

Paradigms of Consciousness and its Cultural & Aesthetic Expressions

VI International Conference of the Caesurae Collective Society

Jointly organized by the Centre for Indian Arts and Cultural Studies (CIACS), Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, Department of English, Cooch Behar College (affiliated to the university) and Caesurae Collective Society in collaboration with Sri Vishnu Mohan Foundation, Chennai.



Dr. Jayita Sengupta



**Chief Guest
Swami
Shrihariprasad**



**Patron,
Dr. Pankaj Kumar Debnath**



**Dr. Shashank
Shekhar Sinha**



**Prof. Pushpa
Mishra**



**Prof. Sarit K.
Chaudhuri**



**Dr. Bhaskar
Sengupta**



Prof. Goutam Ghosal



**Prof. Banibrata
Mahanta**



**Prof. Prakash
Joshi**



**Prof. Mousumi
Guha Banerjee**



**Prof. Himadri
Lahiri**



**Prof. Godabarisha
Mishra**

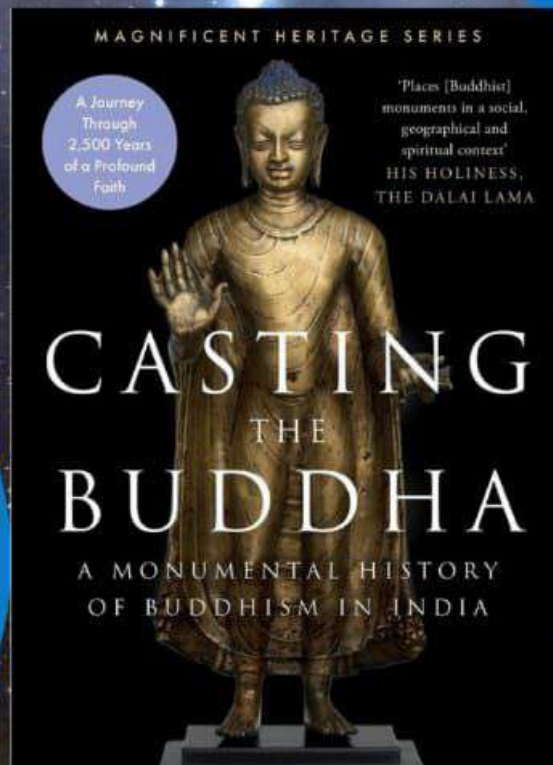
**Date:- 9th -11th April, 2025
Venue: Cooch Behar College**

PARADIGMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND ITS CULTURAL AND AESTHETIC EXPRESSIONS



VI International Conference of Caesurae
Collective Society
Jointly organised by CIACS,
CBPBU, Dept. of English,
Cooch Behar College, Caesurae
Collective Society &

Sri Vishnu Mohan Foundation, Chennai



**BOOK DISCUSSION BY SHASHANK SHEKHAR SINHA
(AUTHOR) WITH JAYITA SENGUPTA & DIPSIKHA ACHARYA,
VENUE: COOCH BEHAR COLLEGE
DATE: 9TH APRIL, 2025 TIME 12:15 PM**

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**A LECTURE DEMONSTRATION ON "SOUND, MUSIC, AND WELLNESS" BY DR. SANCHITA CHOUDHURY ON 9TH APRIL, 2025
TIME: 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM**

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**A LECTURE DEMONSTRATION ON "SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND
COGNITIVE CONNECTION BETWEEN INDIAN CLASSICAL AND FOLK
MUSIC: EXPLORING THE SHARED LEGACY OF MRIDANG/ PAKHAWAJ
AND SHREEMADAL" BY SHRI NISHAANT SINGH ON 9TH APRIL, 2025
TIME: 2:30 PM -3:30 PM**

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"LILA SAMVID" - A LECTURE DEMONSTRATION BY SMT. NANDITA BANERJEE,
A SENIOR BHARATNATYAM DANCER
10TH APRIL, 2025 TIME: 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM



A Workshop by
Nishaant Singh

"Rhythm is life itself"



You don't need any instrument
to carry with you. Just be tuned
to the rhythm of life to come to
this workshop by

Shri Nishaant Singh
as part of the
International Conference on
"Paradigms of Consciousness",
10 April 2025
Venue: Language Lab,
Cooch Behar College.

Time: 2.00 pm - 3.30 pm

Spot Registration for Rs100/- for
students
and Rs 500/- for professors
between 9.00 - 9.30 am on 9th and
10th April at the Conference
Registration Desk.

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VI International conference of Caesurae Collective Society (9-11 April 2025)

“Paradigms of Consciousness and its Cultural and Aesthetic Expressions”

Jointly organized by the Centre for Indian Arts and Cultural Studies (CIACS), Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, Department of English, Cooch Behar College (affiliated to the university) and Caesurae Collective Society in collaboration with Sri Vishnu Mohan Foundation, Chennai.

VENUE: COOCHBEHAR COLLEGE

Conference Schedule

Day 1-- 9/4/25

9.00- 9.30 – **Registration**

9.30- 10.30- **Inaugural Session**

10.30 -11.15 – **Keynote** Address by Prof. Pushpa Mishra, Chair – Prof. Sarit Chaudhuri

11.15- 11.30- TEA BREAK

11.30- 12.15 - **PLENARY I** – Prof. Sarit Chaudhuri, Chair- Prof. Pushpa Mishra

12.15 -1.00 – **Book discussion** on *Casting the Buddha* – Dr. Shashank S. Sinha (Author), with Prof. Jayita Sengupta & Dr. Dipsikha Acharya

TEA TO BE SERVED INSIDE

1.00– 1.45- **PLENARY II**- Prof. Banibrata Mahanta, Chair- Prof. Himadri Lahiri

1.45- 2.30 – LUNCH

2.30- 3.30 – **Spiritual Consciousness & Cognitive Connection between Indian Classical & Folk”-A Lecture Demonstration by Shri Nishaant Singh (madal & pakhawaj player)**

3.30 - 5.00 – **PARALLEL SESSIONS I & II**

PARALELL SESSION I:

Literary Discourses and Cultural Consciousness

Sagnik Chakraborty, Dr. Sharmistha De Dutta, Asmita Som – Chair -Prof. Banibrata Mahanta

PARALLEL SESSION II:

Panel on social/ textual discourses and consciousness

Subhrajit Samanta, Dr. Koyel Lahiri, Shankhapradip Ghosh, Nasrin Sultana
– Chair - Prof. Prakash Joshi

5.00 – 5.30 – CAESURAE AGM -All Life & Annual Members are requested to Attend.

5.30- 6.30- **“Sound, Music and Wellness”-A Lecture Demonstration by Dr. Sanchita Choudhury (Indian Classical & Light Vocal singer)**

Day 2- 10/4/25

9.30- 10.45- – **PANEL – Concepts, Texts, Contexts -I**

Dr. Dipsikha Acharya, Tathagata Sagar Pal, Medha Sinha, Chair – Prof. Godabarisha Mishra

10.45- 11.30- **PLENARY III** – Dr. Shashank Shekhar Sinha, Chair - Prof. Godabarisha Mishra

11.30-11.45 - TEA

11.45 – 12.30 –**PLENARY IV** -Dr. Bhaskar Sengupta, Chair Dr. Shashank Shekhar Sinha

12.30- 1.30 - **PANEL- Concepts, Texts, Concepts II**

Dr. Arghya Dipta Kar & Swastik Banerjee, Chair - Prof. Godabarisha Mishra

1.30 – 2.00- LUNCH

2.00- 3.30 –**PARALLEL SESSIONS III & IV/ WORKSHOP BY SHRI NISHAANT SINGH**

PARALELL SESSION III

Panel on Cultural Consciousness

Soutik Chakraborty, Deep Saha, Pallab K. Sarker, Prajnajyoti Dutta –
Chair - Prof. Banibrata Mahanta

PARALLEL SESSION IV

Spiritual and Ecological texts & contexts

Oly Roy, Sebonti Roy Choudhury, Saptaki Chattopadhyay, Debjani Saha - Chair,
Prof. Prakash Joshi

3.30- 4.15- **PLENARY V**- Prof. Goutam Ghosal, Chair - Dr. Sanchita Choudhury

4.15-4.30 – TEA BREAK

4.30- 5.30- **“Lila Samvid”-A Lecture Demonstration by Smt. Nandita Banerjee (a senior Bharatnatyam Dancer)**

Day 3- 11/04/25

9.30- 10.15 - **PLENARY VI** – Prof. Prakash Joshi, Chair – Prof. Godabarisha Mishra

10.15- 11. 00- **PLENARY VII** – Prof. Jayita Sengupta, Chair - Prof. Mousumi Guha Banerjee

11.00- 11.45- **PLENARY VIII** – Prof. Himadri Lahiri, Chair- Prof. Jayita Sengupta

TEA BREAK

12.00- 12.45- **PLENARY IX**- Prof. Mousumi Guha Banerjee, Chair – Prof. Himadri Lahiri

12.45- 1.45- **Art & Architecture Panel**, Chair- Dr. Bhaskar Sengupta

Sreshtha Chakraborty, Maria Jose Lopez Aldana

1.45 – 2.15- LUNCH

2.15- 3.00- **Valedictory Address** by Prof. Godabarisha Mishra, Chair – Prof. Prakash Joshi

3.00 – 3.30 – **VOTE OF THANKS & DISTRIBUTION OF CERTIFICATES**

PARADIGMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND ITS CULTURAL & AESTHETIC EXPRESSIONS

VI International Conference of the Caesurae Collective
Society

Virtual Sessions- 29 -30 March 2025

Conference in Cooch Behar College- 9-11 April 2025

www.caesurae.org



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Jointly organized by the Centre for Indian Arts and Cultural Studies (CIACS), Cooch Behar
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ABSTRACT BOOKLET

Virtual Conference – 29-30 March 2025

Sessions on Buddhist Philosophy with Practitioners

- A Talk followed by discussion on the concepts of *Anniccha, Dukkha and Anata* in Buddhism, by a Mahayani Buddhist monk, Sonam Phuntsho Khenpola from Bhutan.
- A talk followed by discussion on the *Five Stages of the Path in Buddhism* by Shri Ishwor Shreshtha, a Harvard graduate who has embraced Vajrayani Buddhism, from Kathmandu, Nepal.

Academic Sessions

1. Keynote Address

Diversifying Indian Philosophy – Keynote by Sthaneswar Timalisina, Nirmal K. and Augustina Mattoo Endowed Chair in Classical Indic Humanities, Stony Brook University

Classical Indian philosophy is broadly read with two distinctive interests: a traditional scholastic training of the main philosophical schools with an intent to keep the traditional knowledge systems alive, and the modern Western or Western-inspired study that reads Indian philosophy within the framework of Western philosophy, inadvertently reducing Indic knowledge system to the case studies for the Western theories. I argue that there is a third trend that is emerging among the contemporary thinkers, i.e., to rethink the categories while applying Indic philosophy and keep the vibrancy of classical thinking alive for addressing contemporary issues and expand the scope of philosophy without reducing the Indic modes of thinking to a subset of Western thinking. I find this latter project more interesting, as this opens up new paradigms for philosophical thinking while at the same time recognizing the classical modes of thinking as the defining parameters for what amounts to certain thinking as Indic in contrast to Western philosophy. In this process, we will encounter multiple problems. However, if we can navigate through these problems rather than rejecting them, we will not only be able to keep the modes of classical thinking alive, we will also be able to bring alternative arguments to a broader global philosophical conversation.

Plenary Sessions

2. Music as Thinking/Thinking as Music: A Dialogue with Mukund Lath- A presentation by Daniel Raveh, Professor of Indian and Comparative Philosophy, Tel Aviv University

This presentation offers a dialogue with Mukund Lath (1937-2020). It is comprised of three segments: the first segment introduces Lath's body of work. The second and third segments are a Jugalbandi, a duet or dialogue with Lath through his essays "Identity through Necessary Change" (2003) and "*Thoughts on Svāra and Rasa: Music as Thinking/Thinking as Music*" (2018). In the former, he deals with the question of identity and self, suggesting through classical Indian music, rāga music, that it is change and plurality, not continuity despite change, which define the human person. In the latter essay, Lath creates a dialogue between music and thinking. He looks into the denotative and the evocative elements of language, through the notions of abhidhā and vyañjanā, focusing on vyañjanā which is at the heart of music, and projecting it as a pramāṇa which reveals a thought-like self-reflexive trajectory at the emotive level of consciousness. In the mirror of thinking, Lath suggests, this unique self-reflexivity which music has to offer, becomes more transparent. In the mirror of music, I add to Lath's discussion, thinking can rediscover its own vyañjanā aspect, and overcome the age-old illusion of "one truth" as its alleged goal.

3. "Plants in the folk beliefs of South-Eastern Europe - seeking the spiritual aid of plants to achieve luck, love, health and more"- A presentation by Georgi Mishev, PhD, a Bulgarian author and researcher in ancient culture and religion of the Mediterranean world especially in magic practices.

In this talk I will discuss which plants have an important role in the life of the people in South-Eastern Europe and how people have approached such plants, which rituals they have used to ask the plants for their help and support and how these beliefs formed the perception of plants in the traditional folk culture as conscious beings and as carriers of divine presence; how people have communicated with plants and the powers inhabiting them. One another aspect will be also considered - why is this kind of traditional knowledge still important and how it can improve more aware perception of the plants and nature in the modern way of life.

