PAPERS CONTRIBUTED

BENGALI PHONETICS

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A. THE SOUNDS OF BENGALI

§ 1. Bengali is spoken by over 48 millions of people, and naturally it has many dialects. These dialects range themselves into four main groups—Western, North Central, Northern, and Eastern (with a South-Eastern sub-group). The morphological differences between the four groups of dialects are slight, except in the case of the South-Eastern sub-group; but considerable divergences exist in sounds and phonology. These divergences, however, are not so great as to create mutual unintelligibility among speakers of Bengali in different parts of the country, except, perhaps, in the extreme east and south-east. The language which is commonly used in literature is a "high" dialect, which is composite in its inflections, although it is based mainly on West Bengali of several centuries ago. The grammar of this "high" Bengali—the *sādhu bhāṣā*, as it is called—is archaic, and explains most of the forms of the modern dialects as presenting the prototypes of these latter; but its pronunciation and intonation vary with the different dialectal areas.

§ 2. A study of Bengali phonetics, in order to be complete, must take into consideration the sounds of all the dialects. Such a task is beyond the scope of a short sketch like the following. Moreover, I cannot claim to possess enough knowledge of all the forms of spoken Bengali. Besides, in the study of the phonetics of a language, some dialect or other must be taken up as the basis or norm, even when the aim is to investigate historical or comparative phonology. I shall, therefore, take up one dialect

only—my own, which is that habitually spoken by the educated classes of Calcutta and of West Bengal generally. Like Southern English in Britain, this dialect is at present the dominant one, both in life and literature. It is understood all over the country ; it has already become the speech of the educated people everywhere, modified, no doubt, by local pronunciation and intonation in varying degrees ; the literary language has been profoundly influenced by it, so much so that present day literary Bengali is often nothing but the Calcutta colloquial, with only a few archaic inflections for the verb ; it is freely used in literature, especially in poetry, drama, and fiction, and there is a strong body of writers who advocate the supersession of the old literary language by this living and vigorous form of spoken Bengali. Grammatically it is more advanced than most other dialects. Besides, it is the pronunciation of this dialect alone which is the recognized standard for the literary language. For these reasons, the standard colloquial of Calcutta is particularly suitable as a basis for the study of Bengali phonetics as well as morphology.

§ 3. In phonetic studies, whether general or of a special language, the letters of the alphabet of the *International Phonetic Association* alone should be used as symbols for speech-sounds. The International Phonetic Script is the only phonetic system of writing that is based on the most up-to-date scientific treatment of the subject ; it has become within recent years the one recognized system to be employed in phonetic work, and has already become truly international by being used for languages of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Like the symbols for the elements in chemistry, the symbols for speech-sounds, the elements in spoken language, should be represented by the same letters, no matter what the language is ; and the I.P.A. script alone of all existing phonetic scripts supplies the best possible symbols, under the present circumstances. As such, I would advocate the employment of these symbols (p, t, ʃ, ɔ, ɯ, etc.), even in works on phonetics written in languages such as Bengali, Tamil, Persian, or Japanese, which do not use the roman script, upon the basis of which the I.P.A. alphabet is built ; just as every student of chemistry would insist on the employment of the symbols H, S, Na, K, etc., in a Bengali, Tamil, Persian, or Japanese book on that science.

§ 4. The principles as well as methods and terminology of the modern science of phonetics need not be recapitulated. These methods have been applied, so far, to three Indian languages—Panjabi (in Dr. T. Grahame Bailey's *Panjabi Phonetic Reader*, University of London Press, 1914), Sinhalese (in Messrs. H. S. Perera & Daniel Jones' *Colloquial Sinhalese Reader*, Manchester University Press, 1919), and Bengali. The I.P.A. alphabet has also been applied to some extent in recording the pronunciation of Tamil and Telugu, and of some of the languages of Burma. The late Dr. J. D. Anderson's paper on Bengali phonetics was published in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* for 1917. I have expressed elsewhere (in the Calcutta *Modern Review* for January, 1918) some of my

views on Bengali phonetics and phonology. The present sketch is an attempt to record as accurately as possible the speech-sounds of the Bengali language as spoken by the educated classes, with a view to help foreigners to acquire a correct pronunciation of these speech-sounds by visualizing them, as well as to provide additional material in the study of general phonetics.

§ 5. The Bengali language has thirty-five essential " phonemes ",[1] although the number of actual " speech-sounds " is greater. These are represented in the International Phonetic Script by the letters p, b, t, d, ṭ, ḍ, k, g, c͡ʃ, ɟ͡ʒ (or c, ɟ with a conventionalized value), m, n, ŋ, l, r, ṛ, s, ʃ, h, ŏ, ĕ, i, ī, e, ẽ, æ, æ̃, ɑ, ɑ̃, ɔ, ɔ̃, o, õ, u, ũ. To these may be added F, ꬲ, f, v, z, ʌ : but these are non-essential sounds, although quite common ; the first four occur as common substitutes for ph, bh, but they are not used by all speakers ; z occurs mostly in foreign words, and occasionally as a variant of ɟ͡ʒ ; and ʌ is sometimes found in borrowed words ; but the use of ɟ͡ʒ for z, and of æ, ɑ, or ɔ for ʌ is quite normal.

§ 6. Several of these phonemes include more than one sound, e.g. the n phoneme, the ʃ phoneme, the l phoneme, the h phoneme.

§ 7. It would appear that the analysis of sounds as presented by the arrangement of the Indian alphabetic system (which referred to Indo-Aryan phonetics of several centuries B.C.) does not fully apply to Bengali, since Bengali sounds have developed a great deal, and the old Indian sound analysis, in spite of its wonderful scientific accuracy, is itself capable of restatement in the light of modern phonetics.

[1] " A *phone* or *speech-sound* is a sound of definite acoustic quality produced by the organs of speech. A given speech-sound is incapable of variation."

" A *phoneme* is a group of sounds which are related in character, and are such that no one of them ever occurs in the same position as any other in connected speech in a particular language."

Thus, l (front or " clear ") and ɫ (back or " dark ") are different speech-sounds, and to represent properly the South English words *let* and *well* in phonetic script we should write lɛt, wɛɫ. So *little*=liṭɫ. But, since in English l is not heard in positions where ɫ occurs, they are regarded as different forms of one l-*phoneme*. So, too, in Bengali, the l sounds in the words আলতা *lac-dye* and উল্টা *upside down* are different—in the first instance the sound is dental, because it precedes a dental ত—*alta*, in the second, it is rather retroflex, occurring between the back vowel u and the retroflex ট—u|ta. ļ is not a sound which occurs in any other position in Bengali, and it and the more common "clear" l are members of one phoneme in Bengali. For practical purposes it is not necessary to represent in phonetic transcription *all* individual speech-sounds in a language, except where a very minute or comparative study is required, or where the different values of the same phoneme are based on complicated phonological laws which cannot be easily tackled by a foreigner. Otherwise quite a large number of symbols would be necessary for one single language. The most common and typical sound only of a phonemic group is generally adopted for visual symbolization by means of a letter : thus one l would do for both l and ɫ in English, and l and ļ in Bengali. Ignoring l and ļ pronunciation will not affect the meaning of the word, although a foreign speaker should try to pronounce them at the proper place.

§ 8. The sounds of standard colloquial Bengali can be arranged in tabular form as follows :—

CONSONANTS

	Bilabial	Dento-labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Retroflex	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d				ʈ ɖ	k g	
Affricate					ĉ ĵ				
Nasal	m			n				ŋ	
Lateral				l					
Flapped				r			ɽ		
Fricative	(ꜰ ও)	(f ও)		s (z)	ʃ				ĥ (h)
Semivowel	ŏ					ĕ			•

VOWELS

	Bilabial	Front	Central	Back
Close . .	[u]	i ĩ		u ũ
Half close .	[o]	e ẽ		o õ (ŏ)
Half open .	[ɔ]	æ æ̃	(ʌ)	ɔ ɔ̃
Open . .			a ã	

THE CONSONANTS

§ 9.   The voiceless plosives p t ʈ k are, unlike the ordinary English voiceless plosives, unaspirated—there is not the accompaniment of slightest breath in their pronunciation.

§ 10.   Initial and final b d ɖ g are only slightly voiced, but full voicing occurs in intervocalic position.

§ 11.   There is complete explosion of the first element of a plosive group like pt pʈ kt ʈk, etc.   But where the same plosive occurs doubly, the first one is unexploded.   In English, in a consonant nexus like kt pt tk gd, etc., the first element is not fully exploded, e.g. compare Bengali bhokti ভক্তি *faith*, lipto লিপ্ত *smeared*, ĉitkar চীৎকার *shout*, bagdi বাগ্দী *a caste*, with English *fact* fæk₁t, *apt* æp₁t, *begged* bɛg₁d (the ₁ indicating the absence of plosion in the k p g).

§ 12.   p, b : pɑ: পা *foot*, ɔpɔr অপর *other*, pɑ:p পাপ *sin* ; baba বাবা *father*, ʃi:b শিব *Śiva*.

§ 13.   t d are true dentals, made by striking the point of the tongue against the back or the edge of the upper teeth.   The tongue is fully spread out, as in pronouncing the English *th* = θ, ŏ.   Examples—tɑ:p তাপ *heat*, pɑ:t পাত *leaf*, tɔto তত *so much* ; dada দাদা *elder brother*, ĉɑ:d চাঁদ *moon*.

§ 14. ṭ ḍ are slightly higher than the S. English alveolar t d, the point of articulation being just behind the teeth-ridge. They are therefore not the true retroflex sounds which are heard in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and perhaps Panjabi; they might be called "supra-alveolar" or "forward or pre-retroflex". The tip of the tongue, however, is just slightly curled up. ṭaka টাকা *rupee*, boṭe বটে *is indeed*, ʃa:ṭ ষাট *sixty*; ḍa:b ডাব *green coconut*, aḍḍa আড্ডা *rendezvous, club*.

