short poem 'Nishitha' he tells us not to think of this world as mere dust, as God expresses himself in the soul of every person. Infact, there is hardly any poem in which he does not emphasise upon the spirituality of human life and asks us to keep faith in the Creator.

Though there are quite a number of poems which express his childlike delight at the exuberant beauty of nature, still comparatively we find him more philosophical and serious in tone in most of his poems. Of course he is directly and predominantly philosophical in the poems in his collection 'Nirmalya'. The poems in this book bring

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1. William Wordsworth; 'Intimation of Immortality'.  
Wordsworth Poetical Works. Ed. Thomas Hutchinson,  
(Oxford University Press, 1969), p462

to the mind a sense of devotion and purity, but since we are dealing only with nature poetry, it is not relevant to go in detail into those poems.

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CHAPTER IV.

PERSONIFICATION OF NATURE.

Both Raghunath and Nandakishore excel in the art of personification of nature and in this respect are close to Wordsworth who attributes living qualities to nature in most of his poetry. Primitive man lived with nature and there was no barrier between the two. But by and by man moved away from nature and looked at it with a mysterious eye, sometimes finding it happy and at other times finding it melancholic. Both Raghunath and Nandakishore consider nature as the reflection of human feelings and attribute all human emotions to it. In our ancient literature and the Vedas we find nature being endowed with life and soul. The Rishis compared the sun to a mighty Emperor. The seven colours of the sun have been described as the seven horses of the chariot that the king rides. Dawn or Usha has been allegorised as the beloved of sun. These are nothing but personifications of nature where man has endowed nature with certain life like qualities. Our ancient poets had all surpassed in this art and especially Kalidasa, through his similes, brought about striking resemblances between nature and human beings. Nature does not form a mere backdrop for his prose or poetry but is itself one of the Characters. The 'Topavan' in Kanva's hermitage is very much a character of the play "Abhigyan Shakuntalam" and the patch of cloud of 'Meghadutam' acts as more than a human messenger.

In this connection it is relevant to refer to the essay "Treatment of Nature Poetry" by Hudson. He is of the opinion that in most of the modern nature poetry, nature appears to be steeped in the poet's personal feelings and he says that modern readers as a rule find it extremely sympathetic. He says that "to see and describe any natural phenomena without reference to personal feelings is very rare in recent literature".<sup>1</sup> By way of example Hudson draws a comparison between the poems "Ode to Autumn" of Keats and 'Autumn' of <sup>Watson</sup> Wordsworth. The former, he finds, is almost completely objective. The poet has looked steadily at his subject and no disturbing sentiment affects his picture. In the latter case the poet's eye is turned inward upon himself rather than outward upon the world and it is not with the simple facts of the autumnal landscape, but with the reflection which the season inspires, that he is concerned.

#### PERSONIFICATION IN WORDSWORTH'S POETRY.

Wordsworth does not treat nature as something dull or inanimate but as a living presence endowed with

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1. W.H. Hudson; Introduction to the Study of Literature, (London, 1960) p 330.

A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects  
Of all thoughts,  
And rolls through all things. <sup>1</sup>

The life of nature is everywhere recognised in his poetry, not mere growth and cell changes, but sentiment and personal life; and it is the recognition of this personality in nature that characterizes all the world's great poetry. In his childhood, Wordsworth regarded natural objects such as the streams, the hills, the flowers, even the winds as his companions, and he later developed a mature belief that all nature is the reflection of the living God. Even as a young boy he was conscious of nature's personal presence among the solitary hills and heard

Low breathings coming after me and sounds  
of indistinguishable motion. <sup>2</sup>

Such experience grew intense and provided the background to his maturer convictions in later life. In his poem 'To the Daisy' a fine example of personification is found where

The winter in the garland wears  
that thinly decks his few grey hair.

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1. William Wordsworth : Lines composed above Tintern Abbey  
Wordsworth Poetical Works, Ed. T. Hutchinson, 1969, p 164.

2. Ibid; prelude, p 498.

Winter appears before us as an old man with his withered body, deep wrinkles and grey hairs. 'A Night piece' tells of a vision of the sky when the moon suddenly breaks through a screen of clouds;

There, in a black blue vault she sails along  
Followed by multitudes of stars, that small  
And sharp and bright, along the dark abyss  
Drive as she drives, how fast they wheel away  
Yet vanish not;<sup>1</sup>

The motion of the moon among the clouds along with the regal paraphernalia of the attendants of multitudes of stars is portrayed not only as a beautiful nocturnal scene, but as a vividly living presence. With attributes of real life, the moon, like a queen, sails and drives along the sky. For another example of personification we can take the following description;

A soft and lulling sound is heard  
Of streams inaudible by day;  
The garden pool's dark surface, stirred  
By the night insects in their play;  
Breaks into dimples small and bright  
A thousand, thousand rings of light;  
That shapes themselves and disappear  
Almost as soon as seen.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Wordsworth poetical works, Ed. Thomas Hutchinson, (Oxford University Press, 1959), p 146
  2. The White Doe, Canto IV, Wordsworth poetical Works, Ed. T. Hutchinson, p 320.

