



A Historical Background of the Glorious Erudition of Nabadwip

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Abstract: The prime attraction or fascination of the historical overview of Nabadwip is the practice of wisdom and spirituality. Practically, the fame of Nabadwip touched the horizon as a significant center for the distribution and acquisition of knowledge, as the heart of historical research, and as an institutional form of wisdom in Eastern India. With great philosophers and eminent pundits like Basudev Sabobhauma, Raghunath Sharomani, Mahamahopadhyaya Mathuranath Tarko Bagish, Rudraram Tarkabagish, Raghunandan Smarta Bhattacharya, Krishnananda Agambagish, etc., Nabadwip gradually emerged as the epicenter of the Nabya-Nyaya, Nabyasmriti, great Vaishnava center, and the practice of Tantra. The kings of Nadia used to bestow free land as grants to the Vaishnavite devotees, offer allowances to the renounced scholars, and also scholarships to the students to spread the advancement of wisdom in Nabadwip. The Pandit community of Nabadwip conferred the king of Nadia with the title of 'Nabadwipadhipati.' From the above, it becomes clear that the glory of Nabadwip was deeply rooted in its wisdom. Any ancient and affluent city or town feels proud of its political history, administrative glory, and abundance of architectural styles, or religious grandeur. But the self-esteem of Nabadwip was due to the glory of its wisdom, and many knowledge-seeking pandits illuminated the flame of knowledge. Nabadwip did not only become famous for being the birthplace of Chaitanyadev or the seat of fame for Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Students and knowledge-thirsty people from different parts of India came to this sacred and divine land to acquire knowledge. The paper will indicate and uncover the means by which the traditional intelligence and wisdom of Nabadwip entered the ubiquitous perspective.

Key Words: Knowledge, Prosperity, *Tole* and *Chatuspathi*, Scholars, Education, Pandits

Generally, the history of Nadia's practice of knowledge began with the adoption of the Vedas, the Brahman, the Upanishad, the Aranyaka, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and other scriptural texts, but we do not have any authoritative history of when this knowledge and Sanskrit literary practice got initiated. Nonetheless, evidence of this can be found in the chronicles of the Chinese travelers Hien Tsang and Yijing or I-tsing, who wrote that once Bengal had a remarkable reputation or majesty for higher education. That is to say, in the fifth to seventeenth centuries, Bengali literature took a prominent form, and the genius of Bengali culture and the fancy writing style of literature were introduced. Chandra Gomin, the respectable philosopher and author of Chandra



Byakaran was a Bengali. The distinguished philosopher Gaurpad was the maestro of Shankaracharya. The famous book *Gaurpadkarika* was created with his authorship, and he was a Bengali as well. (Majumdar, 1949, pp.122-123) Sandhyakar Nandi, a well-known literary figure of the Pala period, gained fame for his time-honored work *Ramcharit Kavya*.¹ He referred to Ramachandra of the Ramayana on the one hand and Rampal, the Pala emperor on the other in this book. He also perhaps lived near Barendra Pundra Bardhan (Now in Bangladesh). Atish Dipankar Srigyan was an eminent pundit of Bengal who wrote 168 books. It is said that Śīlabhadra, the author of the book '*Aryabuddha Bhumibyakhyan*' and the Acharya of Nalanda University, had his residence near Nabadwip. After the fall of the Pala rule, the Sena rule was established in Bengal and Nadia . They came to Bengal mainly from Karnataka in southern India and were mainly the worshipers of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. Thanks to them, Hinduism was revived in Bengal and in Nabadwip in terms of knowledge and glory and in Sanskrit literature. According to scholars, Nabadwip became their sub-capital during the reign of Sen ruler Ballal Sen. Towards the end of his life, he built a house in Nabadwip. It is believed that Ballal Sen's son Lakshman Sen also built administrative infrastructure in Nabadwip. He was a great patron of Sanskrit learning, and there was a grand revival of it in his time. Like the great ruler Vikramaditya in Ujjain he had a galaxy of illustrious scholars and poets, who illuminated his court. It is said that the great Sanatana Goswami found an inscription (in versified form) above the entrance of the Sabha-hall (Conference room) of Laxman Sena at Nabadwip which mentioned all the five jewels (*Pancha-ratna*) of the court. These renowned scholars like Joydev, Saran, Govardhanacharya, Halayudh, Umapati Dhar, and others decorated the royal court of the Sena king Lakshman Sen. (Mukherjee, 1966, p. 71) After the fall of the Sena dynasty, especially in the Middle Ages, the knowledge of Nabadwip spread all over India. Dr. Mahanam Brata Brahmachari was a Hindu monk who commented on the identity of Nabadwip and mentioned it as '*Baikunther Angina*' or the Compound of Heaven. He wrote "A province on its eastern border is called *Bengal* she lies like a darling daughter in the lap of mother India. Nabadwip is the greatest town of *Bangabhumi* (Land of Bengal). Indeed, it is the cultural capital of *Bengal* if not the royal. Nabadwip is a wealthy place of fortune, prosperity, and learning." The Nabadwip came to be the center of learning in eastern India and its ripple had been in almost the same vein for a few centuries. But after the advent of the British in India, especially



after the battle of Plassey, decades after the death of Krishnachandra Roy, the king of Nadia, the glory of the knowledge of Nabadwip began to fade.