ḍ final or intervocal, unless doubled in the latter case, becomes r in Bengali.

The English alveolar sounds are ordinarily regarded by all Bengali speakers as equivalent to their ṭ ḍ, e.g. ṭebil টেবিল = *table* tʰeibl, ḍepuṭi ডেপুটী = *deputy*. The difference between the dental and retroflex sounds is of very great signific importance, e.g. pɑ:ṭ পাট *jute, fold*, and pɑ:t পাত *leaf*; kɑ:t কাত *awry*, and কাট kɑ:ṭ *cut*; dɑnɑ দানা *grain, oats*, and ḍɑnɑ ডানা *wing*.

§ 15. k g. Articulation as in English. Before front vowels articulation more forward, but not sufficiently to produce c, ɟ. ki: কি *what?*, bɔ:k বক *heron*; gɑ:cʰ গাছ *tree*, rɑ:g রাগ *passion*.

§ 16. The affricates c͡ʃ ɟ͡ʒ are pronounced by the normally spread-out blade of the tongue well against the teeth-ridge where it commences from the hard palate. They are sounds in which the palatal plosive elements (c ɟ), produced at a rather forward position, are blended with ʃ ʒ glides. The English sounds of *ch j* = t͡ʃ d͡ʒ, are pronounced in the first instance by the tip of the tongue. c͡ʃ ɟ͡ʒ are acoustically very similar to t͡ʃ d͡ʒ and other similar alveolar affricates, but there is some difference in their production. There is no accompanying lip rounding which is present in the English sounds, except when the sound is emphasized. The Spanish *ch* is said to be a palato-alveolar sound like the Bengali c͡ʃ.

A Bengali speaker is accustomed to regard চ জ c͡ʃ ɟ͡ʒ as simple plosive sounds, since the palatal plosives c and ɟ do not occur in the language by themselves, and the old Indian system of phonetics and the graphic system based on it recognize only palatal plosives. In fact, in Old Indo-Aryan (Vedic and Sanskrit) the sounds were plosives—c ɟ, or even kj gj; in Middle and New Indo-Aryan they became corresponding affricates. The theory of affricates is a recent one; but that the sounds of the Bengali letters চ ছ are not simple "stops" can be shown by continuing the ʃ (or ʒ) glide, e.g. mɑ:c͡ʃʃʃʃ ... মাছ *fish*, ɑ:ɟ͡ʒʒʒ ... আজ *to-day*. Old Indo-Aryan possessed the palatal plosives c ɟ when the sounds of Vedic (Sanskrit) were first studied by the ancient Indian grammarians; but these sounds later became affricates, and it is the affricate values that have mainly come down to the New Indo-Aryan languages. c͡ʃɑ: চা *tea*, ɑ̃c͡ʃol আঁচল *skirt, hem*, kɑ̃:c͡ʃ কাঁচ, কাচ *glass*; ɟ͡ʒɑ: যা *go*, rɑɟ͡ʒɑ রাজা *king*, kɑ:ɟ͡ʒ কাজ, কায *work*.

c and ɟ do not occur as phonemes in Bengali ; as a matter of con-
venience, when only the phonetics of Bengali, without any reference to
that of Sanskrit or Vedic (i.e. Old Indo-Aryan), is studied, c ɟ might be
employed to represent the affricate sounds of ব্জ ড়, as it has been
done by Dr. Grahame Bailey in his *Panjabi Phonetic Reader*.[1] In this
way the use of these cumbrous ligatures, which may not be found in
every press, can be avoided.

§ 17. m. Fully voiced nasal. mɑ: মা *mother*, mɑmɑ মামা
maternal uncle, nɑ:m নাম *name*. Intervocal m tends to pass into a
nasalized ৹, and even to a mere nasalization of the contiguous vowels
in quick speech ; cf. § 31. An unvoiced m̥ occurs in the exclamatory
word হুঁঃ = ɦṹh, pronounced m̥m, as in English.

§ 18. n. Ordinarily it is an alveolar sound. Before t d it is
somewhat forward ; before ṭ ḍ it is cerebralized, but acoustically that is
not noticeable. nɑ: না *no*, *not*, kɑnnɑ কান্না *weeping*, kɑ:n কান *ear*,
ɔnto অন্ত *end*, kɔntho কণ্ঠ *neck*.

§ 19. ŋ. As in English *sing*. Can occur intervocally, but does
not occur initially, e.g. rɔ:ŋ রং, রঙ *colour*, genitive rɔŋer রঙের, রঙের.

§ 20. l. Ordinary clear l, as in English *long*. The dark variety, as
in English *cycle*, is not heard in Bengali. Before retroflex sounds ṭ ḍ, l
has a subsidiary retroflex value, e.g. phulṭi ফুলটি *the flower*, but this
need not be written by a special symbol, as it is found in no other
position. The unvoiced ḷ is unknown. lekhɑ লেখা *writing*, kɔlɑ কলা
plantain, lɑ:l লাল *red*. In the speech of women and children and of the
uneducated classes there is a tendency (noticed from early times, and
now modified by education) to pronounce an n for an l, in initial
positions. The reverse (change of n to l) is also to be noticed in the
speech of the lower classes.

§ 21. r. It has two, or rather three, values. Initially it is an
alveolar rolled r (with two or three taps of the tongue against the teeth-
ridge) ; medially and finally it is just an alveolar flap. Before ṭ it has
a slightly higher articulation. The genuine fricative ɹ is unknown, but
a slightly fricative yet rolled r, not a flap, is sometimes the only one
with some speakers. There is no unvoicing of r in Bengali. ri:n ঋণ
debt, kɔrɑ করা *to do*, mɑ:r মার *strike*.

§ 22. ṛ is a sound which cannot be called strictly a retroflex one.
The tip of the tongue is curled up, and is brought near the point of
articulation for ṭ ḍ, but is quickly made to move forward and strike
against the teeth-ridge with the underneath side, and then lie flat ; or,
in other words, it is raised to the retroflex position and then made to
fall flat, hitting the teeth-ridge with the underneath side on the way.

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[1] Dr. Bailey, however, calls the Panjabi sounds plosives. They appeared to me
acoustically to be identical with my Bengali sounds.

r and ŗ are distinct sounds in Bengali, and the distinction is retained in educated speech everywhere ; e.g. pɑːr পার *a going across* and pɑːŗ পাড় *border, bank* ; kɑːr কার *whose ?* and kɑːŗ কাড় *snatch away !* But in certain class dialects in Calcutta and elsewhere, r and ŗ are confused ; with the spread of education this is disappearing. In East Bengal, ŗ, except in a few localities, always becomes r.

ŗ never occurs initially in Bengali, or doubly. ĥɑːŗ হাড় *bone,* gaŗi গাড়ি *carriage,* pɑĥɑŗ পাহাড় *hill.*

§ 23. s. This is a rare phoneme in Bengali ; it occurs in native words only before t d n l and r : ɔsto অস্ত *setting,* sthɑːn স্থান *place,* mesdɑ, also mezdɑ (মেজদা) *second elder brother,* snɑːn স্নান *bath,* sliːl শ্লীল *decorous, genteel,* sriː শ্রী *prosperity, beauty.* s may occur also before p initially : spɔrdĥɑ স্পর্ধা *presumption,* sphurti স্ফূর্তি *hilarity.* But ʃt ʃd (beside zd, and, with some, ʒd, but this is rare) ʃn ʃl and ʃr also occur ; also ʃp. s may be regarded as a subsidiary member of the ʃ phoneme, and as such may be omitted from the list of essential phonemes. But s and ʃ serve to distinguish some words from each other, at least in the speech of some : although the feeling of the native speaker does not distinguish between s and ʃ ordinarily, in the standard colloquial form of Bengali. Thus : aʃto আসত *he used to come* and asto আস্ত *entire,* aʃte aʃte আসতে আসতে *while coming* and aste aste আস্তে আস্তে *slowly* ; the verbal forms, however, may be pronounced with st, and the adjectival and adverbial words with ʃt. But since ʃ and s alone would distinguish words like above, the adoption of it as a distinct phoneme might be justified. In East Bengal s, corresponding to c͡jh ছ of West Bengali, forms a distinct phoneme.

s: occurs as an interjection as a variant of ʃ: in educated speech.

st of English becomes sţ in the speech of those who know some English, and ʃţ in that of ordinary people : maʃtar মাষ্টার *master* (sometimes maʃţɔr মাষ্টর), 'iʃtiʃɔn, 'eʃteʃɔn, 'steʃʌn (ষ্টেশন *station.*

§ 24. ʃ is without lip rounding ; it is more forward than the English ʃ : ʃɔbiʃeʃ সবিশেষ *in detail*; ʃundɔr সুন্দর *handsome*; bɔrʃa বর্ষা *rains.*

Before ţ, ʃ may be said to have a retroflex value, ʂ, but it is only a subsidiary form of the phoneme, which has no noticeably different acoustic quality. ʃ is the characteristic sound of Bengali when contrasted with other Indo-Aryan languages. Certain classes (Musalman working classes mainly) in Calcutta, through Upper Indian influence, use s for ʃ ; this is avoided by the true Bengali speaker, and is as much a sign of vulgar speech as the dropping of h in words like *hall, hat, head* in English.