4. "Dance and the Body as an Audiovisual Medium for Self-Transcendence: Exploring video as colloquial text and the impact of ubiquitous technology on memory, consciousness, and representation." – A presentation by Adriana Di Cillo, a dancer actor, writer, choreographer and producer from Spain.

From a serial dialectic perspective, I will propose a reflection on the tension across tradition and innovation, examining how this dynamic unfolds through the evolving relationship between dance and technology.

5. The Logico-Epistemological role of Self-Awareness in Classical Sanskrit Philosophy- A presentation by Dr. Danillo Costa Lima, Sao Paulo University

This investigation focuses on the problematic of the nature of self-knowledge and the epistemic interdependence between self-knowledge and world-knowledge, for which two primary approaches are possible: either prioritizing being to explain knowledge (as exemplified by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika) or

prioritizing knowledge to explain being (as seen in Yogācāra, Sāṃkhya and Vedānta). On the former, the philosopher proceeds by devising the means for knowing being and the categories in which being may be thought, so as to subsequently proceed to apply these means and categories to understand himself; if the latter, the philosopher begins by clarifying his own self-awareness so as to then derive from it the means by which he can know and the categories within which what he knows must fall. It is found that these two approaches rely on two distinct models of self-consciousness: an intentional or higher-order theory (anuvyavasāya) and a pre-reflexive self-awareness (svasamvedana). The Pratyabhijñā school, or the “School of Recognition”¹, comes at the crust of this debate and offers a unique form of synthesis of these approaches in that, while belonging to the latter camp, it seeks to transcendently recover and justify the philosophical project of the former, giving rise to a philosophy that is epistemically constructivist and phenomenological, with a model of transcendental and dialectical logic that is pragmatic and pan-semiotic.

6. Aesthetico-spiritual Experience in the philosophy of Abhinavagupta by Ramakant Angiras, Ex-Professor of Kalidas Chair, Department of Sanskrit, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India.

This presentation will connect Abhinavagupta’s philosophy of Rasas with Spirituality. It will foreground how the rasa theory is not dissociated from spiritual experience.

*There will be a reading of the poem, “Samadhi”, by Guru Angiras, as a conclusion to the session.

Valedictory Address

7. Mind and Meaning: Rethinking Consciousness Beyond Empiricism- Mahesh Venkataraman, Managing Director, Accenture.

The mind is not just a passive observer of reality—it is the very space where reality is constructed, perceived, and given meaning. While modern science seeks to define consciousness through empirical frameworks, it often overlooks the intrinsic role of direct experience, intuition, and subjective awareness in shaping knowledge. This talk challenges the paradigm of external measurement in understanding consciousness and advocates for an approach that integrates empirical, experimental, and experiential ways of knowing. Drawing on heterophenomenology, we explore how subjective experiences—long dismissed as myth or imagination—can be systematically studied without bias.

By moving beyond rigid dualities between science and intuition, objectivity and subjectivity, the measurable and the meaningful, we open the door to a more holistic understanding of consciousness—one that recognizes the mind as both the source and the interpreter of reality.

Abstracts of the Offline Conference at Cooch Behar College, 9-11 April 2025

Keynote Address

1. **Pushpa Mishra, Former Principal, Bethune College; Former President, Indian Psychoanalytical Society, Psychoanalyst.**

Environment, Consciousness and self-realization in Arne Naess' Ecosophy

Arne Naess' Deep Ecology theory is a well-known approach to man's relationship with ecology. After reading Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, Naess became deeply interested in Environmental Ethics. Being a philosopher, he soon realized that in order to develop an ethical approach to environment one needs to have a philosophy of environment. He called this Ecosophy - a combination of 'ecology' and 'philosophy'. Naess has developed his own Ecosophy which he calls Ecosophy T. This paper will discuss Naess' approach to a valuable aspect of Ecosophy T, namely, Self-Realization. This concept embodies the unique approach of Naess towards environment.

Naess' self-realization consists of expanding one's narrow, individual self to a comprehensive mature Self (with capital S) by identifying with all living beings, as he says, "... all living beings beautiful or ugly, big or small, self will realize its potential only sentient or not." (Arne Naess, 1986). This expansion of consciousness is achieved through the process of identification. This wider and deeper self, according to Naess is the Ecological self where the self relates not only with other humans and society, but with Nature also. Our self-realization is possible only through the self-realization of others with whom we identify.

Naess openly accepts the influence of Gandhi and Spinoza in developing this concept. This presentation will deal especially with Gandhi's influence on Naess' concept of self-realization. In this context, I will also discuss Bookchin's concept of social ecology.

Plenary Sessions

2. **Sarit K. Chaudhuri, Anthropologist, Vice Chancellor, Alipurduar University, West Bengal.**

Evolving Adibasi Art Forms in Contemporary Arunachal Pradesh : Emerging Realities and Transcending Collective Consciousness

Arunachal Pradesh, the erstwhile NEFA, is the homeland of a large number of Adibasis/Tribes who are known for their distinctive identities based on various cultural attributes in spite of sharing some similarities among themselves. Some of these tribes are known for their distinctive wood carving tradition as well as tattooing or body art forms which constitute their core cultural traits and identity markers. These variegated art forms are deeply intertwined with their historicity and the collective consciousness. However, in the post-colonial times, due to exposure to various forces of change, such art forms are passing through a phase of transition leading to a change in their collective consciousness as well. This presentation tries to deal with such issues of decontextualization of Adibasi art forms and emerging realities of an essentially bordering tribal state by taking certain tribes/Adibasis into consideration.

3. **Shashank Shekhar Sinha, Historian, Publishing Director, Routledge, South Asia, Taylor & Francis Group.**

Reading Monuments and Connected Histories

What role do monuments play in the making of a 'historical' consciousness? Does our 'historical' consciousness influence the way we try and understand the monuments? How memories, stories, beliefs, and narratives inform the making of popular or collective consciousness around monuments and connected histories? Do architectures and structures only narrate the consciousness of the time and geography of the primary builders, or do they go beyond? These and several related questions characterise the intricate relationship between monuments and 'historical' consciousness. Understanding this relationship involves a careful examination of a complex interplay of various agents, forces, and situations. My presentation will bring together stories from different spatial and temporal contexts to highlight how a deeper study of monuments (and related artefacts) could lead to a more nuanced understanding of their history.

Despite their significant location in the construction of historical past and their being one of the dominant mediums through which people consume history in their day-to-day lives, monuments continue to remain understudied or inadequately studied. Popular readings and understandings of the monuments continue to see them as 'physical' sites frozen in time and space. In academia and more informed circles, on the other hand, they are dominantly seen through the prism of art and architecture which could be technical and restrictive in scope. Through select examples and case studies, my presentation will underscore how a more inclusive conceptual framework could lead us to a more comprehensive understanding of the historical layers and dimensions of the monuments, perhaps also to a better awareness of the connected histories.

4. **Godabarisha Mishra, Professor & Dean, School of Buddhist Studies, Philosophy and Comparative Religion, Nalanda University**

On Being as Consciousness and Consciousness as Being: Rational and Functional Paradigms of *Cit* in Indian Philosophy

The thrust of this paper is to present the primacy of consciousness as the central and all-encompassing concept in Indian philosophical discourse. The term *Being* is taken as the "ontological Being", not "classificatory Being". The classificatory being refers to grouping all entities under one category—and ontological Being is expressed in the form "That is" or "That exists." The highest form of the ontological Being is "I am," in which if I say "I" the "am" is necessarily implied and vice versa, not merely grammatically, but in actuality and truth. If Being is a plurality, it becomes classificatory. It then becomes empty, unrealistic and powerless. A unitary ontological ultimate is accepted by the Mādhyamikās as *Śūnyā*, suggesting the idea of non-being, which is devoid of the whole force or power of ontological Being.

Bradley says that thought has to commit suicide which means that it has to cease to be thought if it has to grasp the whole truth including its ontological being. To realise reality, to be fully true, is to

become reality; otherwise, the ontological basis of truth remains outside and excluded. This is the prelude to the concept of Consciousness which is reality itself, bliss itself.

This concept of Consciousness needs to be made primary in philosophical thinking with the “I-am” as a self-affirming being. It cannot be nothing, if so, who is it that affirms its nothingness? The affirmer has to be self-conscious and cannot be himself nothing; he is the “I-am”. The “I-am” gives meaning to much in the history of philosophy, and the Upaniṣads speak of it in no uncertain terms as the Consciousness, the self which is bliss and knows nothing else as in the state of *prāñña*. The chief aim of the Upaniṣads is to explain the nature of the Consciousness- *ātman* and direct the enquirer towards it. The statements like: "That the *ātman* is the *Brahman*," "I am the *Brahman*," "All this is indeed the *Brahman*," and "That thou art" are said to be the essential explanations of the concept of Consciousness in Vedānta tradition and this is spoken of as the ontological Being. To understand this idea of Consciousness, we need to understand contrary statements that ‘all this is not the Brahman’, that it is beyond speech and thought, and that it can be described only in negative terms (*neti neti*).

The presentation would highlight the primacy of Consciousness which includes all branches of Indian thought with an aim of leading a holistic life not only with the love of wisdom, but also the life of wisdom.

5. Himadri Lahiri, Professor of English, SoH, Netaji Subhas Open University.

Memory and Consciousness in Partition Narratives: A Phenomenological Approach

A literary narrative, like any narrative, results from a deliberate organisation of human experiences, thoughts, and emotions. In the effort to shape these contents, one navigates the dialogic encounter between one’s own inner world and the external reality. Incidents and emotions the encounter evokes are embedded in memory and can be consciously or subconsciously accessed by the subject. As phenomenologists suggest, consciousness operates in this manner, shaping the human experience of the overall negotiations. Ultimately, it is up to the artist to discipline or order the unruly, chaotic stream of consciousness and render it within a work of art. This paper will phenomenologically try to trace the process of experiencing events and narrating them (and those who experienced the events) in partition narratives, particularly oral narratives, with a focus on material memory and the history of emotion. In the process, it will examine a corpus of available archival materials and publications, such as Aanchal Malhotra’s *Remnants of a Separation* (2018) and *In the Language of Remembering* (2022).

6. Professor Goutam Ghosal, Governing Board Member, Auroville Foundation, (Under Ministry of Education)

The Deeper Aesthetics of Rabindrasangeet and Some Female Singers

When we call Tagore’s songs ‘modern’, we do not just mean a new approach to love and nature and the world but a deliberate rejection of the rigidity of Indian Classical music in search of a new variety of lyrical music, an inexplicable and unusual marriage of words and tune, a fusion sometimes of high or mediocre poetry with tunes formed of multiple ragas (like the *Sree-Purbi* combination in *bina bajao hey momo antore*), which result in a new creation of exquisite sweetness, which is neither poetry nor a perfect classical tune, but a *third art* born out of that fusion. The modern composer arrives in the

musical scene of India with the following words: “Since our science of music is a dead science, we cannot grasp the essence of that science and we raise a hue and cry over the grammar of music, the *raga* and the *ragini*, the dominant and the subordinate notes. The grammar of a living language keeps on changing; it ceases to grow only when the language is dead... I recommend that music, the companion of poetry, also be released from the iron-prison of grammar and let there be a marriage of the two”.

Both Suchitra Mitra and Subinoy Roy wished us to be aware of the utterance of the Word, not just the pronunciation, but the floating of the voice. What is the secret process of creation of the incantatory word? Sri Aurobindo carries forward the *rasadvani* theory in the *Future Poetry*, as he explains that the rhythmic word has a subtly sensible element, its sound value, its thought value, the sense value and finally a combination of all these, the soul value, thereby extending the theory of Anandabardhan and Abhinav Gupta by blending the classical theory of *dvani* with the ancient or the Vedic-Upanishadic concept of incantation. By the tenth century, the meaning of Kavi was totally changed to any maker of prose or verse, which had meant to the ancient seers the person who just saw and sang without teaching, preaching or sermonising. Both Mitra and Roy practised what they preached and taught, though there were others, their contemporaries and predecessors, mostly female singers, who could do that more spontaneously without being taught by Tagore himself or anybody else, like Sahana Devi and Malati Ghoshal. Sri Aurobindo called it ‘the soul-emotion’. While writing a revised history of English poetry, he brings in Tagore, a vernacular poet-singer, alongside Whitman, Carpenter and the Irish poets: “His work is a constant music of the overpassing of the borders, a chant-filled realm in which the subtle sounds and lights of the truth of the spirit give new meanings to the finer subtleties of life”.

Sri Aurobindo was meaning Tagore’s songs and poetry in original Bengali, not the English translations, although he appreciated the English *Gitanjali* in a letter. *Mantra* is born in a particular language, and no translation can bring back that inspired unit from Tagore’s original lyrics, unless there is a new ‘intuitivised’ inspiration in the translator, who might be attempting a recreation. Apart from the higher afflatus, there is also the inmost being in us, *purushantaratma*, as mentioned in the major Upanishads, which Sri Aurobindo calls our ‘inmost subliminal’ or the psychic being. Many of Tagore’s songs come from that zone, especially the prayer songs, like *rakho rakho re*, and *aguner parasmani chhoan prane*. The fire symbolism comes to Tagore from the principal Upanishads and the Rig Veda.