Originally, under the patronage of the Sena rulers, Nabadwip was able to enter the center of Bengal politics. For this reason, Haranath Shastri stated- "Samanta Sen a feudatory Raja of Karnataka, after being repeatedly defeated by his overlord, fled to Bengal where he founded a small Colony on the bank of Bhagirathi. This Colony was probably founded at Nabadwip for the islands which are composed of Nabadvip or nine islands."(Sastri, 1896, p. 35) From the earliest days of the Sena rulers, the awakening of Nabadwip in the field of education, culture, and religion had been going on for ages. The eminent historian Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyaya thinks that one of the capitals of the Sen kings seems to have been Nabadwip or 'Nudia Nagari'²¹ (Chaudhuri 18) according to the annotation of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*. The *Kulji* texts support the fact that Nadia or Nabadwip was one of the capitals of the Sen Kings. According to the texts of the book *Sambandha Nirnay* and *Ballalsen Charit*, king Ballal Sen used to live in the capital city of Nabadwip at a ripe age. (Roy 299) Abul Fazal commented in his book - "Nuddea was the capital of Bengal, where it abounded with wisdom; but now it is thinly inhabited, although it is still conspicuous for learning. (Fazal, 2012, p. 98) According to Minhajuddin Siraj in his book, '*Tabakat-I-Nasari*' argued that "The fame of the intrepidity gallantry and victories of Muhammad Baktiyar had also reached Rai Lakshmoniya's capital was spelled Nudiah until the time of Aurangzeb when words ending *in-ha-I-Mukhtafi-* were ordered to be written with *I=as Nudea*."(Siraj, 2018, p. 231)

Nabadwip emerged as the best educational center in eastern India, and it had been a historical place for the practice of Bengali culture and knowledge. Its preeminence was no less than Nalanda, Ujjayani, Vallavi, or Mithila. Standing in the context of the medieval period, Nabadwip became an ocean of learning with the courtesy of innumerable knowledge-seeking scholars and students from different parts of India. W.W. Hunter once stated, "Nadia-the old capital, stands at the junction of its two upper headwaters, about sixty-five miles above Calcutta ... It was from Nadia that the last Hindu king of Bengal. On the approach of the Muhammadan invader in 1203, he fled from his place in the middle of dinner, as the story runs, with his sandals snatched up in his hand. It was at Nadia, that the deity was incarnated in the fifteenth century C.E., the Great Hindu reformer, the Luther of Bengal. At Nadia, Sanskrit Colleges since the dawn of history have taught



their abstruse philosophy to colonies of students, who calmly pursued the life of a learner from boyhood to white-haired old age."(Das, 1917, p. 28) That is why Nabadwip has emerged as a center of mixed culture since ancient times. Mrityunjay Mandal has divided the culture of Nabadwip into four categories. Such as -

1. Buddhist literature and culture,
2. Shakta culture
3. Shaiva culture and
4. Vaishnav culture (Mandal, 2013, p. 129)

The combination of Aryan and non-Aryan cultures laid the foundation of Hindu culture in Bengal. Bengal fell under the Mauryan Empire during the reign of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka. Scholars speculate that Nabadwip was a famous seat of Buddhist culture in ancient times, observing the formation of an architectural style of the Ballal Mound found during the excavation at Bamun Pond near Mayapur in Nabadwip. The Department of Archeology of India has been conducting excavations at this site in a modern scientific manner since 1981. The architectural structure unveiled by them is similar to the Buddhist *Stupa*, '*Triratha Sarvatobhadra*', which is believed to have been later converted into the '*Pancharatna Brahmanya Devalaya*'. Buddhist society was founded on the structure of a democratic society. The Chinese travellers have highly praised the education system of Bengal. Bihars or educational institutions were built in different parts of Bengal in ancient times. Taranath opines that Dharma Pal established fifty Buddhist educational institutions. Twenty-two Bihars or monasteries were built at Tamralipta (modern name Tamluk, situated in Midnapur) during the period of Fa-Hien. During the period of Hiuen Tsang, 20 Buddhist monasteries were built at Pundravardhana, 30 at Samatata, 10 at Tamralipta, 6 to 8 at Kajangal, and 10 at Karnasuban. (Nadia, 2005, p. 78) Nalanda Mahavihara (University) was closely associated with science and education in Bengal in the sixth and seventh centuries. Acharya Shilvadra of Nalanda Mahavihara was a child of the Brahmanical dynasty of Samatata, and he was the maestro of Hiuen Tsang. It means, all these Buddhist monasteries were the principal centers of Buddhist knowledge, science, and education. The school was not only focused on Buddhism and the practice of *shastra* (scripture). There was a system of imparting knowledge on grammar, medicine, yoga, astronomy, music, painting, etc. (Roy 569-570-571) That is why an eminent



scholar Nihar Ranjan Roy, said that “Knowledge and wisdom and teaching and culture of Bengal of the sixth-seventh century had also a close connection with Nalanda University and the efforts made by the learners, acharyas (teachers) and the members of the royal family for the welcome of the Nalanda Mahavihara cannot be neglected”. (Roy, 1959, p. 390) Many believe that Suvarna Dwip was well-known as the capital of the Pala rulers, which included Godrum Island in the Janab Islands, and its location was not far from Nabadwip. (Roy, 1959, p. 151)