The reflection of the night insects creating dimples captures the mind with a striking effect. The pool appears to be a fair maiden on whose cheek the dimples appear and enhance the beauty. Many of Wordsworth's poems start with an apostrophe where the poet addresses the moon, the flower or a bird assuming that they all have a life. For him the skylark is a divine messenger and he addresses it as such;

Ethereal Minstrel; pilgrim of the sky;  
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?  
or while the wings aspire, are heart and eye  
Both with thy nest upon, the dewy ground?

similarly the cuckoo comes to him as a unique guest and he sings to it in ecstasy;

O blithe new comer; I have heard,  
I hear thee and rejoice  
O cuckoo; Shall I call thee bird,  
Or but a wandering voice ?<sup>2</sup>

PERSONIFICATION IN RAGHUNATH'S POETRY; \_\_\_\_\_

Approaching Raghunath against this background we find that he treats nature in the Wordsworth vein as

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1. Wordsworth Poetical Works, Ed. T. Hutchinson (Oxford University Press, 1969) p 166
2. Ibid, p 145

a living being and not as something inanimate and dull. He constantly draws similes from different elements of nature. For him there can be no other than his darling and the Dahikata appears to him as a cherubim with a message of love. Take the following lines for instance:

At your music the lightening flashes,  
Clouds close and kiss,  
And moving in skyey chariots  
At you peer 1

This is a wonderful picture of personification. The picture of clouds embracing and kissing each other makes the sky a tryst of long lost lovers.

Though in most of his metaphors and imageries he follows the traditional pattern of Sanskrit poets, his originality at times is both startling and excellent. As for example we can take these few lines:

"And in that song of love  
The lean body of the ancient river,

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1. Keteki; English version by Dr.P.D.Goswami  
(Gauhaty, 1961) P 28

The Brahamputra

Swelled up ..... " 1

This is perhaps one of his many beautiful imageries and is uniquely original. In these lines, the poet attributes certain human and life like qualities to river Brahamputra who swells, trembles, becomes full and responds heartily to the beautiful note of the Keteki bird.

The description of the month of bahag;

At your music the maid Bahagi

Decks her youthful person,

With you comes your associate

The cool southern breeze . 2

and the description of the red Ashoka like a human being paying homage to her

" At the gate of the tree shaded cottage.

There is the red ashoka,

It now pays you homage

And offers clusters of blossoms ".3

are all wonderful instances of personification. Raghunath's cuckoo comes fully dressed to welcome the spring and he writes;

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1. Keteki, English rendering by Prof. T.K. Bhattacharya, Preface, English version of Keteki, (Gauhati, 1961) P vii.
  2. Keteki, English version by Dr. P.D. Goswami, (Gauhati, 1961), P 11

"It is the spring, themango blossoms  
The jack fruit buds  
And the sweet tongued cuckoo to see you  
Comes with her hair parted " .1

For him the bhramer comes like a lover, (Bahagir Biya), the 'Bhetphul' is like the neglected daughter of a poor man (Bhetkali) and dew drops are the jewels with which the earth be decks itself (Upama). The murmuring of the river is like the song of her heart (Nair Bukut) and the evening sun appears like a hibiscus flower ( Nair Bukut). With all these imaginative details his nature throbs with life. Of course his poem 'Bahagir Biya' stands out separate as a brilliant example of personification where the month 'Bahag' is portrayed as a comely bride and spring season is described as the bridegroom. Their wedding is delightfully narrated with the help of different natural phenomena. The whole world of nature becomes lively and animated in this poem and participates in merry making and funfare.

#### PERSONIFICATION IN NANDAKISHORE'S POETRY.

Coming to Nandakishore, we find echoes of similar thought and feeling. Almost all his poems directly deal with objects of nature, as would be indicated by the following among his favourite titles; "Vasantha", "Ashoka",

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1. Keteki, English version by Dr. P.D. Goswami, (Gauhati, 1961) P 10

"Nisheetha ", "Sandhya ", "Sharat ", "Kokila", " Usha O Surjya" "prabhata ", "Upavana Bhavana " etc. In the poems where he does not deal with nature directly he uses metaphors and similes from nature and his poetry is replete with such imageries. Some times like the ancient Oriya poets he draws heavily from the world of imageries in Sanskrit, as for example, he compares the cheeks of a lovely maiden with the loveliness of a lotus bud, hair with dark clouds and the neckline of a woman with the smoothness of the body of a conchshell. In his poem "Usha O Surya ", he describes Usha as the beloved of Surya in the true Sanskrit fashion. As in the work of Raghunath, his bhramar also comes as a lover but is rather untrustworthy like most lovers. He comes to a flower so long as it is fresh, but leaves it soon as is attracted towards fresh blossoms like a philanderer (Upavana Bhavana ). This is not only a wonderful example of personification but also a keen study of human psychology. A characteristic study of personification is found in 'Nandakishore's poem "Vasanta O Dharani ". In this poem spring is described as the husband cum beloved of earth who is painted as a beautiful lady. The poet describes the pleasure and happiness of each at the advent of spring who according to the poet had forgotten his beloved for quite sometime. The poet describes the earth as the solitary lonely wife of spring whose tear drops were the rain and whose torture was as unbearable as the heat of summer. At the advent of spring, the longlost husband,