The incantatory songs and poems carry the suggestion of the Infinite. Sri Aurobindo’s letters to K.D. Sethna explain the gradations of consciousness— the sources of *mantra* being the Overmind or very high Intuition-- from which the mantric poems and songs come. Of course, there can be various patterns of *mantra*--- the poetry prayer, vision, revelation, magic and incantation. Even when the substance is not mystic or spiritual, the Overmind or the Intuition (not mental intuition) can affect the style of a lyric. In *Bichitro* phase, we have *door rajanir swapano lage* and *aj taray taray deipto shikhar agni jole* (lines 3 -7), where the lines are not overtly spiritual, but their style catches something of the Infinite. There are lines where both the substance and the style of Tagore seize the Infinite in miracled utterances, as we see in the lines 5 and 6 in *aji joto tara tobo akashe*.

“The Anando from all corners grows into a deep fragrance/They mingle in the inmost core of my heart and sweep across your temple” (just a weak effort at translation, which must fail). Such lines, inspired selections born out of a ‘rhythmic voyage of self-discovery’, cannot be improved upon, something which goes beyond all analysis. The earliest female singers of Rabindrasangeet caught the spirit spontaneously, because they could suspend the intellectual mind while singing. Malati Ghoshal, Amiya Tagore and of course Sahana Devi had that natural ability to interpret the sense and the soul

value of Tagore's songs. Then there came Kanika Bandyopadhyay, Suchitra Mitra, Rajeswari Dutta, Subinay Roy and some others who shaped the tradition of expressing their best self while singing. The singers who came to the scene after 1990 did not know much about this expressive function. That is creating a great danger for Rabindrasangeet, which seeks to express our finer selves. In a personal interview with Sahana Devi in the late 80s, she sang for me alone in her room in Pondicherry drawing my notice to *gola bhasano*, the floating of the voice, which contributes to the incantatory aspect of Tagore's music. The music of Tagore confirms what Sri Aurobindo preaches as a theory in *The Future Poetry* and the letters: "In these higher harmonies and melodies the metrical rhythm is taken up by the spiritual; it is filled with or sometimes it seems rolled away and lost in a music that has really another unseizable and spiritual secret of movement."

This presentation seeks to throw light on the mystery of the best songs of Tagore, the mystery of the inward and upward movement in human consciousness along with a style, which cannot be explained always in terms of ordinary rationality. A blend of the finer vital, the psychic, the mystic and the spiritual has given to the songs an understated charm. Women could express the psychic more easily than men, barring a few like Roy and Santosh Sengupta. The important thing now is to preserve the best records of the great singers, who sang from the 30s till the end of the 70s carrying with them a soul movement, which alone guarantees the lingering appeal of the songs.

7. Banibrata Mahanta, Professor, Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University, India.

Sacred Solitude: Old Age, Death and Salvation in Varanasi

My talk explores the intersection of traditional spiritual practices, sacred spaces, and contemporary perspectives on aging. It situates aging within the four-phase division of human life in Hinduism, comprising *brahmacharya* (learning stage), *grihastha* (householder stage), *vanaprastha* (hermit stage), and *sanyasa* (renunciation stage). Of these, *vanaprastha* and *sanyasa* comprise later life, and are characterized by religious imperatives that emphasize progressive disengagement from body, family, and society, alongside preparation for *moksha* (salvation), which liberates the individual from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Varanasi, one of the holiest Hindu cities, holds deep spiritual significance. Dying here is said to free one from the bonds of past *karma*, ending the cycle of death and rebirth, and leading the soul to *moksha*. This belief draws many older Hindus to spend their final days in Varanasi, and seek accommodation in various hospices or homes for older people, known as *mukti*, *mumukshu* or *moksha bhavans* (salvation homes). These sites offer space for voluntarily withdrawal from the world as individuals prepare for death and salvation.

My talk will focus on these salvation homes in Varanasi as sites shaped by the reality of death and hope of salvation. It will examine their roles in the context of later life duties and goals as enunciated in Hinduism, and their contrast with modern life choices. My analysis and observations will be structured in terms of insights from gerontological perspectives on literature and culture. I will also illustrate my arguments with references from a film on this theme titled *Mukti Bhavan* (2016).

8. Prakash Joshi, Professor of English, Allahabad University.

Becoming Esemplastic: Being and the Oneness of Consciousness(es) in Early Upanishads

If consciousness can be understood to have a structure, which — of course — would be abstract, it should lend itself to be analyzed and investigated in a methodical way. There can be two ways of analyzing consciousness depending on what view of it one takes. One of the two ways would be the objective way, almost a 'surgical' way, treating consciousness as an external object to study; and the other would-be subjective way, feeling and knowing and understanding that consciousness is something that characterizes and connects all that exists in the manifest world.

The first of the two ways, the objective way, is the psychoanalytical way, such as has been quite amply demonstrated in the past one and a quarter century since and after Sigmund Freud first ventured into what he thought were the unfathomable dark recesses of the human psyche. What Freud did/does was/is to put human psyche on the operation table, so to say, and dissect it vertically and horizontally into several sections, naming them and associating them with different internal and external parts of human persona vis-a-vis the structure and constitution of the society. The perspective of consciousness that emerges through a study of this kind, Freudian or post-Freudian or general psychoanalytical, reveals a structure, a kind of skeletal structure. That is, the pre and the sub and the superconscious in Freud remain well defined parts, skeletal in nature and form, covering the rest of the divisible consciousness.

However, if consciousness is understood as the entity or the spirit that pervades and/or connects all that has been and can be perceived through senses or through thought or through some other means or agency, its analysis would have to take another form and course. And, that is the what consciousness appears as in the discourses in early Upanishads: an entity that connects the Creator with the Creation, the palpable with the impalpable, the being with the non-being, and the phenomenal with the non-phenomenal. And, therefore, the character of the discourses on consciousness in Upanishads.

Among others, a major objective of this presentation is to study and strive to understand the Upanishadic discourses on consciousness and thereby derive some concrete insights, such as can help in understanding the (concept/idea of) essential 'oneness' that characterizes the Vedantic thought.

9. Bhaskar Sengupta, Structural & Heritage Consultant, Former Chief Engineer, HOD, Department of Environmental Studies, Officiating Registrar, RBU, Former Executive Engineer, Science City, Kolkata & Former Guest Faculty Civil Engineering JU.

Architecture, Ecology and Consciousness Studies

Some architectural forms often evoke a sense of admiration, transcendence and connection to the divine. They use sacred geometry, Vastu and intricate details which create an experience beyond the physical world. They also create a soothing sensation in the minds of the people. Space is the spiritual dimension of Architecture. It creates a vibration that resonates at a much deeper level and connects expressions, feelings and visions. Emotive power in the architect helps him to find the inner truth and inner self through the creation of such majestic art forms. A thoughtful creative work often goes beyond the physical form and gets connected with divinity. When space become the true replica of natural environment it imbibes spirituality. The best examples of spiritual architecture are the

Auroville's *Matri mandir* - Pondicherry, The Marble Mountain - Devang City- Vietnam, Temples of the god of wealth - China, Dilwara temple and the Temple of stone and light -Rajasthan, Cambridge mosque-UK, Pantheon-Rome, Pyramids-Egypt and Sagrada Familia-Spain. In India, ancient temples have witnessed centuries of history and spirituality.

There is a deep connection between Man and Nature, where Nature is sacred and man has a sense of responsibility towards Mother Earth. Nature, in its elements are *pancha bhootas* – air, water, land, fire and space, which demand veneration. Nature is revered in the form of sacred forests, sacred trees, sacred gardens and mountains, sacred rivers and tanks and sacred animals. Sacred groves which are surrounded by forest and greeneries represent an ancient Indian conservation tradition, protected by local people out of reverence and respect, fear and sentiment and consist of a shrine with a water reservoir. The various cultural connections are expressed through myths and religious practices that celebrate plants, animals, forests, rivers, mountains and precincts. Spiritual consciousness aims to take action and protect and restore the natural world through sustainable practices. The Atharva Veda contain *Prithvi Sukta* -a hymn honouring the Earth. These verses express deep gratitude and reverence for Mother Earth and recognise her abundance and generosity. She is also personified as Bhumi Devi- a goddess, symbolising patience, fertility and nurturance. She is also a consort of Lord Vishnu (Universe preserver). Hence, there is a connection between preservation and sustainability. This presentation will discuss how Vastu, geometrical patterns, natural ventilation and peripheral environment is significant for trapping positive energy and for creating a powerful spiritual vibration.

10. Mousumi Guha Banerjee, Professor of English, Northern Hill State University

Form and Formlessness: The Aesthetic of an Interdisciplinary Paradigm of Consciousness

The *Agunabin Sagunabin Nabin Kochbu Bbeda* concept constitutes the supreme understanding of the divine consciousness that pervades the entire universe. All beings have a consciousness which is one and relate to each other indivisibly. This is the highest order of the metaphysics of the self – a philosophy that is embodied in the Vedanta, in general, and the Advaita Vedanta, in particular. It is of utmost importance to realize what this signifies for us, especially in the modern times – when everything is, almost unavoidably, materialistic in nature, leading only to stark capitalist tendencies that the human mind can seldom shirk away from. While we talk about the human mind here, it is essential to know and deliberate on the two aspects of every manifestable thing or object in the world, that is, “form” and “formlessness”. Swami Vivekananda notes: “A form comes out of a combination of force and matter.” In other words, every “form” is an incarnation or embodiment of the “formless”. In this sense, the “formless” exists in every “form”, since the “form” is comprised of the “formless”. According to the Vedantic philosophy, the divine and the mortal constitute one whole “consciousness”, the former representing the “formless” with the latter signifying “form”. To put it in other words, the Ideal or the concept is representable in and through the form. In case of the arts, let's say literature or creative writing as it were, the word enrobes or presents the Ideal so that it could come to bear a conceivable form. This leads to the corollary that the “form” and the “formless” bear the same idea, the latter being the progenitor of the former. The Advaita Vedantic mind furthers this understanding to signify that the two constitute the same manifestation since they are inseparable and indivisible. The reality, therefore, is indubitably one: the consciousness of the highest order or the divine consciousness, the transcendental that has manifold layers of signification, the non-dual existence that pervades the entire universe, the “One without a second and is referred to as Brahman or the Absolute Reality”.

This discussion has to be contextualized and is followed by a consideration of the Bhakti Movement

that started in South India during the 7th to the 10th centuries CE, primarily via the poetry of Alvars and Nayanars. However, Bhakti quickly expanded to North India, with the *Bhagavata-Purana*, a Sanskrit work from the 10th century, being the most famous example. From the 15th century onwards, it raced across North-East India, peaking between some of the 15th through 17th centuries CE. “Bhakti” is a Sanskrit word that means “devotion”. It was a movement that stressed a devotee’s profound and strong connection and love for a specific deity and God’s love for the believer.

According to some researchers, the Bhakti Movement arose due to feudal tyranny and the Rajput-Brahmin dominance. However, another set of academics believe that the formation of this movement was prompted by socio-economic shifts in the early Middle Ages. These social classes supported the Bhakti movement because they were dissatisfied with the lower social status bestowed upon them in the Hindu Brahmanical society. Therefore, they resorted to Bhakti since it emphasized equality. Although there is no consensus on the origins of Bhakti, there is agreement on the notion that it was founded on justice and devotional submission to an individually imagined ultimate God. Ramanuja, Ramananda, Nimbarka, Kabir, Vallabhacharya, Nanak, Sri Chaitanya, and Mahapurush Srimanta Shankar Dev have been among the most prominent followers of this sect. They advocated the notion of love and admiration to come to terms with God. Several advocates of the Movement have sought to attain spirituality through the practice of philosophy, literature, and the arts, thereby envisaging an integration of the disciplines. The disciplines and the interconnection between them are only but a manifestation of the immeasurable depth of that boundless Soul that lies underneath as the aesthetic sublime – the ultimate or the highest form of self-realization. Disciplines become a domicile for a multiplicity of “transcendent functions of reason” by way of the seeker’s “spiritual activity” in search of “the inconceivable mystery” of all conscious phenomena. The talk thus seeks to argue the practice of the Bhakti pioneers not to be invested in religion in the material sense, but in an intellectual pursuit of knowledge that can educate and enlighten the society to be uplifted from “avidya” or ignorance. It is this cultural dimension of their spiritual devotion that constitutes the point of argument of this discourse.