The Pala rulers were Buddhists by their religion, which was why their capital city was fashioned as Subarna Bihar. In his book *Nabadwip Mahima*, Kanti Chandra Rarhi mentioned a ruined Buddhist monastery known as Subarna Bihar, which was once the residence of the Pala kings. (Rarhi, 2011, p. 25) According to many scholars, the place was named Subarna Bihar after King Subarna. In the book '*Govinda Chandragite*', there is a reference to the Buddhist king Subarna Chandra. The mound of Paharpur or Pardanga, located in the west of Nabadwip town, was once a Buddhist *Stupa*. (Ghosh 88) As a result, most of the ancient Shiva idols of Nabadwip were influenced by Buddhism, and the *Nath Yogis* were associated with Lord Shiva. However, the influence of Buddhism began to wane in the later stages of the Pala rule, influence of Buddhism began to wane. On the other hand, the influence of Brahmin scholars in the Nabadwip was increasing at this time, and therefore a new equation was started in this land under the patronage of the Sena rulers in the fields of education, science, etc. During the reign of the Sena dynasty, Nabadwip became a famous city full of scholars. Many *toles*³ and *chatuspathis*⁴ meant for imparting knowledge on grammar, poetry, the *Smriti*, astrology, the *Nabya -Nyaya*, etc. were established in every village here. (Rarhi, 2011, p. 47) It was with the Sena rulers that the Vaishnava culture was assimilated with the Shaivite culture because Shaivism was widespread during the reign of the Sena rulers. Even their state religion was Shaivism. On the other hand, Vaishnavism was widespread during the reign of the Sena ruler Lakshman Sen. He himself was a devotee of Vaishnavism. Under his patronage, Jayadeva wrote the *Gitagovinda*, which is considered to be the most sacred book in Vaishnavism, based on the love of Radha and Krishna. The Sanskrit language was recognized as the court language during the Sen dynasty, due to which the prosperity of this language increased considerably and numerous books were written in Sanskrit. Bakhtyar conquered Nadiya in 600 AH/ 1204 C. E. The Bhowal plate of Laksmanasena and the *Colophon*



of the '*Saduktikarnamrta*' refer to the year 1205 C. E; the 27th year of Laksmanasena's reign. After the capture of Bihar, Bakhtyar led his army further east and attacked Nadia, which may have been seen as one of the capitals of the Senas, Minhaj's account is the only source of the history of the Muslim conquest of Bengal.(Choudhary, 1967, p. 259- 257)

As a result of the Turkish invasion and the foreign rule and exploitation that came from Central Asia, the trend of learning, especially in the culture of Bengal, was deeply disrupted and affected. Because of drastic changes in the state and social system, the Hindu intellectual community was almost deprived of state patronage for almost a century. At this stage, the practice of education did not spread on such a large scale without the primary and higher education of madrasas and *Darul Khairat*. Sanskrit was the vehicle of the socio-culture of this land, and it was the court language of the kings and their court as well, which got patronage from them. (Chaudhuri, 2013, p. 10) However, the field of Sanskrit literary practice and education had not completely been blocked. According to '*Riaz-us-Salatin*' Nasiruddin Mamud (1435-1459) and his son Ruknuddin Barbak Shah were generous and respected the wise enough. During his time, considerable progress was made in the field of education in Nabadwip. The glory of the knowledge of Nabadwip gradually gained momentum, which is why the scholars compared Nabadwip to the Oxford of Bengal. Foreign scholar E. B. Cowell, later principal of the Sanskrit college. He argued that the word *Tole* is a Bengali word of uncertain derivation, but there are at least two Sanskrit words for the things themselves, *Chatuspathi*, i.e., a place where the four Vedas have studied *matha* (hermitage). In other ways, however, the *Tole* system of Nuddea has become worse. Most Pandits of Toles in other areas still house and feed their students, but almost all of the Pandits of Nuddea have stopped doing this. They now only give their students a place to stay, but the reputation of Nuddea helps them attract students from other Toles, even though those other Toles offer more. *Smriti* and *Nyaya* are Nuddea's best students. Its name is known all over India for this last thing in particular. Other provinces have their own schools of law, so Bengal students are usually the only ones who come to Nuddea's *Smriti Toles*. However, in terms of logic, it has an unbeatable reputation. Chaitanya, who was famous for bringing back the mystical worship of Krishna at the end of the 15th century, was from this place. It has also been home to many great *Niyayik* teachers, whose names are known by every Pandit family in India. In fact, the name Nuddea is linked to the most recent change in the *Nyaya* philosophy. (Mitra, 1953, p. IX-XI) It is said in the book called