earth bedecks herself with fresh blossoms and leaves and looks bewitchingly charming. She worships her husband with the auspicious music of the cuckoo, and the murmuring of the insects is described as her whisper with her husband.

" pallichitra ", "Nirjharini ", "Sandhya Sangeeta" and "Vasantakokila " contain some of the finest examples of his description of nature where nature is presented as a part and parcel of human life. For him the sky is the embodiment of all wisdom (Akasha ). The flower is not only a beautiful but also a shy and modest maiden. The breeze, while making it dance, seems as if is begging for its love but since the flower is already betrothed to the bhramar, it refuses to respond to the romantic advances from others (Pushpa). Ketakijhar, a fountain, appears to him as a dear friend who offers her clean body to him to quench his thirst (Ketakijhar<sup>a</sup>). Descriptions of such tender and sympathetic aspects of nature, where nature appears before us as a living being endowed with human sentiments and emotions, are everywhere in Nandakishore's poetry. That is why the great poet Radhanath Rai has written about him. " His "palichitra ", "Nirjharini " and " Sitabanabas<sup>a</sup> " are replete with passages of great beauty and tenderness and as such challenge comparison with the best poetical productions existing in Oriya literature" <sup>1</sup>

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1. Radhanath Rai; Back cover, Nandakishore granthabali  
Ed. H.K. Dal, (Cuttack, 1955).

CHAPTER V.

ROMANTICISM

THE ROMANTIC APPROACH.

Both Nandakishore and Raghunath appear before us as supreme romanticists. The romantic movement is described by Victor Hugo as liberalism in literature and is usually understood as the expression of life as seen by imagination rather than by prosaic common sense. Imagination is the predominant feature in the poetry of both Raghunath and Nandakishore. Both of them like the English romantic poets expressed a strong reaction and protest against the bondage of rules and customs of established literary standards. Like the English romantic poets they brought back natural wealth, beauty, and plenitude to the realm of literature.

If the essence of romanticism is taken to be this, that literature must reflect all that is spontaneous and unaffected in nature and man, and should be free to follow the ways of fancy and imagination, Wordsworth comes before us as a supreme romanticist. It was his aim to give charm of novelty to things of everyday by awakening the mind's attention from lethargy of custom and directing it to the loveliness and wonders of the world. Likewise, both Nandakishore and Raghunath deal with the apparently small and

insignificant objects of nature, such as a single solitary flower or a blade of grass, the Keteki bird, or a village barn with unusual novelty. All these objects were very much present in both Assam and Orissa, but few poets before them cared to give them a place in poetry. So far as Raghunath is concerned, the unroofed school of nature attracted him more than the discipline of the classics and he learnt more eagerly from birds and flowers than from books. Nandakishore's romanticism was in some important ways a outcome of his study of English literature. As shown earlier, he came deeply under the western influence which is reflected both in thought and expression of his poetry. In poems such as "Bisadini", "Madhusajya", "Byarthe pranay", "Birahini lata", "pravasi" and "Kokilaprati", he quotes lines from English poetry at the beginning to show what the central theme is about. In "Banapriya" he directly takes some ideas from Shelley and elaborates and modifies them to suit Orissa's culture and society. He was all along a very intelligent student and had tremendous liking for the English language. When he was reading in Kendrapada School, he wrote a letter in English to Madhusudan Rao, his erstwhile teacher and a famous poet of Orissa. In reply, Madhusudan wrote that he was not satisfied with his English and advised him as to how he could write better. Nandakishore followed the advice and tried hard and wrote

another letter. Madhusudan was quite pleased with the result this time and praised both his language as well as handwriting which gave Nandakishore immense pleasure. This shows that right from the days of his adolescence, Nandakishore was fascinated by the wealth of the English language. The extent to which he later came to admire and depend upon English poetics is apparent from his various prose writings and criticism. One single essay namely, "Kabi Radhanath O Tadiya Kavita" abounds with appreciative references to English poetics. He analyses and judges poetry in general and Oriya poetry in particular on the basis of some significant western standards. These were the standards set by the romanticists of European literature. The role of imagination, lyricism, love of nature, sense of wonder and mystery about the world, and the use of day-to-day speech in poetic diction these points advocated by the romantics appealed to him as fundamental to literary creation and appreciation.