11. Jayita Sengupta, Professor of English, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University.

Narratives of Gyanganj: A Space to be Grasped Intuitively and Intellectually

Some have called it “Gyanganj”, some “Shangri-La”. Hugh Conway and three other strangers in James Hilton’s novel *Lost Horizon* (1933) by chance after a plane crash land at a paradisaal space in the Himalayas, called Shangri-La. It is a mystical plane of harmony and peace. Ayn Rand too in *Atlas Shrugged* (1957) writes about a space in the mountains where Dagny Taggart’s plane crashes and she finds herself in a remote valley where all the retired industrialists are living. Plane crashes in both the novels lead to a space in the mountains which acts as an alternative better society compared to this world of strife, struggle, and disharmony. *A Step Away from Paradise* (2017), is an account narrated by Thomas Shore based on a real expedition by a tertion named Tulshuk Lingpa to open the “hidden land” in the flanks of Kanchendongza. Travelling to other dimensions of space in this mortal frame has also been the theme of many sci-fi and fantasy fictions and films and web series. Writers have used their power of intuition and imagination to flesh out these spaces in their novels and celluloid. While the space stations try to explore spaces beyond our earth in the skies, possibly there are different planes of existence, different worlds where the real and the mythical meet somewhere in this world itself, and only a few can travel to these spaces through their powers of mediation and yogic skills. Possibly one does not need to take a physical expedition always like Tulshuk Lingpa did, to reach that hidden space of paradisaal bliss. And possibly again this space is a space of an endless pursuit for perfection, to keep the powers of positive vibration alive. My presentation would discuss some narratives, which try to grasp “Gyanganj”, and which write about sadhakas who have visited

this space in their mortal frame, conquering the fear of death. Only true yogis can travel to this realm, so all the accounts say. My engagement in this talk would be to discuss these narratives of mystical experience, which we may grasp intellectually and more so intuitively in our consciousness.

Panels on Concepts, Texts and Contexts

12. Arghya Dipta Kar, PhD, researcher, author, teacher.

Kāmeśvarī: Metaphysical Overlayings of Desire in the Śrīvidyā School of Tantric Śāktism

This presentation explores the understanding of Kāma or Desire in the textual and ritualistic canon of Śrīvidyā. Drawing upon the observations of Anna A. Golovkova's, this study would highlight how the cult of Kāmadeva in the early Nityākaula stream inscribes into the definition of cosmic consciousness in the ontological philosophy of the Śāktas. As the philosophical doctrines of Śrīvidyā evolve into a rich sophisticated canon drawing from the Pratyabhijñā school of non-dualistic Śaivism, it reformulates the Śaiva concept of an autonomous (*svatantra*) dynamic Absolute into that of Tripurasundarī, the goddess embodying the supreme principle of divine desire (*icchhāsakti*) underlying the entire cosmic play of being and becoming. Significantly, Kāmeśvara-Kāmeśvarī, the central deities of Śrīvidyā, are none other than the erotic couple Kāmadeva and Rati overlapping with Paramaśiva-Parāśakti of Trika and Pratyabhijñā. The sexual rituals of the Nityākaula stream, centred round the female body symbolically translate into the internalized and abstract visualization of Kāmakalā, lying at the core of the mystic Śrīcakra diagram. It would be studied how despite the later smārtization of Śrīvidyā with its Tantric core diluted by the forced puristic overtones of the Samayācāra school popular in South India, it remains replete with covert remnants of its pre-canonical Desire-centric cultural core.

13. Swastik Banerjee, Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Calcutta University

From Fragmentation to Oneness: Self-Realisation in Anuttara Trika Kaula

This presentation explores the central role of direct, experiential self-consciousness in realising nonduality as articulated within Anuttara Kaula Trika Tantra. The analysis foregrounds the dynamic interplay between the immediate, lived experience of the Self and its intellectual conceptualization. This duality has long been debated in philosophical discourses on self-realization. Central to the discussion is the contention that true liberation arises not solely through abstract reasoning but through an integrated process that harmonizes direct experiential insights with reflective understanding. The framework of Trika Tantra is examined as a sophisticated system in which the apparent distinctions between the individual self, the ultimate reality, and the cosmos are gradually dissolved through rigorous spiritual practices. By tracing the evolution of consciousness from fragmented perceptions to an embodied awareness of absolute nonduality, this presentation contributes to ongoing debates in contemporary philosophy of mind and spirituality, offering a nuanced perspective on how self-consciousness can serve as the transformative bridge between individual experience and universal oneness.

14. Dipsikha Acharya, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of North Bengal.

***Mudras* in Mahayana Buddhism: A Brief Overview**

Living Buddhism at its core encompasses not only traditions, rituals, and a rich history but also various nuances of spirituality and consciousness. When examining the social aspects of Buddhism's growth and expansion from a historical perspective, we often overlook its spiritual significance. Since this conference aims to engage with such a fundamental aspect of human existence across disciplines and religions, integrating philosophical, artistic, scientific, cultural, and psychological issues, the present discussion finds relevance in exploring *mudras* from a spiritual perspective. Every *mudra* serves as a non-verbal mode of communication and self-expression, consisting of hand gestures with intertwined fingers.

The strength of *mudras* lies in their 'inner resolve' to demonstrate that such non-verbal communication is deeper than spoken words. When these hand gestures are used in Buddhist sculptures and paintings across Asia, particularly in South Asia, they represent spiritual exercises of ritual meditation and concentration. Therefore, these gestures are divine manifestations, as from the Mahayana perspective, the Buddha became a state of mind rather than merely a person. Mahayana Buddhism when within its fold incorporated the Vajrayana perspective, literally the 'Diamond Vehicle' or the 'Thunderbolt Vehicle', and emphasized the esoteric form of Buddhism intending to accelerate the path to awakening, *mudras* became far more important.

Mudras also conceal the secret embodied in five fingers. In this interpretation, each finger, starting with the thumb, symbolically represents one of the five elements: the sky, wind, fire, water, and earth, respectively. The interactions of these fingers with each other signify the assimilation and synthesis of these elements, as it is said that every existence in this universe is composed of a unique amalgamation of these elements. Such amalgamation creates favourable conditions for the presence of the deity near the worshipper or makes the state of mind of the worshipper akin to that of a deity. The significance of these *mudras* can be gauged from the fact that each of the five transcendental (commonly known as Dhyani) Buddhas has one of these mudras as an integral part, and in their visual representations, they must be shown with their distinctive *mudras*. The present talk intends to explore various *mudras* related to Buddhism, particularly Mahayana Buddhism, and to explain the symbolic meanings of these *mudras*. In addition to this explanation, the researcher will also attempt to demonstrate them to establish a connection and raise awareness among the audience.

15. Tathagata Sagar Pal, Research Scholar, Department of English, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University.

Understanding the "Wrathful Compassion": A Reflection upon the Narratives and Forms of Yamāntaka

Karuṇā (compassion) is one of the important cornerstones of the Mahāyāna consciousness. According to the Buddhist tradition, the Buddha not only has the wisdom of insight into the state of things but also the compassion for all suffering sentient beings. The emphasis on the cultivation of compassion, along with the perfection of *prajñā*, is deemed as essential for the emergence of the bodhicitta. This altruistic idealization has led to the exaltation of the bodhisattvas in the Mahāyāna doctrine. The bodhisattvas are the ones who epitomize the cardinal principle of *mahākaruṇā* and do

not accept *nirvāṇa* for only himself. Rather, he pledges himself for the salvation of all, making the bodhisattva path as the supreme way in the Mahāyāna belief and leading to the popularization of the Dhamma. In the Mahāyāna pantheon, therefore, one finds the significance of the celestial bodhisattvas like Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī, who have many forms and display miraculous powers. Their forms, however, undergo changes in Vajrayāna, which adds esoteric meanings to the manifestations. One characteristic of the Vajrayāna pantheon is that there are wrathful deities, including the bodhisattvas. This presentation would like to concentrate upon Yamāntaka, the wrathful appearance of Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva of transcendental wisdom. It would first seek to find the significance of *karuṇā* in Mahāyāna and then, relate to its embodiment by Yamāntaka. While the wrathful deities are often construed to be demonic, the presentation would try to locate the symbolic significance of Yamāntaka's form and how it can be associated with the Buddhist doctrine. It would take into account the concerned texts on Yamāntaka and show how the exploits of the deity can be held as an extension of the bodhisattva's compassion.

16. Medha Sinha, MA from Jadavpur University, Kolkata.

In the Light of the *Padas*: Exploring Sexuality as a Means of Spiritual Transcendence from *Charyapadas* to *Vaishnava Padavali*

The *Charyapadas* are a collection of mystical poems, songs of realization in the Vajrayana and *Sahajīya* traditions of Buddhism from the esoteric traditions in Assam, Bengal, Bihar and Odisha. Vaishnava *Padavali*, on the other hand, refers to Vaishnava poetry often focusing on the Radha-Krishna legend. The term *Padavali* has the literal meaning "gathering of songs", and often reflects an earthy view of divine love. At its heart, both *Charyapadas* and *Vaishnava Padavali* share the essence of material with the divine, with slightly varying metaphors and imagery, centering on the theme of love and sexuality. Exploring sexuality by transcending social norms, and going closer to divine through that is a very important common theme that is prevalent in songs of both *Charyapadas* and *Vaishnava Padavali*. This presentation explores how both *Charyapadas* and *Vaishnava Padavali* share a similar purpose, flavour, target audience, and quite possibly the same route, and at the same time, it also brings to light how *Charyapadas* and *Vaishnava Padavali* lie one after the other, thereby continuing the trend of conveying the esoteric lore prevalent in the spiritual scenario in the form of music, which finds it the most convenient to convey the metaphor of '*abhisamaya*', i.e., the realisation of enlightenment one achieves as a result of the union of *prajna* (wisdom) and *Upaya* (method). This becomes relevant as we begin to study the rich heritage of greater Bengal, where Buddhist *Sahajīya* and Vaishnava traditions flourished, and how, although largely wiped out due to several socio-political and cultural factors, the legacy of the *Charyapadas* and *Sahajīya Sadhana* is carried on by the later emerging *Vaishnava Padavali* and the *Bhakti* tradition. This discussion draws from primary sources like the *Charyacharyavinischaya*, *Sri Krishna Kirtan*, and *Gitagovinda*, to study the nature of the *Padas*, i.e., short votive verses; it also looks into the works of analysis and criticism by several English and Bengali scholars, to get a broad perspective of the subject. It also looks into secondary works based on Tibetan Buddhist traditions, and the greater sphere of *bhakti* poetry and music to get a greater understanding of the subject. Eventually, the paper explores how the *Padas* have evolved, and how there has always existed a strong sense of connection between the earlier *Charyapadas* and the later *Vaishnava Padavali*, how they share a similar, if not mostly same outlook on sexuality as a method of comprehending the union of material and divine, through *Sahajananda* as explored in the *Charyapadas*, or *Radhabhav* as explored in the *Vaishnava Padavali*, and how the associated musical traditions have fostered a deep, meaningful connection between the Hindu and Buddhist traditions in greater Bengal, and continue to aid people who seek to walk the path of spirituality to this date.

17. Dr. Alka Bhakar, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Ch. Ballu Ram Godara Govt. Girls College, Sri Ganganagar.

Understanding the Concept of Universal Consciousness through Eastern Hindu Philosophy with Special Reference to the *Ashtavakra Gita*

Consciousness is a multifaceted concept that has been explored and expressed in various cultural and aesthetic forms throughout history. Various paradigms of consciousness and their cultural and aesthetic expressions illustrate the diverse ways in which humans have sought to understand and depict the nature of the mind. Each paradigm offers a unique perspective and enriches our comprehension of consciousness through various forms of creative expression. The 'Dualism' posits that the mind and body are separate entities. Culturally, this has been expressed through the emphasis on the distinction between the material and the spiritual in art, literature, and religion. The ethical dimensions of consciousness involve understanding how our awareness and perception impact moral decision-making, personal responsibility, and societal values. Consciousness enables individuals to recognize right from wrong, making them accountable for their actions. Ethical theories emphasize the importance of conscious intent in determining moral responsibility. The exploration of consciousness in Hindu philosophy, such as the idea of Atman (the self) and its connection to Brahman (universal consciousness), has been expressed through classical Indian literature.

The concepts of Atman (the individual self) and Brahman (the universal consciousness or ultimate reality) are central themes in Hindu philosophy and have been richly explored in various literary texts. The *Ashtavakra Gita* is often referred to as the Maha Gita because of its profound philosophical insights and its emphasis on the ultimate truth of Advaita Vedanta. The *Ashtavakra Gita* presents the teachings of Advaita Vedanta in a simple, direct, and uncompromising manner. It does not delve into rituals, ceremonies, or complex metaphysical concepts, but focuses on the essence of self-realization and liberation. It explores the nature of Atman and Brahman through a dialogue between Ashtavakra and King Janaka, emphasizing non-dualism and the realization of the self as one with the ultimate reality. The presentation offers insights into the nature of self and the universe, emphasizing the unity of Atman and Brahman as described in the *Ashtavakra Gita*. It also finds the fact that how the text places a strong emphasis on the immediate and direct realization of the Self (Atman) as pure consciousness, beyond the dualities of the physical world. It is the foundation of Hindu philosophy and spirituality, providing timeless wisdom and guidance for seekers of truth. The *Ashtavakra Gita* offers profound insights into how one can attain liberation by understanding and embracing the concept of pure consciousness. Some prominent English transcendental writers who were deeply influenced by Indian philosophy and whose works resonate with the concepts described in the *Ashtavakra Gita* are also discussed here

18. Somdatta Bhattacharyya, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University

***Caravka* Theory of Consciousness: A different Voice in Indian Philosophical Thought**

Carvaka Philosophy emerged during the Vedic period, a time which is characterized by extensive religious and philosophical dialogues. During this era, the dominant Vedic philosophy primarily paid attention on rituals, the soul, and the afterlife. *Carvaka* Philosophy, with its sharp contrasting materialistic stance, presented a counterpoint to these metaphysical beliefs. In the history of Indian

Philosophy it was the daring voice that questioned the sanctity of the Vedas and the concept of a divine being.