§ 25. ĥ (= ɦ). It is the voiced variety of the ordinary English h, which occurs in English in an intervocalic position, as in the words *behind, perhaps.* ĥ occurs in all positions, except finally after a vowel,

in Bengali, e.g. ɦɑ:t হাত *hand*, aɦɑ আহা *ah*, bɦɑ:r ভার *burden*, lɑ:bɦ
লাভ *gain*. An unvoiced variety, a subsidiary form of this phoneme, h,
also occurs, after the voiceless stops to form the unvoiced aspirates ph
th ṭh kh and c͡ʃh. In some interjections, in a final position, unvoiced
h is also found, but the quality of the preceding vowel changes it to a
fricative of the corresponding class, e.g. ɑ:h আঃ, also ɑ:x ; ih ইঃ, also
iç, occurring also as iʃ:, ʃ: ইশ্ ; eh > eç: এঃ ; uh, oh উঃ, ওঃ, also uꜰ
oꜰ, uf, of.

In English loan-words h becomes ɦ : 'ɦɑiko(r)ṭ হাইকোট *High
Court*, etc.

In very quick speech intervocalic ɦ is unvoiced, or even dropped :
ɦatɑɦati হাতাহাতি *a hand-to-hand fight*, also ɦatɑhati, ɦataɑti.

Medial ɦ, prevocal, and after m n l, is very unstable and is commonly
dropped, except in careful speech, the preceding consonant being doubled
by way of compensation : e.g. bramɦon, brammon ব্রাহ্মণ *a brahman*,
c͡ʃinɦo, c͡ʃinno চিহ্ন *sign*, alɦad allad আহ্লাদ *joy*.

This phoneme may be represented by h, with the necessary con-
vention that it is a voiced sound, occurring unvoiced in interjections and
in unvoiced aspirates.

§ 26. The aspirates ph th ṭh kh c͡ʃh, bɦ dɦ ḍɦ gɦ ɟh are
characteristic Indian sounds, and, as they have separate letters, to the
average Indian they are simple sounds. The aspirated rɦ has hardly
a place in modern Bengali phonetics, it being pronounced r, except by
some careful speakers in Sanskrit words like murɦɔ মূঢ় *fool*, garɦɔ গাঢ়
deep. This aspiration has great semantic value, e.g. pɑ:ṭ পাট *fold, jute*
and phɑ:ṭ ফাট *crack*; kɑ:t কাত *awry* and khɑ:t খাত *pit, trench*; tɑ:l
তাল *palm-fruit, time beat*, and thɑ:l থাল *plate* ; bɑ:r বার *day of the
week, outside* and bɦɑ:r ভার *burden*; ḍɑ:l ডাল *branch* and ḍɦɑ:l ঢাল
shield; c͡ʃɑ:l চাল *rice*, c͡ʃhɑ:l ছাল *skin*; ɟɑmɑ জামা *coat*, ɟɦamɑ ঝামা
charred brick, etc.

§ 26a. There is, however, a strong tendency to deaspiration of
aspirated consonants, especially in a medial or final position, in Bengali,
and attempts to emphasize the aspiration in a *final* position would be
looked upon as an affectation ; e.g. ɦɑ:t হাত *hand*, cf. Hindostani ɦɑ:th ;
bɑ̃:dɦ বাঁধ *dyke*, also bɑ̃:d ; mɑ:ɟ(h) মাঝ *middle* ; lɑ:b(ɦ), also lɑ:ʊ,
lɑ:v লাভ *gain*; dæ:k(h) দেখ *see*; bɑ:g(ɦ) বাঘ *tiger*; koc͡ʃ(h)e ক'চ্ছে
is doing.

An aspirate when it occurs before another, or before the corre-
sponding stop, loses its ɦ or h, as the case may be: e.g. rɔttɔla for
rɔth-tɔla রথতলা *place where the car-festival is held*; so kaṭ(h)ṭhokrɑ
কাঠঠোকরা *woodpecker*.

§ 27. ড. The sound of w (= consonantal ŭ) does not occur in Bengali,
and groups like wu we wi wɔ can only be pronounced with difficulty

by Bengali speakers : attempt to pronounce wu will bring in the glottal stop, 'ʔu. we, wi, wɔ will give ŏe, ui, ɔː or uɔ. The language has a consonantal ŏ which occurs only intervocally, mainly before ɑ, in native words, e.g. hɔŏɑ হওয়া *to be*, khɑŏɑ খাওয়া *to eat*, relŏe রেলওয়ে *railway*. This ŏ may be called the second element in a number of diphthongs (see § 48).

ŏ initially occurs in a few foreign words: ŏakɔph, ŏakɔf, ŏakɔf ওয়াকফ *Moslem religious trust property*, "*waqf*." -ŏ- was originally a glide; it can be dropped: hɔɑ হআ *to be*, khɑɑ খাআ *to eat*, etc. (see § 49).

§ 28. ĕ. This is the Bengali equivalent of j (= consonantal ĭ of English and other languages). The real fricative or semivowel j is unknown to Bengali, i being substituted for it. ji would become 'ʔi, je, ja, jo, ju would become 'ie, 'iɑ, 'io, 'iu. e.g. Persian jɑːr *friend* > Beng. 'iar ইয়ার *boon companion*; 'iorop, 'iurop ইয়োরোপ, য়ুরোপ *Europe*. Medially ĕ is found between two ɑ's, e.g. mɑĕɑ মায়া *illusion*, *love* (not mɑjɑ or mɑïɑ), and between ɔ and ɑ: dɔĕɑ দয়া *pity*. Finally, it occurs after ɔ ɑ e æ o, forming the second part of diphthongs (see § 49).

Except in words borrowed newly from the Sanskrit, ĕ in native words is more of a glide origin than anything else.

In modern Bengali ĕ very frequently occurs between two vowels to avoid a hiatus in a breath-group : ʃeĕelo সে এলো *he came*, pɑr kɔroĕamɑre পার কর আমারে *make me cross over*, etc. Cf. the intrusion of r in English ði ɑidiɔrɔvit *the idea of it*, indiɔrɔfis *India Office*, etc.

§ 29. z. As in English, with medium voice. Not a native sound in Bengali, i.e. it cannot be found as an original or essential sound in a single native word. Yet it has developed in a few words from ɟ͡ʒ or ɟ͡ʒh, e.g. ʃezda সেজদা *third elder brother*, from ʃeɟ͡ʒ(ho)dadɑ ; buzte (also buɟ͡ʒte buste) বুঝতে *to understand*, from buɟ͡ʒh(i)te. In a number of foreign names and words z occurs, but one can employ ɟ͡ʒ, or in certain cases s, in pronouncing them ; but it would be regarded old-fashioned or uneducated to do so, especially in English and other European words not naturalized; e.g. nizɑm, niɟ͡ʒɑm নিজাম *the Nizam*, brezil, breɟ͡ʒil ব্রেজিল *Brazil*; ɟ͡ʒebhiɑr, zebhiɑr, zeʋiɑr, zeviɑr জেভিয়ার *Xavier*, etc.

z strictly should be regarded as a subsidiary value of the ɟ͡ʒ phoneme ; but because it is a sound which is quite different in acoustic quality from the latter, and is quite common in educated speech, it is better to give it a place in the list of essential sounds in Bengali, although not a phoneme.

§ 30. f F, v ʋ. The aspirate ph is pronounced very commonly as a dento-labial f, or as a bilabial F, but all speakers recognize ph to be

the "correct" sound, and careful speakers say ph. f F ph, all these three are in fact used by the same person; except that f seldom occurs initially, but in the speech of the younger generation of people in Calcutta, it (f) is fast becoming common. F and ph, especially the latter, are the sounds heard in the villages and among those who know no other language, e.g. phɔːl, Fɔːl or fɔːl ফল *fruit*, prophullo, proFullo, profullo প্রফুল্ল *cheerful* (also *a name*). Final and intervocal ph tends to be deaspirated, hence we have hãːp, hãːph হাঁফ *deep breath*, but very rarely hãːF or hãːf; but all the four in lafalafi, laFalaFi, laphalaphi, or lapalapi লাফালাফি, *leaping and jumping* afiʃ, aFiʃ, aphiʃ, apiʃ আফিস, আপিস = Eng. *office*.

v, ৹ are similarly used for bĥ.   Effort to pronounce the full aspirate sometimes gives vh or ৹h.   Initially, bĥ is more common than v or ৹.   bĥai ভাই *brother*, bĥalo ভাল *good*. Medially, ʃobĥa, ʃo৹a, ʃova সভা *meeting, society*; obĥibĥabok, o৹i৹abok, ovivabok অভিভাবক *guardian*.   Final bĥ is either deaspirated to b, or changed to ৹ or v, but rarely pronounced as a full-voiced aspirate: laːb, laːv, laː৹ লাভ *gain*, ʃulɔb, ʃulɔv, ʃulɔ৹ সুলভ *cheap*.

ph and bĥ should be used in phonetic transcriptions ordinarily, as f F and v ৹ pronunciations have not ousted the older aspirates, and as the aspirates are recognized to be the proper sounds, the best speakers avoiding the fricatives.   For a foreigner to pronounce ph and bĥ initially and medially (see above, § 26*a*) would be perfectly proper, and no native speaker would notice anything un-Bengali, more so when in this matter the Bengali habit is capricious, and has not decided entirely for one of the three groups—ph bĥ, F ৹, or f v.

§ 31.   In unstressed syllables intervocal b d g m have a tendency to become a sort of ৹ ঽ g ৹, with very little audible friction, when words are pronounced carelessly; e.g. baba বাবা *father* = ba৹a, or even baঽa; cf. in the Calcutta slang ki৹a৹a, even kiঽa, for kibaba = *I say, old chap*; o৹i৹a৹ok = obĥibĥabok অভিভাবক *guardian*; dada দাদা *elder brother* = daঽa; kagoʤ কাগজ *paper*; mama মামা *uncle* = mã৹a. k intervocal in some words similarly becomes a voiced g; and occasionally the spirants are elided: e.g. dada ʈhakur দাদা ঠাকুর *revered elder brother* (an address of respect to Brahmans among lower classes) becomes daঽaʈhagur, with no friction in ঽ and g, and even daaʈhaur. Compare dialectal (Eastern) Bengali hɔɔl, hɔːl = hɔgɔl হগল *all* for ʃɔkɔl সকল. The dialect of Chittagong favours the spirantization and elision most, but in the standard language this spirantization is not universal.