'Chaitanya Bhagabat' said that hundreds of thousands bathed at a single *ghat* (bathing Place) in that city, which had many such bathing places. It was not the metropolis of Bengal, nor any emporium of trade, but it was famous as a seat of learning. It was in fact in that respect the most famous city in the world. The one absorbing the idea of all respectable citizens was the acquisition of knowledge. The old young men and women among the higher classes were constantly engaged in intellectual pursuits as if there was no other business in the world. Wealth politics, war, pleasure, and amusements had no attraction for them. In the opinion of the citizens, the man was born only to acquire knowledge which was the end and aim of human life. The students were the only being who could claim the title of man. Beauty, rank, power, and wealth were nothing in comparison with learning. The education of children commenced at the age of four years. So most of the people of Nadia devoted their time to the pursuit of knowledge. The learned had no fear of suffering from what society maintained in several ways. During every occasion, festival gifts were made to the learned. The main duty of a wealthy man was to protect against want those who engaged in intellectual and spiritual culture for the benefit of their followers. Students thronged everywhere. They filled the marketplace, the streets, the bathing *ghates* and the strand. They assembled in thousands at every convenient spot to hold literacy discussions. When the students walked in the street they talk about literary subjects. Literary tournaments were held every day at every ghat of the city. Each student had a book in his left hand that being his distinguishing badge to mark him out from others. It was their ornament his friend and his straight, which secured for him respectful attention everywhere. (Ghosh, 1923, p. 3-4)

From the last decade of the fourteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, Nabadwip gained its monopoly as the main seat of the *Nabya-Nyaya*,⁵ *Smriti*⁶ the *Tantra*⁷, and grammar in Bengal. Apart from Nadia district, Shantipur, Belpukur, Dharmada, Muragachha, Ula or Birnagar, Palpara, Kumarkhali, Kalighat, Chakdaha, Kanchkuli, Bilwagram, Karpasdanga, etc. were famous as the centers of Sanskrit culture and knowledge. Numerous *toles* and *chatuspathis* were built here. Nabadwipa has not gained prominence only as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanyadev or the existence of the international religious place of modern Mayapur (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) here. This holy town pulled many knowledge-seeking people from different parts of India. They were attracted by the advent of many scholars of the region and the glory of their



erudition and knowledge. Even Chaitanyadev's father Jagannath Mishra also got settled in Nabadwip from East Bengal, being attracted by the fame of the education of Nawadwip. After the completion of his education, Chaitanyadev set up a *tole* in Mukunda Sanjay's house and distributed knowledge. Besides, the climate of Nadia was also extremely pleasant. Shri Chaitanyadev has composed only eight verses in his entire life. These give a clue to his philosophy and religion and very few Indian scholars and spiritual leaders have written so little. Chaitanyadev was one of them. He emulated those who adhered to the Vaishnava philosophical ideology. He believed that pure devotion is desireless devotion. *Sikkhastok* is one of the most important practises for the formation of the morality and character of Vaishnava gurus and devotees. This verse shows that Sri Krishna is the God of love and sweetness, the dearest Master and lover of the soul. He is the supreme reality to whom souls are related. Chaitanyadev wrote only eight verses in this *Sikkhastok*. These eight verses clearly reveal his mission and precepts. Krishnadas Kabiraj, in his commentary *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, explains the verses in this way:

চেতোদর্পণমার্জনমাজনং ভবমহাদাবাগ্নিনির্বাণং

শ্রেয়ঃ কৈরবচন্দ্রিকাবিতরণং বিদ্যাবধূজীবনম্।

আনন্দাম্বুধিবর্দ্ধনং প্রতিপদং পূর্ণামৃতাস্বাদনং

সর্বাভ্রুক্ষপনং পরং বিজয়তে শ্রীকৃষ্ণসংকীর্তনম্॥ (Kabiraj, Slok-20/3, 649)

Translated in English: Glory to the Sri Krishna samkirtana, which wipes away all the dust that has built up in the heart over the years and puts out the fire of repeated birth and death. This sankirtana motion is the best thing that could happen to all of morality because it spreads the light of the blessing moon It is the life of all transcendental bliss, and it enables us to fully taste the nectar for which we are always anxious.

নান্নামকারি বহুধা নিজসর্বশক্তি

স্তত্রাপিতা নিয়মিতঃ স্মরণেন কালঃ।



এতাদৃশী তব কৃপা ভগবত্মমাপি

দুর্দৈব মীদৃশমিহাজনি নানুরাগঃ।।(Kabiraj 20/4, 650)

My Lord, only your holy name can give all blessings to living creatures. This is why you have hundreds of millions of names such as Krishna and Govinda. You have put all of your spiritual energies into these transcendental names. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names. Oh! my lord, out of kindness to your holy names, I am so unfortunate that I am not attracted to them.

তৃণাদপি সুনীচেন তরোরিব সহিষ্ণুনা।

অমানিনা মানদেন কীর্তনীয়ঃ সদা হরিঃ।(Kabiraj 20/4, 650)

One should chant the holy name of the Lord with a humble heart, thinking that they are less important than the straw on the street. One should be more patient than a tree, have no false sense of importance, and be ready to give all respect to others. In such a state of mind, one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.

নঃ ধনং নঃ জনং নঃ সুন্দরীং কবিতাং বা জগদীশ কাময়ে।

মম জন্মনি জন্মনিশ্বরে ভবতান্ডক্তিরহৈতুকি ত্বয়ি।। (Kabiraj 20/4, 651)

I have no desire to amass wealth, seek beautiful women, or wish a massive number of devotees, O! great Lord. I merely want your pointless devotional worship to continue from birth to birth.

অয়ি নন্দ তনুজ কিস্করং পতিতং মাং বিষমে ভবাস্বধৌ।

কৃপয়া তব পাদপঙ্কজহিত ধূলিসদৃশঃ বিচিন্তয়।। (Kabiraj 20/4, 651)

O son of Maharaja (King) Nandan (Krishna), I am your eternal servant, yet somehow or other, I have fallen into the ocean of birth and death. Please pick me up from the ocean of death and please me as one of the atoms at your lotus feet.