It is no wonder that such challenging position led to confrontations with traditional schools, yet in current research it has gained much importance and accordingly its contribution to the diversity and richness of the intellectual and spiritual discourse in ancient India has started getting recognition. The *Caravaka* theory can also be regarded as a socio-politico-ethical doctrine which offers a unique position in the realm of epistemology, metaphysics and last but not the least ethics. In this discussion we would like highlight an analysis with regard to *Carvaka* theory of consciousness which is familiar as *Bhutacaitanyavada*.

Panels on Textual Discourses

19. Oly Roy, Assistant Professor of English, St. Xavier's College, Burdwan.

The Galactic Waltz of Consciousness in Samantha Harvey's *Orbital*

Winner of the 2024 Booker Prize, Samantha Harvey's *Orbital* meditates on the nature of consciousness as six astronauts experience the breadth of human emotions along with familiarity in shared connections from within the confines of the International Space Station. The Earth's Orbit is the screen against which the drama of the characters' internal and external worlds unfolds. As they witness the changing shades of the "blue marble", the astronauts undergo compelling cognitive shifts as their individual and collective experiences merge into profound awareness of fragility and resilience, typically akin to the 'Overview Effect'. But as the novella explores the twenty-four hours in the lives of its astronaut-characters, moving at 17,000 miles per hour, sixteen days and nights coalesce together, engendering a unique relationship between them and their mother planet- the Earth. This consciousness of the Earth's enduring aura and their sense of dependence on the planet for identity leads to a recognition of responsibility and connection that goes beyond mere global, social, political concerns (Earth Consciousness). This presentation will explore how Harvey uses powerful narrative to examine the experiences that the characters undergo, leading to a gradual shift in their perspective. Such cognitive shifts precipitate a transformation in their understanding of personal relations as well as scientific observations. The presentation also seeks to reflect on the complexity of the relationship between humanity and the Earth, and the shared responsibilities that can determine the future of life on the planet and beyond it.

20. Sagnik Chakraborty, Research Scholar, Department of English, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University.

"Silent Waters and Shattered Memories: Exploring Partition Trauma and Consciousness in *Khamosh Paani*"

Various alternative narratives are often side stepped and brushed away as a dominant hegemonic discourse is created in order to concretize the notion of a nation and give it an identity of its own. However, when such alternative narratives are recovered from the cobwebs of history, they tend to question the singular monolithic entity of the nation-state. In fact, it is our memories that act as a repository of all such private narratives; narratives that re-narrate the public truth and underscore the

shadowiness of the borderlines. My discussion would try to explore the trauma and horror of the partition of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947, and its aftermath even after 53 years, as narrated in the film *Khamosh Pani: Silent Waters* (2003), directed by the Pakistani documentary filmmaker Sabiha Sumar. Set in post-partition Pakistan, the film explores the lingering effects of the deep psychological and emotional scars (violence, trauma, and displacement) which have deeply affected the individual and collective consciousness of those who lived through it. Through the personal experiences of the protagonist, Ayesha, *Khamosh Paani* provides a powerful cinematic lens for analysing the intersection of partition violence and consciousness studies, specifically examining how trauma, memory, and identity formation are influenced by the violence of the past.

Furthermore, I would draw attention to the plurality of identities and how religion, society and sexuality influenced women's choices during the upheavals of 1947. In every sense, the well in the film as well as its silent water runs as a leitmotif to the central narrative of the film. By examining the film through the lens of consciousness studies, the research would try to underscore how trauma is internalized and finally transmitted across generations.

21. Anup Sharma, Research Scholar, Department of English, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University.

The figure of the 'Divine Mother' and devotional surrender in the Poetry of Paramahansa Yogananda

Paramahansa Yogananda, widely known for his seminal work *Autobiography of a Yogi*, is one of the most prominent figures in introducing Eastern spirituality to the West. His contributions go beyond prose and extend into poetry, where he explores the themes of divine love, mystical union, and surrender to the Divine. Yogananda's poetic works, particularly those in *Whispers from Eternity* and *Metaphysical Meditations*, offer profound insights into the experience of the Divine as an intimate, loving presence, often depicted as "Divine Mother". Through rich metaphors and devotional language, his poems invite readers into a relationship with God by presenting the "Divine Mother" through diverse metaphors like that of a cosmic dancer who shatters illusions and liberates the soul, of a creator and destroyer, of fire that illumines darkness with light. The concept of the "Divine Mother" in Yogananda's poems also serve as a universal archetype of unconditional love and protection, while his theme of devotional surrender emphasizes the dissolution of ego in the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. This presentation explores these two themes—Divine Mother and devotional surrender—analysing how they manifest across Yogananda's poetry, situating them within a broader mystical tradition that transcends cultural boundaries.

22. Asmita Som, Research Scholar, Department of English, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University.

Dynamics of Return in South Asian Diasporic Consciousness: A Study of M.G. Vassanji's *The Assassin's Song*

The archetype of journey or migration is fundamental and phenomenal to literature of both the East and the West. Points of origin, settlement, departure and return are increasingly muddled in the convoluted web of global movement. The term 'diaspora' has enigmatic connotations and has received the attention of academicians and policy makers alike across the world. Returning home is a prospect that every immigrant cherishes. The new phenomenon of returning to the roots, of late,

has loomed large all over the world history. This is especially after the event of 9/11 and the new US President Donald Trump's policy of deportation on the one hand, and, the scope of spectacular or comfortable repatriation being enhanced with the developing economies becoming more global, liberal, open and consumerist, on the other. The introduction of the schemes like Persons of Indian Origin Card (PIO Card) and Overseas Citizen of India Card or the establishments of multinational companies (Yahoo, Google, Microsoft) in South Asian countries after globalization – all these facilitate the process of return. My study will concentrate on the new phenomenon of going back to the ancestral land or 'Return Home' aspect by exploring the social, cultural, historical and psychological implications of the same as reflected in the South Asian diasporic novel *The Assassin's Song*. The 'return', whether imaginary or anticipated or realised/undertaken, has been a pivotal point of the migrants' relationship to both their homeland and host land and has refigured their sense of 'home', 'identity' and 'belonging'. The concepts like 'hybridity', 'imaginary homeland', 'nostalgia', 'assimilation', 'double consciousness' get further complicated while looking through the lens of return phenomenon. My study will, therefore, explore the returnee's complex negotiation with these issues. Through the novel, it also attempts to understand how a new sense of identity, belonging, place and home seems to emerge amongst the migrants when the return is realized and its move towards a re-configuration of the older binaries of home/abroad, local/global, national/international etc. in the discourse of diaspora.

23. Sharmistha De Dutta, PhD in English, IIT Kharagpur.

Mysticism and the Self: Unravelling Consciousness and Self-Realization in Paramhansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

Paramhansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* is a seminal spiritual text that explores the intersections of mysticism, consciousness, and self-realization. Through vivid personal narratives and encounters with enlightened masters, Yogananda presents a vision of the self that transcends material existence, emphasizing the unity between individual consciousness and the divine. This presentation critically examines how the text frames mysticism as a transformative journey toward self-realization, blending Hindu philosophy, yogic discipline, and supernatural experiences. Yogananda's depiction of spiritual awakening challenges conventional notions of selfhood, presenting consciousness as an ever-expanding force that dissolves the boundaries of ego and worldly attachment.

While *Autobiography of a Yogi* has inspired generations of seekers, it also raises critical questions about the relationship between mysticism and empirical knowledge, the role of devotion in self-realization, and the cultural recontextualization of Eastern spiritual traditions in the West. This talk explores these dimensions, analyzing the ways in which Yogananda constructs a narrative of divine consciousness that is both deeply personal and universally resonant. By unravelling the philosophical and literary techniques that shape his mystical vision, this study offers a nuanced perspective on the enduring significance of *Autobiography of a Yogi* in global spiritual discourse.

24. Nasrin Sultana, Research Scholar, Department of English, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University.

Being and Becoming: Decoding the Interplay of Conscious and Unconscious through the Spiritual and Mythical Contents Present in the Kannada Film *Kantara*

Conceptualizing the idea of consciousness is a prime aspect of being human, yet it remains an immense mystery. Investigating the mind and confronting the complexities of consciousness necessarily assert the collision of disciplines. Literature, films, music, visual arts and other forms of performances appear to be the mediums mirroring human experiences, transformations and transcendence across cultures and regions. Films, being one such leading medium, portrays human experiences through various cultural and aesthetic forms. In this paper my endeavour would be to cast light on these interweaving aspects of human existence and experiences of transformations and transcendence through the psychoanalytic approach to conscious and unconscious. To serve my purpose, I have selected the Kannada movie *Kantara*. I shall try to focus on the nuances of aesthetic, spiritual and psychological aspects present in the film for a subtle understanding of the aspects of conscious and unconscious. The film portrays the director's cohesion to psychoanalysis and reveals how the spiritual and mythical elements demystify the unconscious through its utilization both as a cinematic form and thematic device, manifested in discernible scenes of spirituality and myth. It is ascertained that these mythological and folkloric scenes perform a bifunctional role as cinematic and narrative elements. Intriguingly, the multifaceted structure extends to character development as well, exploring the complexities of the characters' psyche. The characters' behaviours, attitudes and objects induce strong traces of memory over the spectators' psyche as well because cinema bridges between the psyche of the characters and spectators. By analyzing the film's subsided potential and its celebration of social cohesion, I examine that it acts as a catalyst for psychological agency on the one hand, and on the other hand, inspires the viewers to uphold for the transformative aspects leading to sustainable practices and fight for cultural preservation. By offering a detailed analysis of the film, I aim to enrich the discourse on cinema's role in fostering critical engagement with psychological and social issues. Examining the film's nuanced portrayal of folklore, its powerful environmental message, and its subversive political commentary, I hope to cast light on the transformative potential of storytelling in providing a more apt and ethical outcome and understanding.

25. Sebonti Roy Chowdhury, Assistant Professor of English, Tufanganj Mahavidyalaya, affiliated to CBPBU.

An Eco-spiritual Reading of Richard Powers's *The Overstory*

This presentation seeks to examine the concept of eco-spirituality, analysing the intersection between nature and spirituality, and the impact it has in the modern society. The profound relationship between nature and humanity can be deemed to be spiritual. Eco-spirituality endows nature with a sacredness, that makes humans conscious of their ethical duties towards its sustenance. Whereas spirituality often concerns itself with the search for the divine, eco-spirituality helps to realize the divine that co-exists within the global and domestic ecological space. Eco-spirituality ensues a synthesis of the unique individual self with the natural world. Scientific research papers have examined 'plant consciousness', wherein evidence of bio-communication in plant cells has been detected, confirming plants as sentient life forms, which can feel. Consciousness is evident in all life forms, although the manner in which it manifests itself is varied. All life forms originate from the same source and share certain common characteristics. This principle is prevalent in DNA consciousness and in different states of energy, where all matters are composed of energy vibrating

at different frequencies. Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose in his research on plant stimuli, with the help of his newly invented crescograph, showed how plants are capable of responding to stimuli, in a similar manner to animals and their nervous systems. Plants have also been known to communicate with one another and have the capacity to warn each other against any kind of potential danger.

Aristotle opined that plants have souls but lack any sensation. It was in the eighteenth century that Carl von Linné stated that plants differ from animals and humans in their inability to move. However, Charles Darwin repudiated the prevailing perception about plants and asserted that every tendril had the capacity for independent movement. This view was further strengthened by Viennese biologist, Raoul Francé, who postulated that plants are capable of moving their bodies as freely as any humans or animals, and the only reason why we fail to notice these movements is because the plants do it at a much slower pace, which human beings fail to register. Francé said that buds and twigs have a certain pattern of movement, while the leaves and blossoms are sensitive to environmental changes. Richard Powers in his acclaimed novel *The Overstory* (2018) explores the intricate spiritual relationship that man has with the natural world and the challenges that an anthropocentric narrative poses. Powers, however, does not anthropomorphize the plants in his novel and gives them a distinct vegetal mode of expression. The trees become active participants in the text, rather than passive receptors. Large-scale exploitation of the environment has been a major source of concern in the modern society. Emerson and Thoreau have advocated the conscious connection with nature in nineteenth-century America. Richard Powers's novel explores the engagement and responsibility towards the environment and trees in an industrialized America. The novel also highlights the importance of the Chipko Movement in India and the Kayapo Indians in Brazil and how they have contributed to the protection of trees.

Animism is a well-established concept that associates both living and non-living things with a spirit. Eco-spirituality is a broader concept that incorporates key elements of animism but further extends to the deep spiritual connection that humans share with the natural world. The symbiotic relationship between ecological awareness and spirituality is significant in the context of Powers's novel and posits how spirituality is an ongoing process, which is inseparably related to our co-existence with nature.

26. Pratima Banerjee & Sisilia Banerjee

Title: Time, Memory, and Transcendence: An Exploration of Consciousness in *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*

In the novel *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* by Toshikazu Kawaguchi, the interplay of time, memory, and consciousness creates a unique platform for exploring human experience and transcendence. Set in a mysterious Tokyo café that allows customers to travel back in time under stringent conditions, the novel serves as a literary mirror to human consciousness, examining how individuals grapple with their past and confront their inner dilemmas. By grounding the fantastical premise of time travel within deeply emotional and personal stories, Kawaguchi delves into themes that resonate with the interdisciplinary inquiry of consciousness across literature, psychology, and philosophy. This presentation seeks to situate *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* within the broader framework of the conference theme, "Paradigms of Consciousness and Its Cultural and Aesthetic Expressions," exploring how the novel provides insight into the nature of self-awareness, time, and the cultural nuances of inner transformation.