#### ROMANTICISM IN RAGHUNATH'S POETRY.

In case of Raghunath, though he did not come under the influence of English poetry, still his poetry bears striking resemblance to English poetry in some important ways. In fact, in many of his poems, the ideas correspond closely to those expressed in the poems of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats. For example like Wordsworth, he mingles with the elements of nature his individual identity. As

Sri S. Barkataki writes about him, " He loses, as it were, his personal identity when he is in intimate communion with the nature. The poem 'Keteki' and 'Dahikatara' are composed in perfect intoxication of joy and freedom from care. In 'Bahagirbiya' the poet breaks into ecstasies over the prospect of spring. Chaudhary's poetry is marked for its mysticism and patriotism".<sup>1</sup>

No other poet found such abundant beauty in the world of nature like him. Nothing is ugly or common place in his world. On the contrary there is hardly any bird or flower which he has not glorified by pointing out some beauty that was hidden from our eye.

This is what he writes in his article 'Mai Likho Kiya' (why do I write). "The emotions created in my mind by the birds and the beauty of flowers were expressed through letters by me afterwards. I could not sit peacefully until I did that."<sup>2</sup> This closely resembles Wordsworth's idea of poetry originating in emotion recollected in tranquillity. He again writes in the same article " The red hibiscus blossoms in bunches, nods its head in the breeze. I take a few of them and keep them in water in a vase. Afterwards the flowers wither away. I feel very sad. I think if I could keep them alive, "<sup>3</sup>and he found the best

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1. Sri S. Barkataki: Assam (National Book Trust, 1969) p 59

2. Sri Raghunath Chaudhary: Mai Likho Kiya (Why do I write)  
Smritigrantha, Raghunath Chaudhary Ed. Sri Hariprasad  
Neog. Assam Sahitya Sabha, 1968 p 160

3. Ibid p 159

possible way to keep them alive through his immortal epic, lyrics and songs.

Raghunath, a cripple, an orphan and lonely man throughout his life went through tremendous mental agony during his childhood. He expresses his dissatisfaction with this world exactly as Keats does in his "Ode to Nightingale". We can compare the following two passages.

The weariness, the fever and the fret,  
here, where man sit and hear each groan;  
and leaden eyed despairs;

Where Beauty cannot keep  
her lustrous eyes,

Or new love pine at them  
beyond tomorrow<sup>1</sup>

Raghunath expresses almost identical emotions in the poems "Keteki".

The bitter sorrows and pains of life  
Rack my body so  
In despair and weariness I fall,  
How to carry on from day to day?  
Desire for matter and thirst for pleasure  
have dried up my throat  
Mirages then accost me<sub>2</sub>  
My way I do not find.

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1. Keats; Ode to Nightingale.
  2. Keteki, English version by Dr. P.D. Goswami(Gauhaty, 1961) p 30

Keats felt intoxicated at the voice of the Nightingale and wrote:

My heart aches, and drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I have drunk.<sup>1</sup>

The song of the Keteki bird evokes the same feeling in the heart of Raghunath and he writes;

I was deep in the sleep of delusion

Neither sensation nor consciousness I had.<sup>2</sup> Keats finds the Nightingale to be an immortal bird. Raghunath also describes the bird 'Keteki' as a divine messenger who has descended upon the earth with abundant love in his heart. Wordsworth ran after Cuckoo through woods and forests in his younger days and wrote;

To seek thee did I often rove

Through woods and the green

And thou were still a hope

Still longed for, never seen.<sup>3</sup>

Raghunath in the same fashion searches for his darling bird here and there like a lunatic and expresses identical emotions in his poem 'Goa He Ebar Mor Priya Bihangini'. Raghunath is sensitive like a barometer to every subtle change in the world around him for there is hardly any sight or sound, from a rose to a river, from a bird note to the distant star that is not reflected in a beautiful way in his poetry. Imagination is the essential ingredient of Romantic poetry. In Raghunath's poetry, imagination finds the same dimensions embracing all that he saw and sensed around him.

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1. Keats : Ode to Nightingale.

2. Keteki, English version by Dr.P.D.Goswami, (Gauhati, 1961) p 8

3. William Wordsworth; To the Cuckoo, Wordsworth Poetical Works Ed.T.Hutchinson, 1969, p 145.

ROMANTICISM IN NANDAKISHORE'S POETRY.

While Raghunath was purely a native genius with some unconscious echoes of English Romanticism, in case of Nandakishore - English Romanticism had its definite influence on him through his education and cultural upbringing. He was a keen student and real appreciator of English poetry. He was a B.A., B.Ed, at that time when there were hardly a few graduates in Orissa and he spent his whole life in the educational department as a teacher as well as an Inspector of Schools. His career in education enabled him to cultivate and sustain his interests in books of the English language which left their imprint on his mind.

He not only translated the poem "Cuckoo" of Wordsworth but also wrote many more poems on the same subject expressing almost the same sentiments and emotions. He wrote a poem "To the West Wind" almost in the same vein as Shelley did. In all created things he found the expression of the power Divine that pervades the universe. In his nature poetry there is a sublime fusion of spirituality and realism which characterised the best work of the English romantic school.