নয়নং গলদশ্ৰুধারয়া বদনং গদগদরুদ্বয়া গিরা।

পলকৈর্নিচিতং বপুঃ কদা তব নামগ্রহণে ভবিষ্যতি।।(Kabiraj 20/4, 651)

Oh! my Lord. When will my eyes be constantly decorated with tears of love flowing when I chant your holy name? When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs on my body stand on at the recitation of your name?

যুগায়িতং নিমেষেণ চক্ষুষা প্রাব্ৰষায়িতম্ ।

শূন্যায়িতং জগৎ সর্বং গবিন্দবিরহেণ মে।।(Kabiraj 20/4, 652)

Oh! Govinda! Feeling your detachment, I am considering a moment to be like twelve years or more. Tears are flowing from my eyes like torrents of showers, and I am feeling very vacant in the universe in your absence.

আশ্লিষ্য বা পাদরতাং পিনষ্টু মামদর্শনান্মর্মহতাং করতু বা।

যথাতথা বা বিদধাতু লম্পটো মৎপ্রাণনাথস্তু স এব নাপরঃ।।(Kabiraj, 20/4, 652)

I only know Krishna as my Lord, and he will remain so even if he rough handles me in his embrace or breaks my heart by not being present in front of me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for he is always my worshipful Lord, unconditionally.

Kartikeya Chandra Roy, in his *Kshitish Bansabali Charita*, said that the climate of all the provinces from seven to eight cros (In one cros equal to near about two miles) north of Calcutta to Murshidabad was healthy. For this reason, people from different parts of Bengal used to come to Nadia for air change in the hope of good health. (Choudhuri, 2013, p. 13) The story runs that on the advice of a doctor, the British Governor-General John Rusell stayed in Nabadwip for a long period of time to recover his broken health. In 1784, Sir William Jones, the Judge of the Supreme Court, came to Nadia for a change of air, spending more than three years here. Apart from that,



Dr. William Carey had to stay in Nabadwip for some time due to his poor health. (Vidya Bhusan, 1921, p. 461)

So, the Nadia or Nabadwip School of logic (*Nyaya*) had flourished from the 15th century to the 19th century under the great patronage of Basudev Sarvabhoom Bhattacharya, the son of Narhari Bishars, had the greatest contribution in establishing the Nabya Nyaya. Basudev went to Mithila for higher education and studied under Pakshadhar Mishra. It is said that Basudev Sarbabouma memorized *Chintamani* and *Kusumanjalikarika* from the Mithila and set up *Nabya-Nyaya Chatuspathi* in Nabadwip. As a result, a new chapter in the history of the practice of the *Nabya-Nyaya* got started in Nawadwip with his initiative. Basudev Sarbobhuma established the first *Chatuspathi* at Vidyanagar, near the town of Nabadwip. Among his innumerable disciples, mention can be made of Raghunath Shiromani, Sri Chaitanyadev, Krishnananda Agambagish and Kanad, who was the creator of the *Anuman Manibyakhyan*. (Mallick, 1986, p. 83)] This is why E. B. Cowel stated - "The fact of having studied at Nabadwip and gained an *upadhi* there will ensure respect for a Pandit in every part of India from Lahore to Travancore. But there are some who are led by less Worldly motives. These come to study *Nyaya* as students came to the University of Paris in middle age. (Mitra, 1953, pp. IX XIII) Vasudev Sarbavabhuma wrote a work on *Nyaya* book called '*Sarvabhuman Nirukti*', a commentary of Gangesa Upadhaya. Though an academy of logic was thus for the first time opened outside Mithila and schools of it gradually multiplied in the heart of Bengal, all was not gained. It yet remained for the academies of Nadia to acquire a university character and authority. Mahanaiyayik Raghunath Shiromani Bhattacharya was the mastermind behind the promotion of the practice of the *Nabya-Nyaya* to the all-India level as one of the main centers of knowledge and learning in Nabadwip.

Raghunath was born in 1480 (Rarhi, 2011, p. 82), and when he was about four years old, Raghunath lost his father. After that, his mother instilled courage and confidence in his mind during cumbersome times. Raghunath was a pupil of Vasudeva Sarvabhuma. After he learned grammar, literature, a lexicon, etc., he went to Mithila to achieve higher education with the permission of Vasudeva Sarvabhuma. He was admitted to the prestigious institution, or Chatuspath, of the renounced teacher, Paksadhara Misra. However, he was admitted into the