The café in the novel becomes a space of both personal and collective experience, where each character's journey reveals the complex ways in which time and memory shape the self. These

journeys reflect a deep engagement with consciousness, not merely as an individual phenomenon but as something culturally and emotionally situated. In doing so, Kawaguchi taps into the essence of consciousness studies: how the mind and self are shaped by their surroundings and experiences, and how individuals seek to reconcile their present identity with the fragments of their past. This exploration aligns with the philosophical discourse on consciousness, particularly phenomenology, which examines how we experience and process time, memory, and regret. The novel's exploration of memory as a liminal space between self and world echoes key questions within phenomenology: What does it mean to be conscious of time? How do we navigate the temporal continuum of experience while grounded in the present?

Kawaguchi's narrative invites readers to reflect on the psychological nuances of consciousness, particularly through its focus on memory and its connection to regret, forgiveness, and redemption. The characters' experiences of time travel can be seen as allegories for broader spiritual practices of self-realization and emotional healing, aligning with cultural traditions of meditation and introspection found in both Eastern and Western philosophies. The novel's emphasis on the passage of time, and the limits of control we have over it, mirrors existentialist explorations of consciousness, where awareness of temporality leads to deeper understanding of the self's limitations and potentials. This intersection of memory, spirituality, and the self resonates with the larger philosophical inquiry into consciousness, particularly how Eastern traditions such as Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta address the impermanence of time and the non-dualistic understanding of the self in relation to the world.

By exploring consciousness through literature, *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* reflects the broader aims of this conference in its examination of the tensions between material existence and inner transcendence. As we follow characters who seek to alter or gain closure with their past, Kawaguchi's novel illuminates how cultural and artistic expressions—rooted in personal and collective memory—serve as tools for awakening, transformation, and understanding of the self. In this way, the novel becomes a dynamic representation of consciousness, embodying the complexities of human experience across temporal, emotional, and cultural boundaries.

This discussion will further explore the novel's alignment with interdisciplinary consciousness studies, drawing connections between Kawaguchi's literary depiction of memory and time with the philosophical and cultural paradigms of consciousness that form the foundation of the conference. Through this lens, *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* serves as a profound artistic exploration of human consciousness, offering insights into the ways memory and time travel influence not only personal identity but also broader cultural and spiritual understandings of existence.

27. Saptaki Chattopadhyay, Independent Researcher.

The Melodious Incarnation of Super-consciousness: A Study of *Gitanjali*.

Human consciousness has been variously viewed and its layers variously commented upon by Western thinkers like Freud and Eastern thinkers like Sri Aurobindo. What is common to all is that at its highest level, often designated as Super-consciousness or Supreme Consciousness, it makes us recognize forms of truth that lie too deep for rational exploration. Art is an embodiment of human consciousness and hence may help us capture what lies buried in the deep structure of human mind. As a poet, Rabindranath Tagore tries to flesh out thoughts related to intuitive perception in his songs, especially in the lyrical poems that form the corpus of his book *Gitanjali* ("Song Offerings"). The presentation seeks to analyze some aspects of Tagore's consciousness as reflected in *Gitanjali*. The

study will focus on how melody has been used not only for aesthetic embellishment but for transcendence, dissolving the barriers between the self and the infinite.

**28. Indrani Datta (Chaudhuri), PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of English,
Vidyasagar University**

Analyzing Consciousness in Paintings and Literature through String Theory and M Theory (Taking as Case-Studies the Paintings of Nandalal Bose and *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran)

The exploration of the realm of human consciousness, since centuries and even in recent decades of unthinkable scientific and technological advancements, has been lagging behind, perhaps, due to its remoteness from the materialistic pursuits of the West. However, the psychological concept of mindfulness and, partially, the role of higher dimensions in String Theory and M Theory of advanced Quantum Physics underscores the need to consider and examine Consciousness not merely as a part of some obscure mysticism but as a serious empirical entity closely linked with human nature, functions of the human body and the workings of the natural world. This point is almost verified when a recent scientific intervention has linked human consciousness to higher dimensions of String Theory that lies beyond human comprehension and perception.

In this presentation, I argue that all forms of art like literature, paintings, sculpture, music extraordinaire are created when these higher dimensions come into play, when their vibrations and frequencies interact, fuse and interrupt each other. The cause is what we know as 'ecstasy' and the effect is what we feel when we see art extraordinaire with an emotive reaction within ourselves. Taking into consideration the paintings of the famous artist of Bengal Art School, namely Nandalal Bose, as my first case-study, I examine how his paintings are capable of transcending the fourth dimension, namely time-space, because of a heightened consciousness that we often term as 'Spiritualism'.

That such Consciousness is a formative force in the creation of certain literatures, frequently labelled as mystical, can be exemplified through the works of a writer who was also an artist but was in no way connected to the Bengal Art School, let alone India, but who had an almost indefinable connection with the Indian Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. To expand my argument, I take up the Lebanese American intellectual Kahlil Gibran's *Prophet* (1923) as my second case-study. In 1922, predicated upon the state of intellectual and spiritual collapse, T.S. Eliot concluded his *Waste Land* with the slokas of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* in order to partially rescue a dilapidated culture that was swirling in-between Darwinian metaphors and Nietzschean nihilism. The next year, in a rather non-Western simplistic manner and with an amorphous formlessness, Kahlil Gibran, an outsider to the West, tried to reveal that same state of internal disintegration that was paving the way to a total spiritual decay. Like T.S. Eliot, his Western contemporary, he, too, tried to salvage the absolute breakdown but in a very different manner: through the elevation of the human consciousness to higher dimensions that can be linked with that of the String Theory. While doing so, he was greatly inspired by the lectures of Rabindranath Tagore which the latter delivered during his visit to the USA. Through the creation of a non-place, non-space, non-time, a phenomenon that releases vibrations that can be connected with the Spiritualism which we find in our ancient Sanskrit texts, namely the Upanishads, Gibran's *Prophet* could capture, even if momentarily, higher dimensions than the fourth (time-space) of String Theory and link human consciousness with the Consciousness of the Universe.

The paintings of Nandalal Bose and the magnum opus of Kahlil Gibran, taken together, emphasizes the capability of human consciousness to access the higher dimensions of Nature, and in its utmost

Spirituality, perhaps, even all the eleven dimensions of the Universe, as observed in M Theory. This leads to a timeless-spaceless-ness, in which one is able to perceive the Universe and Nature in its entirety, as a whole, and as a point where art merges with science through the acknowledgement of direct Consciousness.

Panels on Cultural Consciousness

29. Soutik Chakraborty, Research Scholar, Department of English, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University.

Majilpur Clay Dolls: A Fascinating Preservation of Bengal's Lost Dolls

The clay dolls of Majilpur stand as the last surviving remnants of Bengal's once-thriving tradition of terracotta craftsmanship. While the eighteenth-century clay dolls of Kolkata have vanished without a trace, one artisan of Majilpur continues this heritage, preserving both its artistic essence and cultural significance. Doll making is the traditional craft of Shambhunath Das, who counts as the eighth generation of his family. His creations encompass a wide array of themes, from depictions of Vedic deities, folk deities and animals to figurines that offer poignant social commentary. Each doll reflects a meticulous blend of tradition and innovation, capturing the essence of rural Bengal's storytelling tradition through clay. Despite the pressures of modernization and declining patronage, these dolls remain a testament to the region's artistic resilience. This presentation delves into the history, craftsmanship, and thematic evolution of Majilpur's clay dolls, shedding light on their enduring legacy. It also explores the challenges faced by Sambhunath Das and the urgent need for preservation efforts to ensure that this unique cultural treasure does not meet the same fate as its lost counterparts from Kolkata and other areas of Bengal. By recognizing and supporting these artisans, we can contribute to the survival of a craft that is an invaluable part of Bengal's cultural identity.

30. Deep Saha, Independent Scholar.

Art as Awakening: The Gamira Masked Dance Performance and the Spiritual Aesthetics of Consciousness

This presentation interrogates the complex interplay between art, spirituality, and consciousness through an in-depth exploration of the Gamira masked dance performance, a traditional folk performance of South Dinajpur. Art is admired as not merely a form of aesthetic expression but as a sacred act that unveils the divine within. According to the Advaita Vedanta, through an act of concentration, the artist experiences the momentary glimpse of *Satchitananda* (existence-knowledge-bliss). Thus, art is considered as a transformative practice in which the dissolution of the individual ego leads to an experiential recognition of the universal Brahman, thereby awakening latent spiritual consciousness. Like other art forms, traditional performance art, when performed with the performer's engagement in rhythmic movement, vocalization, and physical expression, can serve as a bridge between the mundane and a state of higher sensory awareness. The Gamira Masked Dance of North Bengal and most particularly of South Dinajpur is not merely a folk masked performance of a region; rather it's a way of life through which the performers can reunite with the Divine or with the spirit to whom they dedicate their masks and unique rituals. They can transcend to a certain state of consciousness where they completely lose control of their bodies and move according to the will of their desired deity during the performance. This study can be understood through the lens of Abhinavagupta's Rasa theory. It will explore how the dance evokes Rasa, creating an empathic connection between the performers and the audience and also facilitates a shared experience of

transcendence. Coomaraswamy's ideas about the spiritual and symbolic dimensions of Indian art have been used to gain a better understanding of the deeper meanings embedded in the masks, costumes, and movements of the Gamira dance and how they position the pathway to the Divine. The dynamics of contemplating performance reveal that one's body is not solely one's own but an interdependent sharing with all other bodies and therefore, a common collective participation in God's body. In this process, contemplating performance can be described as a semantic journey through which God's body is realized as encompassing the performer's body. The mask, the performance, and the deity-invocation rituals enable the performer to experience the four Jungian aspects—the self, the anima/animus, the persona, and the shadow—and to become one with the world consciousness. Through the use of performance studies, iconographic analysis, and metaphysical investigation, this multidisciplinary study aims to demonstrate how the Gamira masked dance performance, as a form of art or sacred art, not only reflects local myths and traditions but also serves as a powerful spiritual awakening paradigm, resulting in profound transformations that reflect the timeless value of traditional art forms in respect of the aesthetics and cultural manifestations of consciousness.

31. Pallab Kumar Sarker, Assistant Professor of English, Cooch Behar College

Cultural Consciousness and the Toto Community: Birth, Death, and Marriage Rituals in the Flux of Time

The Toto community, the smallest tribal group in West Bengal, resides in Totopara village on the Indo-Bhutan border. Anthropologically, they belong to the Tibeto-Mongoloid ethnic group (Chakrabarty 42). Despite their small population, the Totos have maintained a distinct cultural identity through their traditional rituals, language, and social structures. This research delves into the cultural practices related to birth, death, and marriage rituals in the Toto community. It attempts to examine the intricate ceremonies that define these life events and explores the social significance of these customs, the roles of religious and community leaders in preserving tradition, and the underlying beliefs that govern such practices. The presentation also analyses the impact of modernity and external influences on Toto customs. With increasing interaction with the mainstream society, changes in medical practices, burial rituals, and marital norms have begun to emerge. This talk draws from anthropological studies, linguistic research, and historical records to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the Totos balance tradition and adaptation in a rapidly changing world. Through ethnographic analysis and qualitative research, this study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on indigenous cultural preservation and transformation in contemporary society.

32. Prajnajyoti Dutta, Lecturer, Department of English, Cooch Behar College.

Cooch Behar Rashmela and Cultural Consciousness – A Symbol of Communal Harmony

Cooch Behar Rashmela, a vibrant festival dedicated to Lord Krishna, stands as a testament to the region's deep-rooted cultural consciousness and communal harmony. This annual celebration, marked by grand processions, folk performances, and rituals, transcends religious boundaries, fostering unity between Hindu and Muslim communities. This festival is not merely a religious event but a space where Hindu and Muslim communities come together in shared celebration. A remarkable example of this cultural mingling is seen in the craftsmanship of the Rash Chakra, an essential element of the festival, meticulously prepared by Muslim artisans like Altaf Mia. Their artistry and devotion in creating this sacred structure reflect the seamless integration of diverse cultural identities. The festival fosters social unity, where Hindus and Muslims participate in trade,

performances, and celebrations, reinforcing a shared heritage. Through an exploration of Rashmela's historical and sociocultural significance, this paper highlights the festival's role in shaping collective consciousness and preserving the values of inclusivity, artistic collaboration, and interfaith dialogue.

Panel on Art, Architecture and Consciousness

33. Maria Jose Lopez Aldana, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan.

Transcending Observation: The Experiential Power of Immersive Art Exhibitions

Envision a space where light, sound, and color accompany the observer's every movement, blurring the lines between the viewer and the artwork, transforming the individual from a mere spectator into an active participant in the experience. This is the world of Immersive Art Exhibitions, an innovative movement reshaping cultural landscapes by transcending conventional artistic norms. This transformation occurs through the interplay of art and technology, isolating external influences and enabling the viewer to connect with the artwork, thereby enhancing awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, and physical presence within the artistic environment.

