

Martyr Kdudiram Bose and Thought Currents of Surma Valley

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The hanging of Khudiram Bose is a remarkable incident in the history of freedom movement in India. Khudiram Bose was born on 3rd December, 1889 at Midnapur district of West Bengal. His father's name was Trailokya Nath Bose. He gave up studies and joined the Swadeshi movement and became a member of the Revolutionary party. He worked actively in the protest movement against the partition of Bengal in 1905. He was arrested on February 28th, 1906 but escaped after assaulting the policemen. But again he was arrested and finally released on 16th May, 1906. He took part in the looting of mailbags at Hatgachha in 1907. He took part in some other terrorist activities like attack on the Bengal Governor's special train near Narayangarh railway station, attempt of killing of two Englishmen - Watson and Fulle' in 1908 and finally organised a plot with Prafulla Chaki alias Dinesh Chandra Roy to kill Kingsford, Session Judge of Muzaffarpur of Bihar. They threw bomb on 20th April, 1908 at about 8-30 P.M. at Kingsford's carriage. But the vehicle was carrying two English lady Mrs. and Miss Kennedy. Both of them were killed. Khudiram was arrested at Waini railway station on 1st May, 1908. The Muzaffarpur bomb case was opened on May 21st, 1908. He was convicted guilty. The case ended on June 13th with a verdict of death. An appeal was preferred in the High Court on July 6th, 1908. After a short hearing the sentence was confirmed on July 13th, 1908. Khudiram's execution took place on August 11th, 1908 at 6 A.M. in Muzaffarpur Jail.'

Khudiram became a martyr and this incident created a great reaction all over India. Many folk poets composed folksongs narrating this incident. It requires mentioning that the historians have not yet properly analysed the contribution of the folk poets in the freedom movement of India who had spread the sensational news of the freedom movement and sacrifice of the freedom fighter by composing and singing such songs. The freedom movement

in the district of Sylhet and Cachar started centering round the issue of the partition of Bengal. 'Cachar Swadeshi Sabha' was established in the year 1905 at Silchar. Kamini Kumar Chanda was the president of that 'sabha' and Abanti Nath Dutta was the general secretary. Similarly, the Surma Valley Political Conference was established at Sylhet, of course. Sylhet and Cachar were joint partners of the Surma Valley Political Conference. The first session of the Surma Valley political conference was held at Telihaowar under the presidentship of Kamini Kumar Chanda in July, 1906. In 1906 Bipin Chandra Paul came to Cachar to preach swadeshi ideology. A large meeting that was organised at Malugram of Silchar town was addressed by Bipin Chandra Paul and that was the first political gathering of Cachar district.² Though the leaders and workers of the freedom movement tried to spread the ideas of freedom movement of India, yet the folk poets took the responsibility of spreading the sensational news regarding the freedom movement in the remote villages. It may be mentioned here that, one Sushil Kumar Sen, a boy of thirteen was sentenced to be whipped fifteen lashes by the Chief Presidency magistrate. Mr. Kingsford in Calcutta. This incident inspired the revolutionaries to take the final decision to kill Kingsford. On this subject matter Kaliprasanna Kavya Visarad composed a poem.³

can you compel us to forget our mother land
Are we (coward) sons of the mother
Bloodshed will give us more strength
Who will escape leaving the mother.

So, it appears that there was a tradition prevalent in composing poems regarding the exciting events and that famous folk-song were composed following that tradition,

Bid me farewell mother, let me travel around.⁴

This song is mentioned in the chapter "patriotic and swadeshi songs" of the book "Banglar paliigiti"⁵. This popular song has been sung in the film "Subhash Chandra" in a slightly different way.⁶

Folk songs were composed in Surma Valley on the theme of Khudiram's hanging. Many freedom fighters of this region came to learn about Khudiram's hanging through the medium of folksong. Regarding this Nirod Kumar Gupta, a freedom fighter of Surma Valley has written,

“During the swadeshi movement I was mere a child, but still some memories remain in my mind..... The movement in Habiganj (a subdivision of Sylhet district) spread in remote villages. Every year in rainy season I used to go to relatives house in a certain village I heard the following song in that village,-

“The Idnians will never forget their life time.