academy very soon he demonstrated his own worth and was promoted to the upper class. His knowledge gained glory from Basudev Sarvabhaumo. He went to Mithila on the orders of his guru (Basudev Sarvabhauma) to pursue higher studies. During this time, his teacher composed the *Samanya Lakshan*. Raghunath Shiromani's knowledge was so vast that he presented the faults and shortcomings of the book in front of everyone by presenting arguments for Guru's book. Raghunath Shiromani's opinion was finally adopted through fierce arguments, harsh words, sarcasm, ridicule, insults, etc., and he was awarded the title of the Naiyayik (Mallick, 1986, p. 86) With his help, Nabadwip became a university of the divine language of Sanskrit. Under the influence of Raghunath Shiromani, the practice of knowledge in Nabadwip reached its peak. With his help, Nabadwip became the abode of wise scholars. The dominance of this place in this period was unprecedented in the history of Bengal and India. It was with his contribution that a new horizon was created in the history of Nabadwip. He wrote a book of outstanding commentary named the '*Tatva Chintamani Didhiti*' which created a special community of neoconservatives in Nabadwipa. He wrote the books like '*Chintamani Dadhiti*', '*Padartha Khanda*', commentary on '*Atmatattva Vivek*', and also the commentaries on the books like '*Nanchabad*', '*Pramanyabad*', '*Nanarthabad*', '*Akhyatbad*', '*Skhana BhangurBad*', etc. written by the pundits like Bardhaman Upadhyay and Udjanacharya and by compiling all these books, he had multiplied the range of knowledge of Nabadwip, so that the ornament of Shiromani with his name has been rightly adopted. He was offered a *Go-Shala* or a cowshed by Hari Ghosh, where he first opened his *Chatuspathi*. As a result, he continued to distribute knowledge with the glory of his acquired knowledge, and in a very short time, his fame spread to different parts of the country. His *Chatuspathi* always used to be full of students, and their noise could be heard far and wide. For this reason, the locals used to mock this noise and call it '*Harighosher Goyal*'. The European philosopher Valentine commented, "As the well-known jurist Sir William Hamilton has analyzed justice, he used the reference of the Indian sage Gautam which he thought was outstanding to him. But Sir William had not read the books written by Raghunath Shiromani. If he would have read the '*Nabya-Nyaya*' written by Raghunath Shiromani, he could not finish praising it. (Rarhi, 2011, p. 76) Notable among Raghunath's students were Rambhadra Sarvabhaumo, Raghunath Tarka Bagish, Mahesh Pandit, Janakinath Tarka Churamani, etc. The historians of Mithila commented - "Since 1503 when the University of Nabadwip was established the '*Tattva Chintamani*' was much



popularized in Bengal through the endeavours of the famous Raghunath Shiromani and others. The Mithila School of *Nyaya* flourished from the 12th to 15th centuries. Among the veteran scholars were Gangesa and Pakshadhara Misra to mention only a few. Their style of writing was terse, and they discussed the meaning of *Jnapti* more than their predecessors did. In the sixteenth century, the study of *Nyaya* in the Mithila was on the wane, though it made headway in Nadia."(Chaudhuri, 2016, p. 151) That is to say, Raghunath Shiromani Bhattacharya's teaching and writing were at the center of the main attraction of the education of Nabadwip or of Nadia. His fame was so widespread that he was hailed as the sole ruler of the *Navya Nyay* in entire India. Therefore, he stated about Raghunath Siromani- "The learned Serownun, one of the first professors of philosophy at Nuddea, wrote a system of philosophy which had continued to be the textbook of that school ever since fifty-two *Pandits* (teachers) of considerable note in the republic of letters have written each a commentary on Serownun's treatise of philosophy." In the last thousand years, no other great scholar as fortunate as Raghunath Shiromani of Bengal has been born. It was owing to Raghunath Shiromani's courtesy, the glory of the *Navya-Nyay* lasted till about the twentieth century in Bengal and Nabadwip also maintained the glory of education. For this reason, William Ward wrote - "Almost every town in Bengal contains some *Nyayayik* schools though they are most numerous at Nudeeya, Trivenee, and Vasvariya. There are in Nudeeya not less than fifty or sixty schools." (Bhattacharya, 1950, p. 284) Dr. Carry, who visited Nudiya or Nudeeya (Nadia) in 1794, remarks that "several of the most learned *pandits* and Brahmins much wished us to settle there: and as this is the great place of Eastern learning, we see inclined, especially as it is the bulwark of heathenism, which, if once carried, all the rest of the country must be laid open to us." (Long, 1974, p. 35)

At that time, the Brahmin Pandits of *Tole* and *Chatuspathi* confined their way of life to study, teaching, religious criticism, the practice of the *Nyay*, and writing books. They were always indifferent to worldly misery. These wise and learned scholars were satisfied with the land grants or annual scholarships provided by the kings and they carried out the expenses of their families and the necessary expenses of the students. For almost four hundred years, Bengalis were at the height of Guru's glory all over India due to the practice of the *Navya-Nyay* in Nadia. For this