§ 32.   There is *regressive assimilation* when stops and aspirates of the same class occur side by side: e.g. æːk guːn > æggun এক গুণ *one fold*; meːgh koreʧhe > mekkoreʧhe মেঘ ক'রেছে *it's cloudy*; pãːʧ

ɟɔ:n > pãɟɟɔn পাঁচ জন *five people* ; so kaccalano for ka:ɟɟ- কাজ চালান *carrying on work*, ʃɔppaõa for ʃɔ:b- সব পাওয়া *get-all*, babbæʈa for ba:p- বাপবেটা *father and son*, ĥaddækha for ĥa:t- হাত দেখা *seeing one's palm*, etc. Assimilation by voicing or unvoicing when the con-sonants belong to different classes is rare, since the first stop in the group is fully exploded : e.g. adĥphoʈa আধফোটা *half-open bud* ; cɟãdpal চাঁদপাল *a name* ; lokɟɟon লোকজন *people, attendants* ; ĥatbaɟɟar হাটবাজার *market* ; but it is found in a case like ubgar for upɔkar > up-gar উপকার *benefit*.

Progressive assimilation is rare, but it is sometimes found, e.g. ɟɔbdɔ জব্দ *punishment* from Pers. zʌbt (= ضبط).

z, however, as a foreign sound, becomes unvoiced before t and ʈ in the speech of many : buzʈe, buʐʈe, busʈe, also buzde বুঝতে *to understand* (from buɟɟhite) ; kazʈa, kaʐʈa, kasʈa কাজটা *that work* (from ka:ɟɟ ʈa).

§ 33. Doubling of consonants, or, rather, their length, is significant ; e.g. dibi দিবি *thou wilt give* and dib[bi, dibbi দিব্ব *oath* (also *handsome*) (= Skt. divjʌ *divine*) ; pata পাতা *leaf*, patta পাত্তা *trace* (a recent borrowing from Hindostani) ; aʈa আটা *flour*, aʈʈa আট্টা *eight ones, eight pieces*, cɟɔkor চকোর *a bird*, cɟɔkkor চক্কর *whirl, sea-sickness* ; mala মালা *wreath*, malla মাল্লা *crew of a boat or ship* ; kana কানা, কাণা *one-eyed, blind*, also *edge of a pot*, kanna কান্না *crying* ; kãcɟa কাঁচা *raw*, kãccɟa কাঁচ্চা *a weight*, etc.

The groups, a plosive followed by the same sound aspirated, like tth, kkh, ddĥ, etc., are very common.

The mark for indicating length is (:), and instead of doubling the consonants, as is the ordinary practice, it would be more scientific to mark them long : e.g. dib:i, pat:a, aʈ:a, cɔk:or, kan:a, mal:a, kãc:ʃa. In the present paper, however, the old practice has been followed.

Before l r, a consonant is doubled ; this doubling is not phonemic, but it may be written in transcriptions, e.g. ɔmmlo (ɔm:lo) অম্ল *sour* ; bĥɔddro ভদ্র *gentle* ; puttro পুত্র *son* ; nɔmmro (nɔm:ro) নম্র *humble*, etc.

§ 34. Foreign sounds. This is how they are treated in Bengali : z = z or ɟɟ (or s, e.g. when in English words and names the original spelling has *s*) ; alveolar t d = retroflex ʈ ɖ ; fricative ɹ = ordinary trilled and flapped r ; tʃ dʒ = cɟ ɟɟ: ; ʒ = z or ɟɟ; θ ð = th d ; x = kh ; g = g. f in foreign words is written by the letter ফ ph, and pronounced ph F or f ; v is ordinarily written ভ bĥ, and pronounced indifferently bĥ, ৹, or v.

VOWELS

§ 35. The formation of the Bengali vowels can be shown with greater precision by comparing them with the *Cardinal Vowels* in the

cardinal vowel figure, as below. The theory of the cardinal vowels is a very recent one in phonetics, and one familiar with the cardinal vowels will have no difficulty in making out the approximate values of the Bengali vowels in the vowel figure.

§ 35a. The cardinal vowels are sounds which have certain fixed and definite tongue positions as well as known acoustic qualities. Vowel sounds produced by certain tongue positions, high, low, or middle, front, back, or central, are taken as the standard, and the vowels of different languages are studied with reference to that standard. For a study of the question of cardinal vowels, see G. Noël-Armfield, *General Phonetics*, 2nd ed., 1919, Heffer, Cambridge; D. Jones, *Pronouncing English Dictionary*, 1917, Dent, London ; and H. S. Perera & D. Jones, *Colloquial Sinhalese Reader*. The cardinal vowel figure has been used with the kind permission of Mr. Daniel Jones, who has systematically worked and established the idea.
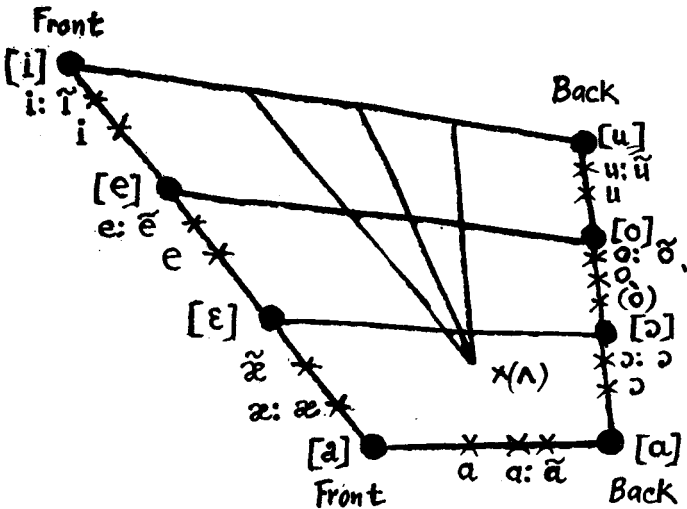
Cardinal vowels [in square brackets], ●.
Bengali vowels (approximate positions), ×.
Bengali i tends to be slightly retracted from the cardinal position,
     and Bengali u to be slightly advanced, like Southern English
     ɪ and ʊ.

The tongue positions for the Bengali vowels in the above diagram are only approximate. Exact positions can only be determined by means of X-rays photographs of the mouth in articulating the sounds. The above are the seven (including ʌ, eight) vowels heard in educated speech.

§ 36. iː, i. Bengali iː (the long sound) is slightly lower than the cardinal sound. It is a pure vowel, not diphthongized as it frequently is in English.

The short i of Bengali is lower than the long one, about halfway or slightly below halfway between cardinal i and cardinal e. Short i in initial syllables very commonly tends to become e in the dialect of the city of Calcutta, e.g. b̂hetor, c̆jhelo, petol, etc., for b̂hitɔr ভিতর *within*, c̆jhilo ছিল *was, were*, pitol, pitɔl পিতল *brass*, etc.

Some people pronounce a long i: as only a lengthened form of the short vowel, without any difference in quality, i.e. without raising the tongue for the long sound.

Long i : ri:n ঋণ *debt*, ti:n তিন *three*, ri:t রীত *custom*; in reading aloud the literary language, words like moli:n মলিন *pale, dirty*, sthobi:r স্থবির *old*, etc.

Short i : diʃi দিশি *native, country-made* or *-born*; biliti বিলিতি *foreign*; didi দিদি *elder sister*; hiɟibiɟi হিজিবিজি *scrawls*, etc.

The emphatic particle i in words like tinii তিনই *he indeed*, ɟaboi যাবোই *I shall go indeed* has a tongue position nearly as high as the long i:.

§ 37. Bengali e: is slightly higher than Bengali e, and Bengali e (short) is about halfway between cardinal e and ɛ. In the standard colloquial, e is carefully distinguished from æ, but in East Bengal ɛ is substituted for both ɛ and æ. c̆jole চলে *walks*, khee̯e খেয়ে khee̯e (also khee, and in the pronunciation of some, khei̯e) *having eaten*, h̃eʃeke̯de হেসেকেঁদে *laughing and weeping*; ke:ʃ কেশ *hair*, be:t বেত *cane*, teʃta তেষ্টা *thirst*; onneʃɔn অন্বেষণ *search*; bekti ব্যক্তি *person*, kheti ক্ষতি *injury*.

§ 38. æ:, æ. Position a little above cardinal No. 4, somewhat lower than the Southern English sound of æ in mæn (*man*). Long æ: has mouth open wider than in the case of short æ. æ:k এক *one*, dæ:kh দেখ, দ্যাখ *look thou*, tæ:g ত্যাগ *renunciation*, ottæc̆jar অত্যাচার *oppression*, biggæn বিজ্ঞান *science*, obbhæʃ অভ্যাস *habit*, hottæ হত্যা *murder*, rokkhæ (commonly rokkhe in Calcutta) রক্ষা *preservation*.

a is frequently heard for æ when it represents in the middle of a word Middle Bengali ɛa, written ্যা (i.e. -yā), for Sanskrit -jɑ: : e.g. kollɑn, besides kollæn কল্যাণ *well-being*; hotta, hottæ হত্যা *murder*; rokkhɑ, rokkhæ রক্ষা *preservation* (from earlier rɔkkhɛa, Sanskrit kʃ becoming kkhj).