The unjustified execution of Khudiram and then I came to learn about the execution of Khudiram.”⁸

Nirod Kumar Gupta from his memory quoted the song in the book “Swadhinata Sangramer Smriti”. But he could not remember the whole song. I have collected the full text of the song from Late Girija Sundari Dhar of Chandmari Road, Tarapur, Silchar. The text of the song is as follows :-

The Indians will never forget in their life time

The unjustified execution of Khudiram.

Our Khudiram comes of a gentle family of Medinipur.

He was calm and quiet, ever cheerful and sweet tongued.

In the bomb case of Muzzaffarpur

Caught by the Firingis

He was doomed to go to ocean of eternity

He was nineteen

Looked like a prince

He was a teenager orphan

But severe revenge was taken upon him.

With a smiling face

He stood on the platform of gallows

Standing bravely

He showed the example of patriotism.

In a wailing voice Brindaban says

I cannot tolerate it any more

He (Brindaban) becomes depressed

Remembering the wretched condition of the country.

From this song we know that one Brindaban is the composer of the song. There are many folk songs prevalent in this Valley in the name of Brindaban. But no details about his life are known yet.

It requires mentioning that “Bid me farewell mother, let me travel around” is a popular patriotic folksong. But the song which is in Surma Valley is almost unknown. But if compared it will appear that the song prevalent in Surma Valley is more

objective. In the song of the Surma valley the following points are mentioned distinctly which are supported by history. The points are as follows:

- ii) The birth place of Khudiram.
- ii) His behavior.
- iii) The proper mentioning of the place of his trial
- v) The age of Khudiram at the time of his execution.
- v) The family history of Khudiram.
- vi) His stability of mind at the time of execution.

The *Empire* (an evening daily of Calcutta) published the following editorial on August 11, 1908: "Khudiram Bose was executed this morning.....He was cheerful and smiling..... — It is said that when his pleader visited him in the jail the day before execution, Khudiram told him that he would die as fearless as the Rajput women of old did on funeral pyres."

Notes & References

1. K. C. Ghosh, *The Roll of Honour*, Calcutta, 1965, p. 166; P. N. Chopra (ed), *who's who of Indian Martyrs*, New Delhi.
2. J. B. Bhattacharjee, *Cachar under British Rule in North East India*, New Delhi : 1977 p.256.
3. bet mere ki ma bhulabe
amra ki mar sei chhele
dekhe raktarakti barbe sakti
ke palabe ma phele.
Nirod Kumar Gupta *Swadhinata Sangramer Smriti*, Silchar, 1974, p. 16
4. ek bar biday dao ma ghure asi (The full text of the song is given on page.5
5. Chittaranjan Deb, *Banglar Palligiti*, Calcutta, 1966, pp. 422-423.
6. Gramophone Company of India, Disc Record No-3 AEX 4002, Side-2, cut-6
7. *Swadhinata Sangramer Smriti*, p. 18.
8. The original text of the folksong . is as follows ;
bhulibe ki pranante o bharatbasi
bara abichare hailare khudiramer phansi
medinipur bhadraghare
moder khudirame janma dhare
chila santa sista sada hrista ati mistabhasi
Mazzaffarpur bomar mamlay

tare dekhte yena rajputra
ma bap mara chele manus
tar upare eta akrosh
phansikasthe hese hese
se ye daraiya birer bese
se ye svadesh bhaktir ki mahima
gelare prakashi
kende brindaban bale
amar ar manena pora mane
yakhan deser katha mane hay
hay se udasi.

The text of the song "ek bar biday de ma ghure asi:"

Bid me farewell mother, let me travel around.

The hanging knot shall I wear laughingly,
to be seen by the world,

Mother, preparing a bomb
I was waiting beside the railway track,
Intending to kill the lord

(Unknowingly) killed, Indians,

Bid me farewell mother.....

Saturday at ten a.m.

The High Court was with capacity crowd,

Abiram was sent to exile

And khudiram hanged,

Bid me farewell mother

Had been with a dagger

Your khudi might not have been caught

Flesh and blood would have been mingled together

All the world could see,

Bid me farewell mother

After ten months and ten days

I would be born again to any aunt

if you cannot recognise me

Mark the knot at my throat

Bid me farewell mother

se ye pariya phiringir pallay

se ye chiratare kalsayare chalilare bhasi

bayas unish bachar matra