reason, Bharat Chandra Roy Gunakar, the court poet of Maharaja Krishnachandra Roy, in his epic poem 'Annadamanga' mentions Nabadwip as 'the lamp of the Indian capital. In addition to the *Nabya-Nyay*, Nadia had the influence of the *Smriti Shastra* or *Dharmashastra* up to the horizon in this era. Kulluk Bhatta was a famous pundit of the *Smriti Shastra*. He wrote a brilliant commentary on the *Manu Samhita* which was published in the form of a book entitled 'Manwartha Muktavali'. Raghu Nandan Bhattacharya also was a *Smarta* pundit of Nabadwip. He had a *tole* meant for the *Smriti* in Nabadwip. He authored a book of the *Smriti* entitled '*Samay Pradip*'. He has also written the '*Shraddhatatva*', the '*Tithitatva*', the '*Shuddhitatva*', the '*Smrititatva*', the '*Durga Pujatatva*', the '*Tirthatatva*', the '*Jatratatva*', the '*Dayatatva*' etc. He also wrote a commentary on the book '*Daaybhag*' written by Jeemut Bahan, the famous pundit of the *Smriti*. His best composition is the *Astabimshati Tatva*. He was best known as *Smarta* Bhattacharya of Nabadwipa all over India for his profound erudition in the *Smriti*. (Rarhi, 2011, p. 117- 118) Rambhadra Nyalankar was also a great pundit on the *Smriti Shastra*. He wrote two commentaries on the *Dayabhaga* and the *Siddhanta Kumud Chandrika*. He also wrote a commentary on the *Raghu Vansham* written by the great poet Kalidasa called '*Vidvenmadini*' and a commentary on the play the *Shakuntala* named '*Shakuntala Bibriti*'. Rambhadra's son Rameshwar wrote a book entitled '*Tantra Pramadan*' on *Tantra*, *Diksha*, and *Hom*. His other son Raghumani brightened his father's name and enhanced the fame of Nabadwip through his composition of the *Agamsar* and the '*Dattak Chandrika*'. Sree Krishna Sarvabhauma spread the radiance of education by setting up a *Chatuspathi* in Navadvipa. He composed two books entitled *Krishnapadamrita* and *Padankadyuta*. Chandrashekhar Bachaspati was a brahmin of the Varendra clan, who resided in Nabadwip. He wrote books entitled '*Smriti Shastra*', '*Smriti Pradeep*', '*Smritisar Sangraha*', '*Sankalpa Durgo Bhanjan*' and '*Dharmajivak*'. Sri Krishna Tarkalankar established a *Chatuspathi* in Nabadwip and immersed himself in teaching his numerous students. He wrote the commentary on the *Dayabhaga* and a book named '*Daaykram Sangrahanadu*'.(Mallick, 1986, p. 99) Gopal Nyalankar was a great scholar on the *Smriti Shastra*. He was a member of the court of Maharaja Krishnachandra Roy of Krishnanagar. He composed a manuscript named '*Udbah*'. His books on the rituals like *Achar*, *Tithi*, *Suddhi*, and *Prayaschitya* of the *Durga* worship convey the testimony of his profound wisdom of the *Shastra*. He argued irrefutable that widow re-marriage was completely unscriptural and illegitimate in our time. But afterward, *Vidyasagar* proved that widow



marriage is scriptural according to the interpretation of the ‘*Parasara Samhita*’. We are even aware of the fact that at that time Nabadwipadhipati Girish Chandra Roy signed in favour of widow marriage. Bireshwar Nyayapanchanan and Ramananda Bachaspati illuminated Nabadwip in the light of their knowledge of the *Smriti Shastra* in the eighteenth century. Both these pundits were members of Krishna Chandra Roy's royal court. Krishnakant Vidyabagish and Krishnanath Nyayapanchanan were notable scholars of the *Smriti Shastra* of Nadia after the reign of King Krishna Chandra Roy.

Scholars speculate that the combination of the activities of the Brahmins and the teachings of the Buddhists gave new life to the *Tantra*. *Tantric* ideology originated between the 4th and 6th centuries C.E. Krishnananda Agam Bagish Bhattacharya was the most influential person in introducing *Tantra Shastra* in Bengal. He was born in Nabadwip between 1600 and 1610 C.E. (Rarhi, 2011, p. 123) His father was a famous person in the pursuit of the *Tantra* and his name was Maheswar Bhattacharya. Krishnananda collected the extract of 170 *tantras* and *upa-tantras* and wrote a great book on *tantras* entitled *Brihat Tantrasar*. With his courtesy, the practice of the pursuit of *Shakti* was introduced in Bengal in every Nabadwip house. The fear and hatred against the *Tantric Kapaliks* from the hearts of the common people came to an end with the composition of the *Brihat Tantra Sar*. Owing to this reason, the attraction of *Shakti* worship gradually increased and gained wide popularity all over Bengal centering. (Sarkar, 2019, p. 262) W. W. Hunter argued that "A distinguished *Tantrik* who lived in Krishna Chanda Roys's time was Krishnanada Agombagish. He was the author of *Tantrasara*. And he was the first to celebrate the Kali puja and to establish the custom of illuminating the streets and houses on the night of the ceremony a custom that now extended all over India. (Hunter, 1877, p. 156) But most scholars agree that Agam Bagish was not a contemporary of Nawadwipadhipati Krishna Chandra Roy. Most of them think that Krishnananda appeared in Nabadwip sometime in the first decade of the seventeenth century and it was under his influence that the Vaishnava pilgrimage of Nabadwip became the main center of the pursuit of *Shakti*. That is why the dominance of *Shakti* worship can be noticed and it is celebrated here with great pomp and grandeur in the main Rash festival of Nabadwip. In the eighteenth century, Krishnachandra Roy, the king of Nabadwip, and Kali Prasad Ramprasad Sen,



the great devotee of Goddess Kali played a major role in strengthening the range of *Shakti* worship in Nadia.