§ 39. ɛ is a sound rarely heard among speakers of standard Bengali, although it is common in East Bengal dialects, e.g. kɛ:n for kæno কেন *why*, tɛ:l for te:l তেল *oil*, dɛ:ʃ for de:ʃ দেশ *country*, ɛ:k for æ:k এক *one*. But the interjection of address, ĥe হে *oh*, when used finally at the end of a sentence, is frequently ĥɛ; but this is not universal, ĥæ being pronounced by many; e.g. bɔloto ĥɛ or ĥæ বল তো হে *you say,*

here ! dækho to hɛ or hæ দেখতো হে *look here !* hæ̃ hɛ or hæ (also he) হাঁ হে *I say !*

In English words like t͡ʃɛə(r), ʃɛə(r), kʰɛə(r) (*chair, share, care*), the ɛə diphthong becomes eɑr in Bengali: cʲeɑr, ʃeɑr, keɑr.

§ 40.   Bengali ɑ is a clear sound, halfway between the cardinal a and ɑ: mã:, mɑ: মা *mother* ; bɑbɑ বাবা *father* ; ɑmɑr আমার *my* ; hɑ:t হাত *hand* ; gɑ:cʲh গাছ *tree*, etc.

In the "cockney" of Calcutta, ɑ in an initial syllable, with the syllable following having another ɑ, has a frontal pronounciation, that of the cardinal a, in a great many words, and this frontal value is commonly changed to a full æ.   This is a characteristic of speech which is avoided by the best speakers.   The modification ɑ > a > æ is not consistently carried out, but it is noteworthy that a large proportion of the words showing æ for ɑ have the vowel nasalized ; e.g. kɑ̃tɑl > kæ̃tɑl কাঁটাল *jack fruit*, bɑ̃kɑ > bæ̃kɑ বাঁকা *crooked*, kɑ̃ʃɑri > kæ̃ʃɑri কাঁসারী *worker in bell metal*, ʃɑ̃khɑri > ʃæ̃khɑri শাঁখারি *worker in shells* (but ʃɑ̃kha শাঁখা *a conch shell* is rarely ʃæ̃kha, and kɑ̃ʃa কাঁসা *bell metal* is never kæ̃ʃa), kɑ̃kṛɑ > kæ̃kṛɑ কাঁকড়া *crab*, ʈɑka > ʈæka টাকা *rupee*, etc., etc.

In the pronunciation of some, final ɑ tends to be raised to ʌ, but this is not common ; the low ɑ is retained.

ɑ through the influence of a preceding i and u always becomes . e and o.   This change takes place through vowel-harmony, and is recognized in Bengali ; e.g. binɑ > bine বিনা, বিনে *without* ; nindɑ > ninde নিন্দা, নিন্দে *blame* ; Persian xʌri:dɑ:r *buyer* > *khɔirdɑr, *khoiddɑr, khodder খদ্দের ; puɟɑ > puɟo পূজা, পূজো *worship* ; ɟuta > ɟuto জুতা জুতো *shoe*. Similarly, when there is æ in the preceding syllable, ɑ through vowel-harmony is fronted to a, but this is not noticed ; e.g. bæbʃɑ > bæbʃa ব্যবসা *trade* ; æklɑ > ækla একলা *alone*. This fronted a, approaching æ, is a subsidiary form of ɑ, and ordinarily it is not necessary to indicate it in phonetic transcription.

§ 41.   ɔ short is slightly lower than the cardinal vowel ɔ, but considerably higher than the English sound in *not*.   Ordinarily there is very little or no lip rounding, but long ɔ: has a certain amount of lip rounding, but not so much as in S. English ɔ:.   With some among the best speakers of Bengali, ɔ tends to move forward towards ʌ.   ɔ is the most characteristic vowel-sound in Bengali, distinguishing it, with the ʃ and b pronunciation of s and ও or w, from other Indian languages. A final ɔ at the end of a syllable or word becomes a very lax and open kind of o, and this may be written ɔ or o according to preference in individual pronunciation.   This lax o may also be rendered by ò.   The more common pronunciation among speakers of the standard colloquial is o.   In reading a literary composition in prose or verse, however, ɔ or ò pronunciation is more common than o.

ɟɔːl জল *water*, bɔːr বর *bridegroom*, kɔto, kɔtò কত *how much*, উপর
upɔr (Calcutta cockney opor) উপর *above*, udɔĕ উদয় *rise*, ɔbɔʃɔnnɔ,
ɔbòʃɔnnò অবসন্ন *tired*, ɔbɔʃʃɔ ɔbòʃʃò ɔbɔʃʃo অবশ্য *certainly*, ɔnɔbɔrɔtɔ
ɔnòbɔrɔtò ɔnobɔroto অনবরত *continuously*.

The English short vowel in *not hot* has a guttural quality which is
lacking in the Bengali ɔ, because the latter is pronounced with a higher
position of the tongue.

§ 42. There is a half-distinct form of ɔ, which results from an
attempt to slur a syllable containing ɔ in quick pronunciation. It is at
the present day occasionally heard in rapid pronunciation of learned
words which when fully enunciated will retain the ɔ, and in common
words (which have already dropped the ɔ) when the latter occur in literary
composition in high style with a too Sanskritized vocabulary. This
indistinct sound may be written ᵒ. gombhirᵒnadi gòmbhirɔnadi
গম্ভীর নাদী *deep sounding*; ʃagɔrᵒtɔrɔŋgɔ সাগরতরঙ্গ *ocean billows*,
cjikurᵒbhaːr চিকুরভার *heavy tresses*; apᵒnar আপনার *of self*; ʃutᵒraŋ
সুতরাং *therefore*, tarᵒkeʃʃor তারকেশ্বর *Tarkeshwar* (a name), upᵒkar
উপকার *benefit*, amᵒra আমরা *we*, dɔrᵒan দরওয়ান (also dɔrɔan) *gate-
keeper*.

§ 43. The o phoneme in Bengali has three values: when it is long,
it is a vowel of rather high quality, but slightly lower than the cardinal o;
the lip rounding is not so great as in the case of the cardinal sound.
Ordinary short o has a lower position than long o, perhaps a little above
the middle point between cardinal o and ɔ. There is a third kind, a lax
form of o, which may be written ò, slightly above the cardinal ɔ, and
which occurs mainly as a modification of an ɔ in a final syllable—in fact,
which is a sort of ɔ tending to become an o. Ordinarily, a single letter,
o, would be enough for the three varieties. ò is an extremely volatile
sound, and no definite rule can be laid down as to its occurrence. e.g.:
roːg রোগ *illness*; boːn বোন *sister*, বন *forest*; roːɟ রোজ *day, every
day*; ɟoːm যম *Yama* (*the God of Death*); ʃoroɟ সরোজ *the lake-
born* (=*lotus*); oti অতি *much*; ponero, ponerò পনের *fifteen*; loha লোহা
iron; boɟha বোঝা *load*; kolu কলু *oilman*; biog বিয়োগ *subtrac-
tion, loss*.

§ 44. uː and u present a parallel to iː and i; duːr দূর *distant*, bhuːt ভূত
ghost, bhutɔ, bhutò ভূত *past*, kuːp কূপ *well*, ruːp রূপ *beauty*, ʃadhu
সাধু *good, honest*; nupur নূপুর *anklet*, mukuṭ মুকুট *crown*, kukur কুকুর
dog, dhonuk ধনুক *bow*, boʃu বসু *wealth* (*a surname*=*Bose*). u short
interchanges with o in a few words, especially through laws of vowel
harmony, e.g. ʃoĕ শোয় *he lies down*, but ʃu-e শুয়ে *having lain* from
ʃuia শুইয়া; gona গোনা *counting*; but guni গুনি *I count*.

uː has no tendency towards diphthongization.

§ 45. ʌ, as in English, Hindostani, etc., occurs in a few foreign words. English ə becomes ʌ when any attempt is made to pronounce in the English way. ʌ is not universal in Bengali, in fact, it is distinctly a foreign sound ; ɔ, ɑ, and occasionally æ are substituted for it. bʌs, also bɑs, bæs (with ʃ as well) বাস্ বস্ *enough !* ; sʌr, sɔr, sɑr, sær স্‌র, সর, সার, স্‌র *Sir.*

§ 46. Nasalized vowels. All the seven vowels of Bengali, i e æ ɑ ɔ o u, can be nasalized, and thus we have seven more phonemes— ĩ ẽ æ̃ ɑ̃ ɔ̃ õ ũ. A vowel preceded or followed by a nasal generally has a slight nasalization ; and this nasalization by contact need not be represented. In the speech of some, however, this nasalization by contact is not present. Nasalized vowels have higher tongue position than the simple ones : ɑ̃ has more backward a tongue position than ɑː or ɑ. e.g. pĩṛa, pĩṛe পিঁড়া, পিঁড়ে *a wooden board to sit on* ; kẽde কেঁদে *having wept* ; pæ̃ːcʃ পেঁচ *turning, screwing* ; pɑ̃ːcʃ পাঁচ *five* ; ʃõpa সঁপা *surrendering* ; ʃõron স্মরণ *remembrance* ; thõːṭ ঠোঁট *lip* ; kũːcʃ কুঁচ *a red berry.*

§ 47. Bengali vowels generally are pronounced in a lax way. This laxness of enunciation gives the Bengali vowel-system its characteristic *timbre,* when contrasted with ordinary educated Southern English or Panjabi or Hindostani.

§ 48. The vowels i e ɑ o u can occur twice within the same word, side by side : tinii তিনিই *he indeed* ; khee খেয়ে *having eaten* ; khɑɑ খাআ *eating* ; bolboo ব'ল্‌বোও *and I shall say* ; kuu কূউ onomatopoetic— *cry of the cuckoo.* An ĕ glide is usually intruded between two e's, and an ŏ glide between two ɑ's, but it is not essential.