As Wordsworth recaptures various stages of the progress of his soul in the poem, 'The prelude' so also Nandakishore does in his poem 'Birupa Tate' (on the bank

of Birupa river ) recapitulating his whole childhood step by step. Like Wordsworth he gives the charm of novelty to things of everyday life and records the impressions made on his mind from the period of his childhood. Wordsworth sang of the river Derwent associated with his childhood, and wrote in 'The prelude'.

" O Derwent, winding among grassy holms  
Where I was looking on, a babe in arms,  
Make ceaseless music that composed my thoughts  
To more than infant softness, giving me  
Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind  
A foretaste, a dim earnest of the calm  
That Nature breathes among the hills and groves".<sup>1</sup>

One is struck by the similarity of feelings of Nandakishore for the river Birupa as expressed in the poem 'Birupa Tate'.

In this poem, Nandakishore like Wordsworth succeeds in vividly awakening our hurried impulses and forgotten impressions of the past. He stirs our memory so deeply that in reading him we live once more in the real and beautiful wonderland of our childhood.

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1. 'Prelude', Wordsworth Poetical Works Ed. Thomas Hutchinson, 1969. p 498.

Nandakishore's poem 'Nishitha' bears a striking resemblance with the poem of Southey's "Thalaba" opening with these lines: "How beautiful is the night, a dew freshness fills the silent air". Like Southey, Nandakishore is charmed with the quietness of the night. He describes the golden silence of the night broken by occasional sounds of nocturnal birds. The earth is imagined to be a sleeping beauty and the sounds of the nocturnal birds are the sounds supposed to be made by her while she tosses in her sleep.

Nandakishore's poetic genius was versatile. He was able to absorb fully all literary influences that he received from the English poets. These influences contributed to the enrichment of his thought and expression, which nevertheless, remained characteristically his own.

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CHAPTER VI.

SOME CONCLUDING THEMES.

TREATMENT OF LOVE IN RELATION WITH NATURE.

Both Raghunath and Nandakishore being romanticists, it might sound strange that they do not excel in love poems and that their love for nature subdues their love for their sweethearts. Romantic love does inspire them occasionally but it is not the main occupation of their poetry, but rather a secondary emotion, the primary being the love of nature.

LOVE IN WORDSWORTH'S POEMS;

Considering Wordsworth we find that although he too has written volumes of poems with reference to his personal life, his childhood and the places with which his early life was associated, he is remarkably silent about love. Except for the few Lucy poems we do not find in any of his works reference either to his personal romantic episodes or to love in general. But one thing is true that though his love poems are only a few, the feelings expressed in these poems are no less intense than his feelings for nature. His Lucy is as beautiful as a violet by a mossy stone or is as fair as a star when only one is shining in the sky. The beautiful comparison and lyrical charm of these lines speak of the adoration of the poet for Lucy. Being a poet of nature, Wordsworth chooses apt image

of a solitary star and a violet that perfectly portray the natural beauty of Lucy. His love for Lucy fills his heart with so much exstasy that for her sake he values the spirit of nature with which Lucy's spirit seemed to be mingled and he writes:-

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed  
The bowers where Lucy played  
And thine too is the last green field  
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.<sup>1</sup>

The different elements of nature the nights, the mornings, and the green fields, all assume a different colour because of the poet's love for Lucy. Lucy was essentially a part of nature.

Three years she grew in sun and shower  
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower on  
earth was never sown;  
This child I to myself will take;  
She shall be mine, and I will make  
A lady of my own."<sup>2</sup>

Lucy's death gave the poet the greatest possible blow and yet he drew inspiration from the thought that she had

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1. William Wordsworth; 'I travelled among unknown men'  
Wordsworth poetical Works (Edited by Thomas Hutchinson,

Oxford University Press, 1969) P 86

2. Ibid, P 148

actually become a part of nature from where she had come;

" Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,  
With rocks, stones, and trees. 1

There are beautiful passages in the poem " Strange fits of Passion have I known ". In this poem the poet is rather secretive in a beautiful way and wants to whisper his emotions of love to a lover who alone can appreciate his sentiments. Here too he takes the help of nature to describe Lucy and writes;

" When she I loved looked everyday  
Fresh as a rose in June  
I to her cottage bent my way  
Beneath an evening moon."2

These lines speak of the perfect harmony of the poet's feelings of personal love and his feelings for nature. The Lucy poems amply demonstrate that Wordsworth, predominantly a poet of nature, however is capable of handling the love theme equally well.