Raja Man Singh received special help from a man named Bhavananda Majumdar to suppress the Baro Bhuiyans (big twelve Zamindar) of Bengal. As a reward for that assistance to Raja Man Singh, the Mughal emperor Jahangir granted Bhavananda a Zamindari of a large tract of land, including Nadia, by a decree or *forman* in 1606. The capital was established at Krishnanagar during the reign of King Rudra Roy. The society of the scholars of Nabadwip developed a close relationship with this dynasty of Krishnanagar. The rulers of this dynasty Raghab Roy, Rudra Roy, Ramakrishna Roy, and Krishnachandra Roy used to give a lot of money for the pursuit of knowledge of the learned Brahmin scholars of Nabadwip, for the development of knowledge, improvement and teaching of *Toles* and *Bachatuspathis*. These kings also gave them a lot of lands that were completely free of all revenues. The scholars of Nabadwip honoured Ramakrishna Roy, the ruler of Nadia, with the title of Nabadwipadhipati for his kindness and generosity towards them. From then on, the rulers of this lineage preferred to identify themselves as the kings of Nabadwip. The classical rule of the educational society of Nabadwip was so important that it was recognized as the rule of the whole of Bengal. (Sarkar, 2019, p. 116- 117) The kings of Nadia arranged for some annual grants in almost every *tole* and *Chatuspathi* in Nabadwip. If the students had the intention to set up an educational institution and teach after completing their lessons, they would come to the king's palace and get permission to distribute knowledge and get royalties only after passing the examination with the identity of qualification. (Roy, 1932, p. 48- 49) But after the death of King Krishna Chandra Roy, the financial condition of the rulers of this dynasty became very critical. As a result, the financial assistance of *toles* and *Chatuspathis* of Nabadwip had been severely reduced, and the decline of knowledge in Nabadwip began gradually. In the middle of the nineteenth century, a series of terrible incurable diseases and epidemics appeared in Nadia. That is to say, the glory of knowledge was suddenly fading in Nabadwip, which was once well known for its extremely nice weather, good health, and its best center for the study of eastern India, and its great scholars. Governor-General Lord Minto wrote very able minute, recommending that two Sanskrit colleges should be established, one at Trihut, the other at *Nudiya*; he encouraged learning there, giving two chiefs Pandits Rs. 100 monthly each, prizes were awarded to the best native



scholars, in the first-class Rs. 800, in the second Rs. 400, third Rs. 200, fourth Rs. 100, besides a *khetab* (award) to the one most proficient. (Long, 1974, p.284) Lord Minto recommended an annual expenditure of Rs. 12376 for the betterment of the education and learning society of Nabadwip. Sibendra Narayan Roy's higher son became the king of Cooch Behar, but he was the minority king of this dynasty and went to take education from Nadia.(Sarkar, 2011, p. 43) But as time progressed, the standard of education in Nabadwip was fallen. Civilization does not survive in one place, and it is like a nomad who moves from one to another place with the passing of time. The same was true of Nabadwip. This glorious land of Nabadwip shone with its glory for hundreds of years for its rich Bengali culture and the glory of knowledge. The knowledge entered the land of Nabadwip and penetrated like lightning into it, but gradually its radiance began to fade. In the current context, Nabadwip has become more famous as an international tourist destination instead of a famous place in the field of knowledge and studies. As a result, Nabadwip has become known to the common people to be the birthplace of Chaitanyadev, and the religious pageantry of Mayapur as the main seat of Gaudiya Vaishnavism is now worldwide. That Nabadwip, which was once ascended to the position of the city of learning and every street and lane of which used to be filled with numerous toles or *chatuspathis*, and students and researchers from all parts of the country were admired here for their wisdom or knowledge, has now become merely a tourist destination and its glory of the past has become completely eroded in the oblivion. The pursuit of the Goddess Saraswati is no longer accomplished here in Nabadwip like in the days of its glorious past. Instead of wisdom, Nabadwip is now known as the wonderful center of temples in eastern India. In each of these alleys, countless temples have been formed. Consequently, Nabadwip is now a sacred holy land and the place where Srikrishna Chaitanya was incarnated and initiated his journey of love.

Notes

1. Ramcharit of Goswami Sandhakar Nandi enjoys a unique place among the classics of the world's literature. The author enjoyed the patronage of the uttermost last Pala ruler Madanpal and finished his kavaya with the wish for a long life of the ruler during the first half of the 12th century



2. According to the book Amarkosh, the Bengali words Dwip and Naba both mean "new" or "island" surrounded by water. Again, just as "naba" means "nine," there are instances where "naba" has been used as a numerical value. The correct number Nabadwip may have been changed to Nudia, Nudiyaho, or Nodeh in a foreign tongue, and over time, the perverted Bengali spelling of Nodeh became known as Nadia.
3. School of higher learning institution for instruction in Nyaya, Rhetoric, Dharmasastra and Smritishastra like Vedic Literature. Elementary schools of learning through domestic instructions.
4. Elementary schools of learning through domestic instructions.
5. Neo-logical ideas of Indian logic and philosophy were established during the 13th century under the patronage of the greatest philosopher Gangesa Upadhyaya in Mithila, now situated in Bihar, and it was unresisted by the renounced scholar Raghunath Siromani Bhattacharya of Nabadwip.
6. Hindu religious works like the Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, etc. comprise traditional religious teaching.
7. The doctrines and principles of the tantras or worship of power involve mantras, meditations, Yoga, and ritual.

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