§ 49. The Bengali system of writing, which is that of Sanskrit, recognizes only two diphthongs—oi ঐ and ou ঔ. But the number of diphthong (and triphthong) sounds actually found in the language is remarkably large. These are mostly *falling* diphthongs, the stress being on the first element. But a few of them can be called *rising* ones. In deliberate speech, it is quite possible to pronounce the diphthongs either as *level* ones, or as two syllables ; the latter thing would be encouraged by the spelling. But in ordinary speech of sufficient rapidity the sounds are nothing but diphthongs, of which the unstressed part is a consonantal vowel.

When the two vowels do not form a diphthong, a hyphen may be employed between the vowels to indicate that they form two syllables.

ie : gie গিয়ে *having gone* ; a rising variety also makes the syllable ultimately ge গ < gĭe, gje.

ia : iar ইয়ার *boon companion* ; eǀia এসিয়া *Asia.*

io : dio দিও *give* (precative future), iorop ইয়োরোপ *Europe.*

iu : ʃiuli শিউলি *a flower.*

ei : nei নেই *is not*, also *indulgence, affection*.

ea : c̑jeɑr চেয়ার *chair*. In some words like beɑlɑ বেয়ালা বেহালা *violin*, it becomes æe, bæela.

eo : ɟ̑ɟeo যেও *go* (future precative). Cf. *Mayo Hospital* = meo hãʃpɑtɑl.

eu : keu কেউ *somebody*.

æe : dæe দেয় *gives*.

æo : dæor দেওর, দেবর *husband's younger brother*, kæoʈ কেওট *a caste*; bæorɑ বেওরা *affair* (slang).

ɑi : bhɑi ভাই *brother*.

ɑe : khɑe খায় *eats*, pɑerɑ (paĕrɑ) পায়রা *pigeon*.

ɑo : dɑo দাও *give*.

ɑu : lɑu লাউ *gourd*.

ɔe : hɔe হয় *is, are* ; bhɔe ভয় *fear* ; bɔeʃ বয়স *age*.

ɔɑ : ʃɔɑ সআ, সওয়া, সহা *endure*, bɔɑte বআটে *loafer*.

ɔo : hɔo হও *be*.

oi : boi বই *book*, doi দই *curds*.

oe : doe দোয় *milks*, noe নোয় *bends*, koe (also ko-e) ক'য়ে *having spoken* ; occasionally heard as a rising diphthong.

oɑ : koɑʃɑ কোয়াসা *mist*, doɑt (also do:t) দোয়াত (দোত) *inkpot*.

ou : bou বউ, বৌ (*newly-wed*) *wife* ; douɽ দৌড় *run*.

ui : ɟ̑ɟũi জুই *jasmine*, dui দুই *I milk*, two ; uil উইল *will*, huil হুইল *wheel* (in fishing) (the last two are English words).

ue : dhue ধুয়ে *having washed*, ʃue শুয়ে *having lain, lying* ; a rising diphthong frequently.

uɑ : duɑr (also do:r) দুয়ার, দ্বার *door* ; ɟ̑ɟuɑ জুয়া *gambling* ; rather a rare diphthong in the Calcutta dialect, frequently changed to uo, o.

uo : dhuo ধুয়া *burden of a song*, kuo কুয়া *well* ; a rising diphthong originating from the preceding, which is frequently simplified to o:.

§ 50. The above twenty-five diphthongs can have nasalized forms, the first element being always the one to have nasalization.

§ 51. In addition to the diphthongs, the following triphthongal combinations are found in native words : iei, ieo, iɑe, eie, eio, eɑo, eoi, euo, æei, æoi, ɑie, ɑio, ɑei, ɑoi, ɑui, ɔei, ɔoi, ɔeo, oie, oɛi, oeo, oɑi, oɑe, oui, uie, uio, uei, ueo, uɑe, uɑo, uoe. Some of these are frankly two syllables, others are compressed into one.

§ 52. In the following tetraphthongal groups, eoɑi, eoɑe, ɑoɑi, ɑoɑe, oɑio, we have two diphthongs really, the push on the ɑ giving a division of the group into two parts. The groups ɔoɑio, ɑoɑio similarly are ɔŏ-ɑi-o, ɑŏ-ɑi-o.

Sound Attributes

Length

§ 53. Length of consonants, commonly described as "doubling", has been treated in § 33. A consonant can also be lengthened or doubled in some cases, when the word is emphasized: e.g. ʃɔkol সকল *all*, also ʃɔkkol; ʃɔbai সবাই *everybody*, also ʃɔbbai; kicʃhu কিছু *a little*, also kiccʃhu. This doubling is represented in writing in Bengali.

§ 54. On the other hand, length is not a significant sound attribute for vowels. Quantity of Bengali vowels depends on the rhythm of the sense group. Except in the case of Sanskrit words, quantity is not consistently indicated in Bengali orthography. Vowel quantity is an extremely baffling thing, and there are various shades of length, but ordinarily three are recognized, long (:), half-long (·), and short. Except ʌ, all Bengali vowels can have all the three quantities.

§ 55. Spoken Bengali has also a characteristic habit which I have called *bimorism* or *dimetrism* (*dvi-mātrika-tā*). Isolated words tend to take up a standardized time-beat or *mora* (space of time). A normal Bengali word takes two time-beats, or units of time, or *moræ*. Words of three *moræ* are also common. In case of monosyllabic words, there is a lengthening of the syllable ; and polysyllables are cut short or divided into groups of syllables which take each the normalized length of time. e.g. kɔː ক *k* (2 *moræ*, with rather long stop for *k*), kɔkar ককার *the letter k* ($\frac{3}{4}$+1$\frac{1}{4}$ *moræ*), ɔpra-ɟsite for ɔpraɟɟita অপরাজিতা *a flower*, etc.

§ 55a. Monosyllabic words pronounced as separate words always have the vowel long: e.g. kɔː ক *the letter k* ; tiːn তিন *three* ; keː কে *who ?* ; æːk এক *one* ; kaːr কার *whose* ; phɔːl ফল *fruit* ; ɟɦoːl ঝোল *soup* ; ruːp রূপ *form, beauty*. Foreign monosyllabic words naturalized obtain the long quantity in Bengali ; e.g. Pers. gul *flower* > guːl গুল ; English fut *foot* > phuːt ফুট ; tʰɪn *tin* > tiːn টিন ; wʊl *wool* > uːl উল. When these monosyllables occur in a sense group, in composition or otherwise, the long quantity is curtailed ; e.g. tinti তিনটী *three pieces* ; rup-kɔtha রূপকথা *fairy tale* ; du-phuṭ দুফুট *two-foot* ; ul-bona উলবোনা *to knit wool* ; ṭin-mistri টিনমিস্ত্রী *tin-worker*.

§ 56. It has been found out from kymographic mouth-tracings that in disyllabic and polysyllabic words and sense groups like 'ekṭi একটী *one piece*, 'pata পাতা *leaf*, 'paka পাকা *ripe*, bagda বাগ্‌দা *prawn*, 'manot মানত *vow*, 'cʃɔndɔn চন্দন *sandal*, 'bonduk বন্দুক *musket*, 'dek(h)te দেখতে *to see*, dib'bendro দিবেব্দ্র *a name*, 'kɔtokṭa কতকটা *a little*, 'tɔktaṭa তক্তাটা *that plank*, 'kæmon-acʃhen কেমন আছেন *how do you do ?*, 'ami-debo আমি দেবো *I shall give*, 'ʃe-elo সে এল *he came*, etc., the final vowels, although not stressed, are invariably longer than those

preceding. The length of these final syllables is not so great as that of an isolated monosyllable, and they can as such be described as half-long.

§ 57. Long and half-long quantity may be indicated in isolated words, but it is extremely difficult to determine the exact quantity of words in connected speech in a sense group. When there is no doubt, length or half-length may be indicated, but the best thing would be to omit length marks and to divide the sentence into portions by vertical lines | and ||, indicating sense groups, the double line expressing a slight pause. Stress also may be expressed where it is pronounced. General rhythm of the sentence, which is based on the speaker's emotion, comes into play in adjusting the lengths of the different syllables in a sense group, and high pitch of voice is accompanied by long quantity.

Stress

§ 58. Stress (denoted by ' before the syllable which bears it) is not significant, i.e. presence or absence of it does not alter the sense of a word. In Standard Bengali, stress is dominantly initial. Word-stress is always subsidiary to sentence-stress ; and this sentence-stress is always on the initial syllable of the first important word in a sense group. The stress on individual words comprising a sense group is sacrificed, the initial syllable in the first important word being the only one that retains its stress. A Bengali sense group, viewed from the standpoint of stress, has been compared to a railway train, the first stressed syllable being the one which draws the rest. Normal Bengali versification is based on this principle of division of the sentence into sense groups with strong initial stress. But this is changed in giving emphasis to a particular word. In learned as well as common words from Sanskrit, the root syllable generally has stress (and length), to the exclusion of the prefix —a state of things which is out of harmony with the native Bengali habit of initial stresses. Examples : ɟo'ti:ndrɔ যতীন্দ্র *a name* (familiarly 'ɟoti:n) ; ɔpɔ'ra:ɟita অপরাজিতা *unconquered* (colloquially 'ɔpraɟite *the name of a flower*) ; a'ra:dʰɔna আরাধনা *adoration* ; ɔp'pra·cʃurɟɔ or ɔppra'cʃu:rɟɔ অপ্রাচুর্য্য *paucity* ; bi'be:k বিবেক *conscience* ; ɔ'ne:k অনেক *much, many* ; ɔ'tu:l অতুল *incomparable* (but 'otul as *a name*) ; onu'ra:g অনুরাগ *affection* ; ɔ'boʃʃo অবশ্য *certainly* (colloquially 'obiʃʃi, 'obbiʃʃi).

§ 59. Pronominal words, conjunctions, and other particles, as a rule, are not stressed even when they begin a sense group ; also auxiliaries in compound verbs. An adjective which precedes its noun takes the stress, the following noun generally losing it.