#### LOVE IN RAGHUNATH'S POEMS.

Unlike Wordsworth or Nandakishore, Raghunath was a bachelor. Nature was his sole mistress. He found not only abundant beauty in her but also companionship and

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1. Wordsworth, A slumber did my spirit seal. Wordsworth Poetical Works. Ed. T. Hutchinson, 1969, P 149

2. William Wordsworth; Strange fits of passion have I know Wordsworth poetical Works. Ed. by Thomas Hutchinson.

comfort for his lonely soul. His love poems, written in the purely romantic vein are only a few such as "Sakhilai" ( to my darling), 'Kavipriya' (The Beloved of the poet) and 'Jugal Tora' (Twin Stars). In the first poem he asks his beloved who seems to have become selfish and incomprehensible to remember their past romantic adventures when she was gay, simple and spontaneous. Being essentially a poet of nature he goes on to describe different scenes of nature that they had viewed and enjoyed together, how he had offered her the fragrant bokul flowers and how they leant on the green grass and enjoyed the colourful evening together.

In his poem 'Jugal Tora' there is a perfect blending of nature and love. His poetic imagination reaches the highest peak when he compares the eyes of his beloved with twin stars, blue pools, burning candles and so on.

The poem 'Kavipriya' rings of deep pathos. The poet finds the whole nature throbbing with life. The night is flooded with moonlight, the murmuring stream flows on and the branches are bent or low with the load of fresh blossoms. Against this background the poet waits for his darling to come back to him, but she does not. He remains a 'Birahi' an estranged lover throughout his life. In his poem 'Virahir Ukti', the poet says that he has been mad after love but has become disappointed. So in the

the last stanza he turns to nature to find an identical replica of his mental state and compares himself with a disillusioned deer who has been running after mirages all his life to quench his thirst.

LOVE IN NANDAKISHORE'S POEMS.

Nandakishore had a happy family life. Though essentially a poet of nature, he expresses his love for his beloved wife in many of his poems. He named one of his collections, 'Vasanta Kokila' after his wife. The name of his wife was Kokila Devi which is the Oriya word for Cuckoo and that perhaps explains his unusual liking for the bird about whom he has written several poems.

His poem 'Safala swapna' describes in an indirect way the advent of the cuckoo in the spring time of his youth flooding his life with its sweet notes, which metaphorically refers to the advent of his dear wife in his life filling his heart to the brim with music and sweetness. The poem 'Madhusajya' gives sensuous descriptions of the wedding night. The poems 'Tarunitanu' describes the physical charm of a woman's body. Like Raghunath and Wordsworth, he turns to nature for his love imagery and describes a woman's beauty in terms of the beauty of the blue sky, different colourful birds and flowers, and green pastures, and thus his love of nature and his love of feminine beauty are closely associated. In his poem 'Hatasha pranay<sup>u</sup>' a lover pathetically narrates the agony of his heart at the loss of his beloved. While describing the girl, the poet turns

to nature and some of the images that he gives are really striking. He describes the neckline of the beloved by comparing it with the smoothness and beauty of a golden conchshell. Similarly the flowers adorning her hair are said to be like stars in the pitch dark sky or like fresh flowers in a deep blue lake. Most of the poems in the collection "Tarangini" and "Vasanta Kokila" are romantic in tone, speaking sometimes of the poet's own experiences and at other times dealing with love themes in general.

For an appreciation of his deep romantic tone we can take the two poems 'Champakabati Rajkanyar Swapna' (Dream of Champavati princess) and 'Rajputrar Swapna' (Dream of a prince). Both the poems, written in the ballad form, epitomise his thoughts and feelings about romantic love and create an atmosphere of deep sensuousness and passion through suitable choice of words and images. 'Dream of a prince' gives a vivid description of the beloved of the Prince whose complexion is like that of the golden champak petals, body is like a slender creeper swinging with the wind, and feet are like full blown lotus flowers. The images employed are all from nature. Like Wordsworth, and like Raghunath, Nandakishore also sees a close correspondence between the beauty of nature and that of human life. His poetry is an attempt to establish that correspondence.

LANGUAGE AND DICTION.

A word about the diction and language, metre and form used by both the poets will not be out of place here. The main similarity that we mark about both poets is that they are essentially lyrical poets and that their language is sometimes highly Sanskritised and they often adopt the colloquial speech and diction of day-to-day life. Both of them excel in writing short poems. Though Raghunath has written a small Kavya 'Karbala' and Nandakishore has written three kavyas such as "Sitabanavas", "Sarmistha" and "Krushnakumari", they are widely known for short poems.

So far as the language of both the poets is concerned, there is a close link between them and Wordsworth. Wordsworth declares in his preface to the 'Lyrical Ballads' that his principal object was "to choose incidents throughout, as far as possible in a selection of language really used by men".<sup>1</sup> He rejects the use of any specific poetic diction and writes: "There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction as much pains has been taken to avoid as is ordinarily taken to produce it. This has been done for the reason already alleged to bring my language near to the language of men".<sup>2</sup> It may also be remembered that Wordsworth does not,

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1-2. William Wordsworth; Preface to 'Lyrical Ballads' Wordsworth Poetical Works, Ed. Thomas Hutchinson, 1969, pp 734, 736.

find any essential difference between the Language of poetry and that of prose and says: "Not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, though of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose".<sup>1</sup> Like Wordsworth, both Raghunath and Nandakishore in almost half of their poems use simple day-to-day language. Both of them draw into their poetry spoken words and phrases that they themselves have heard. Both came from ordinary middle class families and being attached to the simple peasant life of their own states were well conversant with the ordinary folk speech which they used in their poetry successfully.