More than just an aesthetic experience, Immersive Art fosters a profound connection with the ideas and emotions the artwork seeks to convey, engaging the senses in a way that deepens the dialogue between the body, mind, and art. By seamlessly integrating the observer into the artwork, these exhibitions invite individuals not only to witness but embody the narrative, forging an intimate and transformative relationship with the experience.

Studies have consistently explored the technological and interactive aspects of immersive art (Antón et al., 2018), (Charitonidou, 2020; Liu & Sutunyarak, 2024; Yin & Jin, 2022); however, there has been limited focus on how these elements contribute to a deeper cognitive, emotional, and sensory connection between the observer and the artwork. While previous research highlights the role of digital tools such as projection mapping, less attention has been given to how these technologies facilitate meaning-making and enhance the viewers' understanding and connection with the art piece.

Adopting a qualitative research approach, this study focuses on U-108 SPACE exhibition "*a-Forest*" at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts. *a-Forest* is an immersive, participatory art installation that merges EEG data, AI-generated visuals, and multi-sensory soundscapes. Through guided meditation, body movement, and real-time co-creation, participants journey into a surreal dreamscape, deepening their awareness of subconscious impulses and emotions.

The study seeks to explore how immersive art reshapes the visitor experience by utilizing visitor and artist interviews. By shifting the perspective from a technological point of view to the experiential and interpretative dimensions of immersion, this study aims to uncover how these exhibitions transform passive spectators into active participants, ultimately deepening the connection with the art and its intended narrative.

Initial insights from this study suggest that immersive art exhibitions, such as *A-Forest* at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, do more than merely engage audiences through technological interactivity—they facilitate a deeper cognitive, emotional, and sensory connection with the artwork. Preliminary data from visitor interviews indicate that immersive art exhibitions heighten self-awareness and intensify emotional responses, allowing participants to feel more present within the artistic environment. Moreover, interviews with the artist reveal that the

intention behind these technological elements is not solely to enhance visual spectacle but to create an embodied experience that encourages personal interpretation and emotional resonance. Furthermore, early analysis suggests that visitors who interact with the exhibition on multiple sensory levels report a stronger connection to its themes and a heightened ability to derive personal meaning from the experience

This study contributes to a broader discussion on the evolving relationship between art and its audience in the digital age, emphasizing the importance of embodiment, perception, and personal meaning-making in contemporary artistic experiences. By examining how immersive installations blur the boundary between observer and artwork, the research highlights the transformative potential of these encounters to foster deeper emotional connections and collaborative forms of creativity.

34. Shreshtha Chakraborty, Architect from Pune.

Role of Architecture in the Pathway of Transcendence- A Phenomenologically Inquiry.

The discourse of architecture has evolved to encompass various opinions, often focused on aesthetic implementations and stylistic or visual characteristics. Scholars like Gaston Bachelard and Juhani Pallasmaa focus on the poetics and significance of the architectural experience and connection with the environment. This presentation delves deep into its spiritual and divine interjections and the role it plays in awakening consciousness treading the path of transcendence. Drawing on Gregory Gorelick's the four modes of transcendence that include group directed (ritualistic), theory of mind (pertaining to ultra-human agents), aesthetic (feelings of awe), and epistemic (revelation of truth) (Gorelick, 2016), this study contends that architecture, by engaging with these higher-order needs, can provide spaces that not only address material requirements but also facilitate experiences of contemplation, curiosity, and personal transformation. Operating under the assumption that transcendence enables individuals to connect with the divine, we investigate architecture's potential as a tool for spiritual unity and conviction. A brief study of built spaces and landscapes supports this theory, providing a synthesis and analysis of "sacral architecture." The analysis further explores how spirituality addresses human needs for transcendence, connection with others, and self-awareness (Chen & Patel, 2021). Spirituality, far from being an individual privilege, is a vital component of life, nourished by relationships grounded in deep bonds (e.g., Buber, 1970) and architecture can construct built environments that help create such a bond. Further, we argue that through connection with time, this bond can be established. Finally, we conclude by discussing the contingent implications of the intersection of phenomenology, spirituality, and architectural design, advocating for a more nuanced understanding of the semantic and semiotics in this discourse, in the path of transcendence.

Panels on Social Spaces

35. Debjani Saha, Research Scholar, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University.

The Interdisciplinary Catastrophe of Akaar (Form) and Niraakaar (Formless)

The ever-creative mind of human body capably initiates its engagement with earthly affairs, performing the duties of mundane madness, to synchronise a perfect harmony. Like a gamut of a song, all these attributions hover over the facts of perishable, illuminating mortality as adjustment.

Ever since our childhood we are eventually tamed by our ancestors, to accommodate the laws of life to ensure a great future. These integrated approaches are designed to imbibe the greater aspects called, learning, which are life centric tactics, and thoroughly engaging. Motivations, engagements and responses equip our responsible behaviour and indicate holistic development. In any given manner, these conventional attributes are common for any normal perception of human life, whereas unconventional advancements trigger only hostility.

Societal overbearing gradually points towards the mutual growth of human life, based on accumulation of information and application of it in proper ways. But when a normal mind fails to co-ordinate these things, in a popular manner and tends to accumulate, synthesize and analyze issues beyond the level of conscious understanding, surprisingly enough, he / she is out casted from social arena as being nerd or mental.

36. Koyel Lahiri, PhD, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata.

The Precarious Worker as Spiritual Being: Towards a Non-Materialist Reframing of the Narrative on how Workers Experience Contemporary Work by way of Reading Their Artistic Expressions and Practices

This presentation proposes to see the contemporary precarious worker as a spiritual being creatively expressing itself through various forms of art. It explores the manner in which cultural paradigms shape (or limit) how workers see themselves and, consequently, express themselves creatively. By examining autobiographical forms of oral narratives and storytelling, poems, and video narratives by way of TikTok videos and self-documentation through photos and videos, this discussion attempts to tease out artistic expressions of inner experiences of precarious workers, and its interplay with their social selves. In particular, with respect to these creative expressions, it focuses on what they reveal and why these artistic expressions are shaped by collective understanding and how they in turn shape collective understanding. For example, with respect to workers' movements, there is a widespread belief that consciousness, as defined and understood by this conference, has no influence on shaping social and political change. Collective beliefs also tend towards separating the spiritual lives of workers from their identities as workers, as if the two domains do not or cannot overlap meaningfully.

How do the nuances of consciousness express themselves, and go unrecognised or under-explored, in the artistic practices of precarious workers? The talk would like to argue that this question matters because 'secular' art, minus the recognition of consciousness at play, limits and retards understanding, the possibility of moving towards individual transcendence and collective upward evolution of society. Without the underlying framework of consciousness to read and analyse from, and by not applying this analysis to the domain of work and precarious workers (which is a universal and central aspect of life and living), we are faced with a bleak picture of the present, the unfolding future and, arguably, left with an incomplete picture when discussing the possibilities of individual and collective transcendence, especially through spiritual practices.

This presentation thus proposes to explore one thread from the conference theme- it looks to join the conversation on inter-disciplinary approaches to studying the consciousness, by bringing in a labour studies perspective. It seeks to illuminate the connections between mind, self and world and its intersections with work, labour and precarious workers' movements. It explores what it means to (re) examine questions of work, labour and workers' movements by centering the inner lives and inner selves of workers. Recognizing that the world within makes the world without, it asks, with

great urgency- how does awareness of consciousness inject possibility into workers' movements and the re-shaping of the world of work so as to make space for more equity, more safety, more time, more security and a more fulfilling experience of work? These are not only the end goals for which workers movements have historically laboured so hard, albeit with small success, but equally, these are factors that are needed in order to even begin some sort of transformative personal spiritual practice.

The presentation draws from long-term ethnographic fieldwork with two types of precarious work, street vending and non-permanent factory work, and secondary literature. It will be structured to first briefly contextualize why precarious workers and labour studies are being drawn into conversation with consciousness studies, followed by using the sources mentioned to explore in greater detail the social and selfhood aspects of work. Within this analysis, the distinction between the social and selfhood aspects is such that selfhood refers to inner worlds, i.e., inwardly focussed, where the principal actant is the worker, with their external social context reasonably muted. The social, on the other hand, refers to a more 'outward' focus where the principal actant is still the worker, but the worker embedded in their social context.

37. Subhrajit Samanta, Research Scholar, Department of English, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University.

Is AI Prejudiced? Decoding A.I.'s Spiritual Wisdom through Goffman's Lens

The "5th Science and Technology Basic Plan" of Japan (2016) outlines society based on the evolution of technology. From the traditional agrarian society, termed "Society 1.0", Japan strove to transform into "Society 5.0", promising to amalgamate technology and society building into a timeline of digitization and personalization. However, this is not without its limitations and challenges. While the rhetoric of technology aiding societal developments or vice versa gains momentum in research fields, it needs to be acknowledged that the concept of AI was introduced as a "summer research project" in 1956 by experts in the scientific field. Sixty-nine years of continuous innovations have consistently driven AI developments, transmuting theories into reality. According to a survey by Salesforce (2023), AI is already being used by 73% of the Indian population. However, India was once hailed as the "spiritual leader" of the world by Sri Aurobindo (1950). The inception of a new era begins with India embracing AI technologies and it becomes necessary to investigate how such adoption influences values, attitudes and beliefs through conversations and interactions with this technology. It acquires relevance that AI can reshape and redefine narratives related to India's spiritual traditions. It is of concern that Indians born in the 21st century, post-2010, the "Generation Alpha" (Theodosius, 2023) will look towards AI for answers on existentialism, rationalism, and spirituality in a world that constantly tests their patience and limits. Within this context, this presentation is relevant in analyzing the communication of "spiritual information" by Generative AI models easily accessible to all, specifically, through OpenAI's ChatGPT, Facebook's (now, Meta) Meta AI, and Google's Gemini. 19th-century Bengal is the selected area for study since it is best known for a dynamic spiritual revolution, catalyzing intellectual activity and transforming Bengal into a "hub of spiritual enlightenment". Selected through convenience sampling, the canonical works serving as the basis of spiritual enquiries include, Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1946), Sananda Ghosh's *Mejda* (1980), Swami Tyagananda and Vrajaprana's *Interpreting Ramakrishna* (2010), Sankar's *The Monk as Man* (2011), and finally, Ayon Maharaj's *Infinite Paths to Infinite Reality* (2018). Although not all books were originally published in the 19th century, they focus on the lives of spiritual leaders: Yogananda, Sri Ramakrishna, and Swami Vivekananda. Ayon's book is added

since it features Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, offering theoretical paradigms used to test AI's reasoning on spiritual enquiries. These books are used to construct five research questions exploring topics that intersect with “exploratory” spiritual knowledge and AI's interpretation of such queries. An evaluation framework is constructed that rates responses based on “Interpretational Accuracy”, “Specificity”, “Accuracy”, “Ratiocination”, and “Creativity”. Erving Goffman's framing analysis (1975) is used as the theoretical framework to identify how “frames” (personal expectations) are created by the user's interaction with AI through qualitative discourse analysis. It is inferred that AI is unique in framing answers and constantly shapes and reshapes spiritual discourse engaging with consciousness, culture, and aesthetics within a culturally ethical framework. It also provides context-based perspectives to reveal the complexities and nuances of Indian spiritual traditions.

Lecture Demonstrations & Workshops

38. Shri Nishaant Singh, Pakhawaj Player and a Fulbrighter to receive the Professional Excellence Award.



Spiritual Consciousness and Cognitive Connection Between Indian Classical and Folk Music: Exploring the Shared Legacy of Mridang/Pakhawaj and Shreemaadal

The cognitive relationship between Indian Classical and Folk music can be analyzed through their shared rhythmic structures, instruments, and performance techniques as they both connect with the divine consciousness. The Mridang/Pakhawaj, integral to North Indian classical music, and the Shreemaadal, a Nepali folk percussion instrument, belong to the same family, displaying similar tonal qualities. However, their techniques and applications diverge. The Shreemaadal requires the performer to simultaneously sing a Maadalay geet (traditional song) while playing, with a male dancer in female attire performing the Maaruni Naach, synchronized with the rhythm. This multifaceted performance merges music, dance, and song, creating a cohesive cultural expression.

In contrast, the Pakhawaj is primarily used in classical contexts, either as a solo instrument or in accompaniment to other classical instruments such as Dhrupad vocal, Veena, Sarod, Sitar, Flute, and Kathak dance. The distinct finger placement techniques and the role each instrument plays highlight the nuanced diversity within the percussion tradition, where both folk and classical music serve to deepen emotional expression and cultural storytelling.

***A Workshop on Rhythm will be conducted by him with the participants.**

39. Sanchita Choudhury, PhD in English Literature from IIT KGP, Indian Classical Vocalist, Director of Hum Nishaad Foundation.



Sound, Music and Wellness

Sound and music profoundly influence human lives and other living beings. Across history, various cultures have recognized their therapeutic and transformative potential. Ancient Greece saw Pythagoras extolling the healing powers of music, while Indian classical ragas have long been believed to invoke specific emotions and alleviate ailments. For example, Raga Darbari Kanada is associated with stress relief, and Raga Hamsadhvani is said to inspire positivity. Beyond humans, animals like whales use melodic songs for communication, and studies suggest plants grow better when exposed to soothing rhythms. Indian farmers historically sang to their cattle, fostering productivity and connection.