§ 60. In spite of the literary influence of Sanskrit noted above, stress in Bengali is initial, and phrasal accent is the dominant thing in connected speech. This initial stress has given rise to umlaut and vowel harmony on a very large scale in modern spoken Bengali; these properly come under Bengali Phonology. As in English and French and other

languages, polysynthetic expressions as a result of slurring of unstressed syllables abound in Bengali : e.g. ′æddin অসাদিন for æto din এত দিন *such a long time* (lit. *so many days*) ; ′ɟʒaccʃhetai যাচ্ছেতাই *very bad*, for যাহা ই চ্ছা তাই ɟʒaha iccʃha tai *as one would wish, most wilful*; ′koɟʒaccʃo 'কোঞ্জাচ্চ' *where are you going?*, for kotha ɟʒaitecʃhɔ কোথা যাইতেছ ; ɟʒæ̃gge যাঞ্জে *as you command*, for ɟʒe aggæ̃ã (যে আজ্ঞা, etc.

§ 61.   Sentence rhythm in colloquial Bengali is extremely varied and picturesque, there being the musical quality of speech—pitch— always present.   But in the literary language when it is read out, there is an approximately equal interval of time for the various sense groups with the strong initial phrase stress, which gives rise to a certain rhythmic quality to a Bengali line, e.g. the opening line of Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagara's *Sītār Banabās* : ′raːm ‖ ′raːɟʒpɔde | ′protiʃthitɔ hoia ‖ ′ɔpprɔtihɔtɔ bhabe | ′raɟʒɟʒɔ ʃaːʃɔn | ′korite lagileˑn ‖ রাম রাজপদে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়া অপ্রতিহতভাবে রাজ্যশাসন করিতে লাগিলেন *Rāma, established in the dignity of kingship, began to rule the kingdom without any obstruction*; or, from the same writer's *Kathāmālā*, in a simpler style : ′ekɔda | ′(ĕ)æk ‖ ′bagher gɔlaĕ ‖ ′haːr phuṭia|-cʃhilɔ ‖ একদা এক বাঘের গলায় হাড় ফুটিয়াছিল *Once a bone got stuck within the throat of a tiger*.

Intonation

§ 62.   Intonation or pitch of voice is not a significant element of speech in Bengali.   In one or two isolated cases, however, intonation has a signific value ; such cases of words having different meanings owing to difference in intonation are the two syllables m (sometimes written উঁ, i.e. ũ), and hã হাঁ *yes* ; e.g.

′m with high rising tone, indicates a query.   So ′hã = *yes*?

′m with mid rising tone, with abrupt ending, indicates annoyance or disgust.

ˌm with low falling tone = the English expression *I see*.

ᵛm with mid fall-rise tone = *yes, it may be so, but—*.

⌐m: with high falling tone = *very well, I shall see* (threatening, used jocosely or seriously).

§ 63.   But in a sentence intonation is a highly expressive speech attribute in the language, possibly to a greater extent than in English. The laws of intonation in the Bengali sentence have not been studied at all, but the following sentences are given as illustrative of Bengali intonation.   These are taken at random from Girish Chandra Ghosh's drama *Bilwamangal* :—

′aɟʒamaːr ′cʃokkhukhulecʃhe !
আজ আমার চক্ষু খুলেছে ! *To-day my eyes have opened.*

'tuikikore 'ɟanli ? or tɐiˈkiˑkore 'ɟanli
তুই কি ক'রে জানলি ?   *How did you know ?*

cɟheleṭi maˑbolle
ছেলেটি মা ব'ললে   *The little boy called " Mother ! "*

aɦa, 'ki ʃundɔːr
আহা, কি সুন্দর !   *Ah, how beautiful !*

'ʃebina(ĕ)arˈneimaˑnei
সে বিনা আর নেই মা নেই ।   *There's none else but he, none, mother !*

tomar 'ʃamikeˑmaː ?
তোমার স্বামী কে মা ?   *Who is your husband, little mother ?*

'goṭakɔtɔkˈṭaka(ĕ)eno
গোটা কতক টাকা এনো   *You will bring some rupees.*

'bæbʃaṭa ʃiggir 'ɟombe
ব্যবসাটা শীগ্‌গির জ'ম্বে   *The business will flourish quickly.*

'cɟɔlo, 'aːɟi brin'daːbonɟattra kori
চল, আজই বৃন্দাবন যাত্রা করি   *Come, let's start for Brindaban even to-day.*

'kæno bʰai ? 'ækla kæno bʰai ? 'amiɟɟe tomar'ʃɔŋgeroecɟhi'bʰai ?
কেন ভাই ? একলা কেন, ভাই ? আমি যে তোমার সঙ্গে র'য়েছি ভাই ?
Why, brother ? why alone, brother ?   Here am I in your company, brother !

§ 64. I conclude this sketch of the phonetics of Modern Bengali by giving the transcription of a connected text. I give a short prose poem (reproduced and translated with the kind permission of the author) by the greatest writer of Bengali, Rabindranath Tagore ; it was published in the

Sabuj Patra for Bhādra and Āshwin, Bengali year 1326. ħ h have been used; h might be used for both. Also ò has been employed; o would do ordinarily.

kothika

'phõṭa   phõṭa | 'briſṭi   ħoe | (ĕ)akaſer | 'megħ   name, ‖ —'maṭir kaĉhe | 'dħɔra   debe   bole. ‖ temni | 'kotha   theke | 'meĕera   (ĕ)aſe | 'prithibite | 'bãdħa   poṛte. ‖

'tader   ɟonnò | 'ɔlpò   ɟaĕgar | 'ɟɔgɔt, ‖ 'ɔlpò   manuſer. ‖ 'oiṭukur moddħe | (ĕ)apnar | 'ſɔ·bṭake | 'dħɔranò   ĉai | —apnar 'ſɔ:b   kɔtha, | 'ſɔ:b 'bætha, | 'ſɔ:b   bħab(ɔ)na. ‖ 'tai   tader | 'mathaĕ 'kapòr, | 'ħate 'kãkòn, | 'aŋinaĕ 'bæṛa. ‖ 'meĕera   ħolo | 'ſima(ſ)   ſɔrger 'in·drani.‖

kintu | 'ko:n   deb(o)tar | 'koutuk(ɔ)ħaſſer   motò | ɔporimitò 'ĉɔnĉòlòta nie(ĕ)amader | 'paṛaĕ   oi | 'ĉhoto   me(ĕ)eṭir | 'ɟɔnmò? ‖ 'ma   take rege   bɔle | " 'doſſi ", ‖ 'ba:p   take   ħeſe   bɔle | " 'pagli ". ‖

ſe   pɔ'la:tɔka | 'ɟħɔrnar | 'ɟɔ:l, ‖ 'ſaſɔner   pathòr | 'diŋie ĉòle. ‖ tar 'monṭi   ɟænò | 'benuboner | 'upɔr   ḍaler | 'puta, ‖ keboli 'ɟħir   ɟħir kore | 'kãpĉe.

'aɟ   dekhi | ſei 'duròntò   me(ĕ)eṭi ‖ 'barandaĕ | 'reliŋe | 'bħɔ·rdie ‖ 'ĉupkore | 'dãrie ‖ —badòl   ſeſer | 'indrò   dħonuṭi   bollei 'ħɔĕ. ‖ tar 'bɔrò bɔrò   duṭi | 'kalo | 'cſo:kh ‖ aɟ | ɔ'ĉɔnĉɔ·l, | 'tɔmaler   ḍale | 'briſṭir dine | 'ḍanabħeɟa | 'pakħir   motò. ‖

*   *   *   *   *   *

'kiĉhu   din· age | 'rouddre:r | 'ſaſòn   ĉhilò | 'prokhɔr; ‖ 'digɔnter mu:kh | 'bibɔrnò | ; 'gaĉher   hɔ'taſſa·ſ   patagulo ‖ 'ſukie | 'ħolde   ħoe gæĉhe. ‖

'æmon   ſomɔĕ | 'ħɔṭhat | 'kalo   aluthalu | 'pagla 'me:għ | 'akaſer 'kone   kone | 'tãbu   phelle. ‖ 'ſurɟaster   ækṭa | 'rɔktòrɔſſī ‖ 'khaper bħitòr   theke | 'tɔlòarer   motò | 'berie   (ĕ)elo. ‖

'ɔrdħek   rattre   dekhi ‖ 'dɔr(ò)ɟagulo | 'khɔrkhɔr | ſɔbde 'kãpĉe. ‖ 'ſomostò 'ſɔhɔrer | 'ghumṭake | 'ɟħɔrer   ha(ò)a ‖ 'ɟħūṭi   dħore | 'ɟħãkie dile. ‖

'uṭhe   dekhi, ‖ 'golir   aloṭa | 'ghɔnò   briſṭir   moddħe | 'mataler | 'ghola   ĉokher   motò | 'dekhte. ‖ ar 'girɟer   ghoṛir | 'ſɔbdò(ĕ)elo ‖ ɟænò | 'briſṭir   ſɔbder | 'ĉadòr   muṛi   die. ‖

'ſɔkale | 'ɟɔler   dħara | 'aro 'ghonie   (ĕ)elo ‖ —'rouddrò   (ĕ)ar | 'uṭhlo   na. ‖

*·   *   *   *   *   *

ei 'badlaĕ | amader   paṛar 'me(ĕ)eṭi | 'barandar   reliŋ   dħore | 'ĉup kore | 'dãrie. ‖ ·

tar 'bo:n   eſe   take | 'bolle, ‖ "ma'ḍakĉe." ‖ ſe   kebòl | 'ſɔbege | 'matha naṛlo, ‖ tar 'beni | 'dule   (ĕ)uṭhlo. | 'kagòɟer   nouko   nie | tar 'bħai | tar 'ħa·t   dħore | 'ṭanle. ‖ ſe   ħat 'ĉhinie   nile. ‖ 'tobu   tar 'bħai | 'khælar ɟonne | 'ṭanaṭani   korte   laglo. ‖ take   (ĕ)æk 'thapòr   boſie   dile. ‖