Close familiarity with native dialect is seen in both Raghunath and Nandakishore. Take for example, the poems "Bahagir Biya", "Moramar pakhi", "Keteki Charai", "Banijar Katha" of Raghunath. In diction and style all these poems are marked for their colloquial vocabulary, naturalness and simplicity. The same is true of the poems in Nandakishore's "Nanabaya geeta" and "pallichitra". In fact any other kind of diction would have been thoroughly unsuitable for these two books, as the former is a collection of lullabies meant for children and the latter des-

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1. William Wordsworth: preface to 'Lyrical Ballads'  
Wordsworth Poetical Works, Ed. Thomas Hutchinson,  
1969 p 736

cribes different village characters and scenes. In sheer variety Nandakishore seems to have gone a little further than Raghunath as is seen in the astounding range of his songs and lyrics. His lullabies created a new genre in Oriya literature and his poems because of their lilting music as well as racy folk qualities created a tremendous impact on the mind of his readers. He was universally esteemed in Orissa, and Gopalchandra praharaj, the famous Oriya writer and author of Oriya Encyclopaedia, <sup>(a 7-volume dictionary)</sup> wrote about him. "I style you as the poet of reminiscence of Orissa. Orissa shall have a niche for you in her National Museum. Go on, never mind what the blamers say".<sup>1</sup>

#### THE 'BIRD POET' AND THE 'VILLAGE POET'

##### THE "BIRD POET"

One thing worth mentioning here is that Raghunath is reputedly known as Bihagi Kavi and Nandakishore as 'palli Kavi'. The variety of colourful birds and their cooing attracted Raghunath more than any other aspect of nature. Of course he does write about the variety of flowers and seasons of Assam but he is distinguished by his numerous references to birds. Most of his poems "priya Bihangini", "Keteki", "Dohikatara", "Maramar pakhi" deal mainly with

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1. Gopalchandra praharaj; Backcover- Nandakishore Granthabali  
Ed. H.K. Baj, 1955.

birds and the poets feelings concerning them. The chirping of a bird or the flapping of colourful wings of the tiniest bird opens for him the door to the land of exstasy and poetic imagination. He finds a new power, a new sense of joy and freedom in the songs of the birds and says:

"In desolate and desert lands  
You sang your vitalizing song,  
And ground that was dry and barren  
You converted to a superb garden".<sup>1</sup>

Raghunath describes almost all his favourite birds Dohikotara, Mewa, Sarali, Chakoa, Sakhiyati, Mayna, Jili, Keteki, especially the birds of Assam in his poems. He writes in an article Mailkho Kiya (Why do I write) "Keteki and Dahikatara, ~~both~~ both of them are my favourite, birds. But in the old days Dahikatara is more favourite. His song, it seems is sweeter and more appealing than the music of Tansen or Bismillakhan".<sup>2</sup> This statement shows how deeply Raghunath was attached to the world of nature and especially so to the world of birds. In the same article he speaks of his pleasure in listening to the songs of the Keteki bird and smelling the delicate fragrance of white lotus flowers. He feels as if God

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1. Keteki, English version by Dr.P.D.Goswami,  
(Gauhati, 1961) p 8

2. Raghunath Choudhary Mai Likho Kiya (Why do I write?),  
Smritigrantha Raghunath Choudhary Ed. Sri Hariprasad  
Neog, (Assam Sahitya Sabha 1968), p 163

created these things only for him. His first poem, which is about a bird, is "Priya Bihangini". He remembers nostalgically how the first song of Keteki after a hail storm aroused an ocean of thought in his mind. 1 Indeed the people of Assam are justified in conferring the title "Bihagi Kavi" on him. Prof. T.K. Bhattacharya in his foreword to the English rendering of 'Keteki' says that "though popularly known as the "Bird poet" of Assam, his (Raghumath's) literature has really a wider range than generally supposed". We do agree with this, and after going through his poems one cannot but observe his special love for birds and flowers. 'Keteki is the most representative of his bird poetry. The Central theme of this poem is the attainment of youth in animate and inanimate nature at the advent of the bird the Keteki. The song of the Keteki is the echo of some peerless joy of a fuller world hitherto unknown to men. The voice of the Keteki is, as it were a vernal breeze, nobody knows from where it comes and in which direction it blows". 2 To the poet the Keteki

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1. Raghumath Choudhary 'Keteki Janma', Smritigrantha  
Raghumath Choudhary, 1968, PP 165, 166
  2. Dr. Banikanta Kakati; Preface, English version  
of Keteki (Gauhati, 1961) P IV  
(English rendering of the preface by Prof. T.K.  
Bhattacharya).