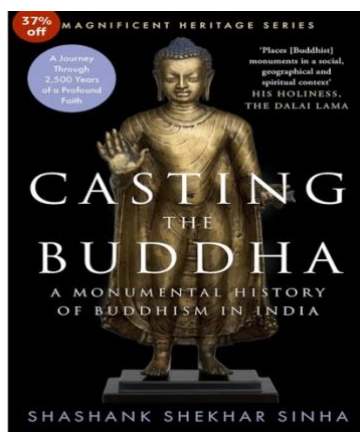
In modern life, sound continues to play a critical role. Nature-inspired soundscapes, such as ocean waves or birdsong, are used for relaxation, while diverse music genres help individuals energize or unwind. Cultural practices in India, such as chanting bhajans, mantras like the Gayatri Mantra, or engaging with Bollywood melodies, highlight how sound fosters mental clarity and emotional connection. The resonance of sound—whether through a spiritual chant, classical raga, or favourite song—enhances well-being by reducing stress and nurturing joy. This universal bond underscores sound's vital role in promoting holistic health and harmony across living beings.

40. Nandita Banerjee, a senior Bharatnatyam dancer, choreographer, founder of Punascha Dance Troupe.



"Lilā Samvid," presented by Nandita Banerjee, explores the spiritual essence of Natyashastra, Rasa theory, and Bharatanatyam in the context of consciousness. Highlighting the transformative power of Rasa and the storytelling depth of Bharatanatyam, this lecture-demonstration reveals how classical Indian arts transcend entertainment to become pathways to self-realization and divine connection. Through this exploration, participants will gain insight into the role of traditional art forms in fostering spiritual awareness and inner harmony.

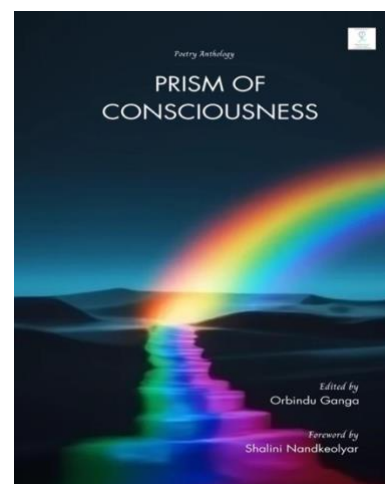
Note:



There will be a Book Discussion on Dr. Shashank Shekhar Sinha's latest book, CASTING THE BUDDHA: A MONUMENTAL HISTORY OF BUDDHISM .

He will be in conversation with Prof. Jayita Sengupta and Dr. Dipshikha Acharya, with Professor Godabarisha Mishra as Moderator.

The Poetry Anthology especially brought out by Orbindu Ganga, for this conference, titled PRISM OF CONSCIOUSNESS will be launched in the inaugural session of the conference.



People Who made Things Possible

Local Organizing Committee (Cooch Behar College)

Pallab Kumar Sarker (Convener)

Tariqul Islam (Jt. Convener)

Susanta Das (Jt. Convener, Poster Designing)

Prajnajyoti Dutta (Treasurer; Arranged Accommodation for the delegates; Poster Designing)

Anindita Dutta (Jt. Treasurer)

Caesurae Organizing Committee

Jayita Sengupta (President)

Prakash Joshi (Vice President)

Tathagata Sagar Pal (Treasurer, Fine tuning of Abstracts)

Sagnik Chakraborty (Member, who took care of delegates' travels and offered technical support for the virtual sessions)

Oly Roy

Arghya Dipta Kar

Sri Vishnu Mohan Foundation, Chennai

Swami Shri Hariprasad

Swastik Banerjee (for Concept)

PATRON: Dr. Pankaj Kumar Debnath, Principal, Cooch Behar College & Jt. Director, Centre for Indian Arts & Cultural Studies (CIACS), Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University.

Paradigms of Consciousness and its Cultural & Aesthetic Expressions

VI International Conference of the Caesurae Collective Society

Jointly organized by the Centre for Indian Arts and Cultural Studies (CIACS), Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, Department of English, Cooch Behar College (affiliated to the university) and Caesurae Collective Society in collaboration with Sri Vishnu Mohan Foundation, Chennai.



**ONLINE (ZOOM) SESSIONS
29th -30th MARCH, 2025**

Our Speakers



Sonam Phuntsho
Khenpola



Shri Ishwor
Shreshtha



Professor
Sthaneswar Timalsina



Professor
Daniel Raveh



Professor
Ramakant Angiras



Shri Orbindu
Ganga



Dr. Georgi
Mishev



Adriana Di Cillo



Dr. Danillo
Costa Lima



Shri Mahesh
Venkataraman

Livestream on Caesurae YouTube Channel
<http://www.youtube.com/@caesuraecollectivesociety3231>

Offline Conference – 9th -11th April, 2025
Venue: Cooch Behar College

Paradigms of Consciousness and its Cultural and Aesthetic Expressions
ONLINE (ZOOM) SESSIONS
29 -30 MARCH 2025

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www.caesurae.org



(Registered under West Bengal Act XXVI of 1961
S/2L/No: 58832 of 2016-2017)

Jointly organized by the Centre for Indian Arts and Cultural Studies (CIACS), Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, Department of English, Cooch Behar College (affiliated to the university) and Caesurae Collective Society in collaboration with Sri Vishnu Mohan Foundation, Chennai.

29th March 2025

Prelude- Session on Buddhist Philosophy from Practitioners

11.45 AM- 11.55 AM, IST- **Welcome Address by Professor Jayita Sengupta, President, Caesurae Collective Society and Director, CIACS.**

11.55 AM – 12.00 PM- **Introduction by Shri Sagnik Chakraborty, Academic and Caesurae Member.**

12.00 PM – 1.00 PM IST - **Sonam Phuntsho Khenpola** from Bhutan, will be delivering a talk on the concepts of *Anniccha*, *Dukkha* and *Anata* in Buddhism

Chair- Professor Godabarisha Mishra, Dean, School of Buddhist Studies, Nalanda University



1.00 PM IST – 1.30 PM IST- Questions and discussions

1.30 PM – 2.00 PM – BREAK

2.00 PM IST – 3.00 PM IST – **Shri Ishwor Shreshtha** from Kathmandu, Nepal will be delivering a talk on the *Five Stages of the Path in Buddhism*.

Introduction by Shri Anup Sharma, Academic and Caesurae Member.

Chair – Dr. Arghya Dipta Kar, Academic specialized in Tantra Studies, Author, Editor of the “Indic Studies” Section of the Caesurae Journal.



3.00 PM IST – 3.30 PM IST- Questions and Discussions

3.30 PM IST – 4.30 PM IST- A Conversation between Sonam Phunstsho Khenpola and Shri Ishwor Shrestha

Chair – Dr. Arghya Dipta Kar

ACADEMIC SESSIONS

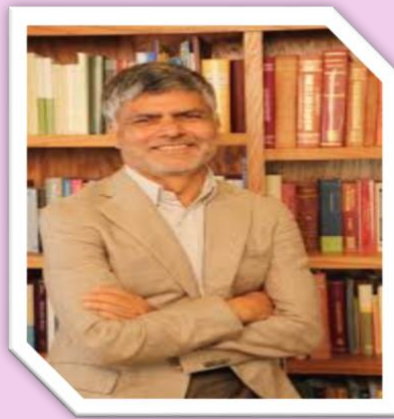
7.45 PM IST- 8.00 PM IST- **Welcome Address by Shri Sagnik Chakraborty from Caesurae Collective Society**

8.00 PM IST – 9.00 PM IST - Keynote by **Professor Sthaneswar Timalisina**, Nirmal K. and Augustina Mattoo Endowed Chair in Classical Indic Humanities, Stony Brook University

Title of his talk: *“Diversifying Indian Philosophy”*

Introduction by Shri Soutik Chakraborty, Academic and Caesurae Member.

Chair- Professor Jayita Sengupta



9.00 PM IST – 9.45 PM IST – **Professor Daniel Raveh**, Professor of Indian and Comparative Philosophy at Tel Aviv University

Introduction by Shri Soutik Chakraborty

Chair - Professor Timalisina

Title of his talk- *“Music as Thinking/Thinking as Music: A Dialogue with Mukund Lath”*.



9.45 PM IST – 10.00 PM IST - Time for Open Forum Discussion with Professor Timalisina and Professor Raveh.

30th MARCH 2025

10.00 AM IST – 11.00 AM IST – **Professor Ramakant Angiras**, Ex-Professor of Kalidas Chair, Department of Sanskrit, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

Title of his talk- “*Aesthetico-Spiritual Experience in the Philosophy of Abhinavagupta*”.

Introduction by Professor Jayita Sengupta

Chair – Professor Prakash Joshi, Allahabad University, Vice President of Caesurae.



11.00 AM IST – 11.30 AM IST- Reading of Professor Angiras’s poem “Samadhi” (Hindi) by Professor Prakash Joshi, which is to be followed by a discussion on his talk.

BREAK

2.00 PM IST – 5.00 PM IST – **Book Release** followed by the **Reading of poems** and discussions by the contributors from home and abroad, for the Special Publication of a Poetry Anthology titled *Prism of Consciousness*, compiled, selected and edited and published by **Shri Orbindu Ganga** for this Conference.

Introduction by Professor Jayita Sengupta



Shri Orbindu Ganga, Editor of MANA, the Creative Section of the Caesurae E-Journal: *Caesurae: Poetics of Cultural Translation*, and the creative mind behind this Special Anthology, *Prism of Consciousness* will Chair the Session.

Moderators- Dr. Kiran Deep, Translator, Academic and Caesurae Member and Ms. Pratiksha Karn, Poet and Editor.

Special Invitee- Shalini Nandkeolyar, Bilingual Poet, Translator and Editor.

7.00 PM IST- 7.30 PM IST- **Dr. Georgi Mishev**, A Bulgarian author and researcher in ancient culture and religion of the Mediterranean world especially in magic practices.

Title of his talk- "*Plants in the folk beliefs of South-Eastern Europe - seeking the spiritual aid of plants to achieve luck, love, health and more*".

Introduction by Shri Sagnik Chakraborty

Chair - Shri Swastik Banerjee, Academic & Member of Sri Vishnu Mohan Foundation.



7.30 PM – 8.00 PM – A Creative Presentation by **Adriana Di Cillo** – a dancer, actor, writer choreographer and producer from Spain

Title of her presentation: "*Dance and the Body as an Audiovisual Medium for Self-Transcendence: Exploring video as colloquial text and the impact of ubiquitous technology on memory, consciousness, and representation*".

Introduction by Shri Sagnik Chakraborty

Chair – Professor Jayita Sengupta



8.00 PM IST- 8.30 PM IST– Discussion on both the presentations

8.30 PM IST – 9.00 PM IST – **Dr. Danilo Costa Lima**, Sao Paolo University

Title of his talk: *“The Logico-Epistemological role of Self-Awareness in Classical Sanskrit Philosophy”*.

Introduction by Ms. Oly Roy, Academic, Editor of the “Spring Rhythm” Section of the Caesurae E-Journal.

Chair – Professor Godabarisha Mishra, Dean, School of Buddhist Studies, Nalanda University.



Discussion- 9.00 PM IST – 9.30 PM IST

9.30 PM IST- 10.00 PM IST- Valedictory Speech by **Shri Mahesh Venkataraman** , Managing Director, Accenture.

Title of his talk: *“Mind and Meaning: Rethinking Consciousness Beyond Empiricism”*.

Introduction by Ms. Oly Roy

Chair- Dr. Bhaskar Sengupta, Structural Engineer and Consultant in Heritage & Environment.



10.00 PM IST - 10.15 PM - Closing Remarks by Professor Prakash Joshi, Vice President, Caesurae Collective Society

10.15 PM – 10.45 PM IST – Rapporteurs Reports

Rapporteur for 29th March - Shri Tathagata Sagar Pal, Academic, Treasurer, Caesurae & Editor of the “Spring Rhythm Section” of the Caesurae E-Journal.

Rapporteur for 30th March - Shri Prajnajyoti Dutta, Academic, Cooch Behar College & Caesurae Member.

Rapporteur for the Poetry Reading Session on 30th March Afternoon - Ms. Neha Chatterjee, Academic, Vivekananda College & Caesurae Member.

10.45 PM IST -11.00 PM IST - A Vote of Thanks by Shri Soutik Chakraborty



About Caesurae Collective Society- Caesurae is a registered non-profit organization devoted to academic and cultural activities. We organize academic seminars, creative writing, music, dance, film, graphic arts, photography, and art workshops and events. Our organization prides itself on members who come from different disciplines. We have academicians who are creatively inclined, and we have professionals from different cultural streams. Caesurae Collective Society intends to bring together creative arts with academic discursiveness on culture and cultural translation. If you have the creative and/or academic zeal in you, and wish to become one of “us”, you just have to write to mail@caesurae.org with your interests and a brief note about yourself. Our multi-media E-Journal (International, double blind peer reviewed journal), “Caesurae: Poetics of Cultural Translation” (ISSN 2454-9495), is free for readers and contributors. However, one is required to become a member to participate in our conferences and workshops