*   *   *   *   *   *

'briʃṭi porˊc̡e. ‖ 'ɔndʱòkaˑr ǀ 'gʱɔnò ʱoe (ĕ)elo. ‖ 'me(ĕ)eṭi ǀ 'sthiːr
dãr̥ie. ‖

'adi ɟ̑uge ǀ 'sriʃṭir mukhe ǀ 'prothòm kɔtha ǀ 'ɟ̑egec̡ʰilò ‖ 'ɟ̑ɔler
bʱaʃaĕ ǀ 'ʱaðar kɔṇṭhe. ‖ 'lokkʱò koṭi bɔc̡ʰɔr ǀ 'paːr ʱoe ǀ ʃei 'ʃɔ̀ròn
'biʃʃɔ̀ròner ǀ o'tiːt kɔtha ǀ (ĕ)aɟ̑ 'badlar kɔlòʃʃɔre ǀ oi 'me(ĕ)eṭike (ĕ)eʃe ǀ
'ḍak dile. ‖ 'oː tai ǀ 'ʃokòl bær̥ar 'baire ǀ 'c̡ole gie ǀ 'ʱarie gælo. ‖

'kɔtò bɔr̥ò 'kaːl, ‖ 'kɔtò bɔr̥ò 'ɟ̑ɔgɔt, ‖ 'prithibite ǀ 'kɔtò ɟ̑uger ǀ kɔtò
'ɟ̑ibòlila. ‖ ʃei ʃu'duːr, ‖ ʃei bi'raːṭ, ‖ aɟ̑ ei 'duròntò me(ĕ)eṭir ǀ 'mukher
dike 'takalo, ‖ 'megʱer c̡ʰaĕae ǀ 'briʃṭir kɔlòʃòbde. ‖

o tai 'bɔr̥ò bɔr̥ò ǀ 'c̡okh mele ǀ ni'stɔbdʱò ǀ 'dãr̥ie roilo ‖ —ɟ̑ænò
ɔn'òntòkaleri ǀ 'protima. ‖

<div style="text-align:right">sri: robindrònath ṭhakur.</div>

STORIETTE

The cloud in the sky comes down in drops of rain, to be held by the earth below. So women come, no one knows from where, and get bound to this earth.

For them the world of a small space, and of a few people. That small area must hold their all—all their story, their suffering, their fears. That is why they have the wimple on the head, the bracelet on the arm, and the wall round the yard. • Women are queens of the heaven of narrow bounds.

<div style="text-align:center">*   *   *   *   *   *</div>

But that little girl in our neighbourhood was born with a brimming liveliness,—what god's mirthful laughter was it like ? Her mother gets cross and calls her " naughty ", but her father laughs and calls her " my madcap darling ".

She is the water of a running fall, defying the rocks that would check her. And her heart is as the leaf on the topmost branch in a bamboo grove, which is always ashiver with the slightest breath of air.

This day I saw that sprightly little girl standing quietly leaning upon the rails of the balcony—one might say she was like the rainbow after rain. Her two big black eyes were without their merry twinkle to-day, like birds on the branch of the *tamāl* tree, with wet wings in a day of rain.

<div style="text-align:center">*   *   *   *   *   *</div>

For some days the sun's heat was oppressive ; the face of the ends of the sky was pale ; the leaves of trees, with all hope dead, had become dried up and yellow.

At such a time quite of a sudden, an erratic cloud, black, dishevelled, pitched its tent in the corners of the sky. A red ray of sunset issued forth like a sword from the sheath.

At midnight I found the doors and windows trembling and groaning with a rattling noise. The storm wind shook by the forelock the sleep of the whole town.

I rose and saw the light in our lane looking through the thick rain like the dull eye of a drunkard. And the sound of the church bell came as if shrouded in the patter of rain.

In the morning the streams of rain became greater and still greater, and no sun rose.

<div align="center">*   *   *   *   *   *</div>

In this rainy weather the little girl in our neighbourhood was standing quietly by the balcony rails.

Her sister came and said to her, " Mother is calling." She only vigorously shook her head, her plait of hair swung round. Her brother came with a paper boat and drew her by the hand. But she snatched her hand away. But still her brother pressed her for play. She gave him a slap.

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It was raining. The darkness became deeper and deeper. The little girl stood still.

In the primeval age, at the beginning of creation, the first word awoke in the speech of the waters, in the voice of the wind.   Through millions and millions of years that word of days beyond remembrance and forgetting, came and called the girl to-day in the gentle sound of the rain.   That is why she passed beyond all barriers and lost herself.

How vast the time, how great this world, the life of how many ages on this earth ! That far-off, that vast magnitude looked at the face of this sprightly girl, under the shadow of the cloud and in the gentle sound of the rain.

She therefore remained standing, with her big eyes wide open, silent— as if an image of eternity.

<div align="right">Rabindranath Tagore.</div>

<div align="center">কথিকা ।</div>

ফোঁটা ফোঁটা বৃষ্টি হয়ে আকাশের মেঘ নামে,—মাটির কাছে ধরা দেবে বলে' । তেমনি কোথা থেকে মেয়েরা আসে পৃথিবীতে বাধা পড়তে ।

তাদের জন্ম অল্প জায়গার জগৎ, অল্প মানুষের । ঐটুকুর মধ্যে আপনার সবটাকে ধরানো চাই—আপনার সব কথা, সব ব্যথা, সব ভাবনা । তাই তাদের মাথায় কাপড়, হাতে কাঁকন, আঙিনায় বেড়া । মেয়েরা হল সীমান্বর্গের ইন্দ্রাণী ।

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কিন্তু কোন্ দেবতার কৌতুকহাস্যের মত অপরিমিত চঞ্চলতা নিয়ে আমাদের পাড়ায় ঐ ছোট মেয়েটির জন্ম ? মা তা'কে রেগে বলে " দস্যি ", বাপ তাকে হেসে বলে " পাগলী " ।

সে পলাতকা ঝরনার জল, শাসনের পাথর ডিঙিয়ে চলে । তার মনটি যেন বেণুবনের উপরডালের পাতা, কেবলি ঝির্ ঝির্ করে কাঁপচে ।

আজ দেখি সেই দুরন্ত মেয়েটি বারান্দায় রেলিতে ভর দিয়ে চুপ করে দাঁড়িয়ে—বাদলশেষের ইন্দ্রধনুটি বল্লেই হয় । তার বড় বড় দুটি কালো চোখ আজ অচঞ্চল, তমালের ডালে বৃষ্টির দিনে ডানা-ভেজা পাখীর মত ।

কিছুদিন আগে রৌদ্রের শাসন ছিল প্রখর ; দিগন্তের মুখ বিবর্ণ ; গাছের হতাশ্বাস পাতাগুলো শুকিয়ে হল্দে হয়ে গেছে ।

এমন সময় হঠাৎ কাল আলুথালু পাগলা মেঘ আকাশের কোণে কোণে তাঁবু ফেল্‌লে । সূর্যাস্তের একটা রক্ত-রশ্মি থাপের ভিতর থেকে তলোয়ারের মত বেরিয়ে এল ।

অর্দ্ধেক রাত্রে দেখি দরজাগুলো থড়থড় শব্দে কাঁপ্‌চে । সমস্ত সহরের ঘুমটাকে ঝড়ের হাওয়া ঝুঁটি ধরে ঝাঁকিয়ে দিলে ।

উঠে দেখি, গলির আলোটা ঘন বৃষ্টির মধ্যে মাতালের ঘোলা চোখের মত দেখতে । আর গির্জ্জের ঘড়ির শব্দ এল যেন বৃষ্টির শব্দের চাদর মুড়ি দিয়ে ।

সকালে জলের ধারা আরো ঘনিয়ে এল—রৌদ্র আর উঠল না ।

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এই বাদলায় আমাদের পাড়ার মেয়েটি বারান্দার রেলিঙ ধরে চুপ করে দাঁড়িয়ে ।

তার বোন এসে তাকে বল্লে, "মা ডাক্‌চে" । সে কেবল সবেগে মাথা নাড়ল, তার বেণী ছলে উঠল । কাগজের নৌকো নিয়ে তার ভাই তার হাত ধরে টান্‌লে । সে হাত ছিনিয়ে নিলে । তবু তার ভাই খেলার জন্যে টানাটানি করতে লাগ্‌ল । তাকে এক থাপড় বসিয়ে দিলে ।

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বৃষ্টি পড়্‌চে । অন্ধকার আরো ঘন হয়ে এল । মেয়েটি স্থির দাঁড়িয়ে ।

আদি যুগে সৃষ্টির মুখে প্রথম কথা জেগেছিল জলের ভাষায়, হাওয়ার কণ্ঠে । লক্ষ কোটি বছর পার হয়ে সেই স্মরণ বিস্মরণের অতীত কথা আজ বাদলার কলস্বরে ঐ মেয়েটিকে এসে ডাক দিলে । ও তাই সকল বেড়ার বাইরে চলে গিয়ে হারিয়ে গেল ।

কত বড় কাল, কত বড় জগৎ, পৃথিবীতে কত যুগের কত জীবনলীলা । সেই সুদূর সেই বিরাট, আজ এই দুরন্ত মেয়েটির মুখের দিকে তাকাল, মেঘের ছায়ায় বৃষ্টির কলশব্দে ।

ও তাই বড় বড় চোখ মেলে নিস্তব্ধ দাঁড়িয়ে রইল,—যেন অনন্তকালেরই প্রতিমা ।

<div align="right">শ্রীরবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর ।</div>