is a voice, a mystery;

Whence have you come, O dear,  
Which way are you flying,  
And why have you come this far distance  
Roaming all alone? <sup>1</sup>

When we think about Raghunath's love for flowers we see that he is not only attracted by the lovely rose bud, but also by the ordinary flower like "Bhetful". In the poem "Bahageer Biya" in one place he sings the praise of Simalu, Palash, Ashoka, Mandar, Kamini, Kanchan, Champa, Nageswar and all other fragrant and sweet scented flowers. He describes the girls who stand gazing at the keteki bird and from their hair loosen and fall the Malatis that are there. And again he describes the same beautiful girls who become absent minded with the song of the bird and their toes that are like Champa, k buds get knocked off against the road. The poet seems to be particularly partial towards three flowers, namely "Bhetkali", "Girimallika" and "Golap" as he devotes three whole poems to these flowers. The lonesome "Girimallika" and "Golap" both appeal to his imagination as two lovely mysterious beauties who under their veils look at him and charm him with their incomparable smile. In one word, both birds and flowers are the

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1. Keteki; English version by Dr. P.D.Goswami, (Gahhaty  
1961) P 1

soul of Raghunath's poetry. In his kingdom of poetry there is a continuous chirping of birds and an ever pervading fragrance of flowers. That is why on his death, Dr. Maheshwar Neog, the eminent Assamese Scholar had commented "With the expiry of poet Raghunath, it seems as if all the flowers have withered away and all the birds have become silent".<sup>1</sup> Actually the way Raghunath loved and understood the different elements of nature, perhaps no other poet of Assam has ever been able to do that.

#### THE "VILLAGE POET".

As Raghunath comes before us as a poet of flowers and birds, Nandakishore is distinguished as a poet who is in love with the silvery rain-drops. Some of his best poems are about rain and the moment he sees a patch of dark cloud in the sky and rain drops falling on the green grass, he feels an overwhelming ecstasy and his mind is flooded with recollection of his childhood and musings on the glory of nature. Justly he will be remembered for all times as Orissa's foremost Palli Kavi.

A professor of Hindi of Vishwabharati<sup>2</sup> commented on the Annual Anniversary of the poet that when the

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1. Dr. Maheshwar Neog; Bihagi Kavir Mrityut Sahanubhutih Vani, Smritigrantha Raghunath Choudhary (Assam Sahitya Sabha, 1968) P 185

2. Sri Suryamani Jena; preface to Nandakishore Granthabali (Ed. H.K. Bal, Cuttack, 1955).

western civilization was going to devour our national life, our leaders tried in their writings to focus attention on the villages. Ravindranath and Gandhi had this idea before them. Nandakishore has expressed the same ideal in his writings.

Nandakishore being brought up in village had a natural longing for village life. But the idea to write poems with the rural background occurred to him from a peculiar incident which happened when he was in college. When he was a student of 3rd year in the College, there was an essay competition in English on 'Village life in Orissa'. Nandakishore's essay was adjudged as the best. The poet Madhusuden R<sub>o</sub>, the then Headmaster of the training school was one of the examiners. He advised Nandakishore to give it the form of poetry; that is why his book Pallichitra not only deals with the exquisite beauty of rural Orissa, but also presents before us the whole countryside with its pageant of different characters. Its broad canvass offers the poet the scope for not only landscape painting, but also for character painting. The different characters such as the Brahmin, the beggar, the widow, the farmer, the sculptor, the changing natural scenery, the seasons of spring, autumn, rain, the village pond, the barn, the grave-yard, the mango grove and many other minute details of village life are painted with such art and dexterity that the whole village with its surroun-

-dings comes alive before us. 'pallichitra' is a small volume but a great poem. The picture of the old village school with its cane wielding school master, the terror stricken children, the bluffing and talkative barber, the ballad singer bringing tears to the eyes of the soft hearted housewives, the habardasher, whose visits are keenly looked forward to by the women-folk, the priest who was once completely identified with the village, the burning ghat and other familiar scenes such as those of agriculture, are presented before us with such vividness, humour and pathos that they make this work of the poet a treasure in the memory of every cultured Oriya.

The second point that is worth mentioning here is that Nandakishore had genuine spiritual and mental affinity with the folk tradition of Orissa. His poems "Kakabarata", "Dahaniakhara", "Adinamagha", "Nababarshabhavana" are based on the rich folk-poetry of Orissa. This adoption of materials and imagery of folk song for modern lyrics was an excellent artistic contribution in terms of a fusion of the folk tradition with the sophistications of modern poetry. He wrote innumerable short poems on a wide variety of subjects: some reflective, some satiric, some patriotic, but all with a deep core of lyrical beauty and feeling for the countryside and nature, which justified the title of 'palli Kāvi' best-owed upon him.

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ON  
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