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Source Context Of Sasthipada Chattopadhyay's Juvenile Detective Story 'Pandab Goenda'

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Abstract: Like other branches of Bengali fiction, the detective story branch has shed its dull past and established itself in mainstream literature. Recently, prominent Bengali writers from other genres have also started writing in this genre. Notably, Sasthipada Chattopadhyay is widely recognized in Bengali literature as a juvenile writer. He is calm, simple, and lively. His literary work and life flow in the same direction. He gained recognition mainly through the creation of the juvenile detective story 'Pandab Goenda'. This article explores the concept behind writing 'Pandab Goenda' and its sources of inspiration. It also mentions Khirrod Chandra Majumdar and English Children's writer Enid Blyton (1897-1968) in the magazine 'Shuktara', edited by Majumdar. Essentially, it discusses the background or source context of Sasthipada Chattopadhyay's juvenile detective story, 'Pandab Goenda'.

Index Word- Khirrod Chandra Majumdar, Shuktara Magazine, Enid Blyton, Juvenile Detective Story, Pandab Goenda, Source Context, Writing Concept.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sasthipada Chattopadhyay was born on Sunday, 9 March 1947. Father Jitendranath Chattopadhyay and mother Nandarani Devi. Although his ancestral home was Narugram near Ramna in Burdwan district, he was born in Khurut Shasthitala in Howrah district. He spent his entire life in Howrah. His literary pursuits began in his teenage years by publishing his writings in the children's section 'Dakghar' of the newspaper 'Dainik Basumati'. He also wrote in the children's section of several magazines. His writings have been published in Magazines such as Sharadiya Basumati, Janasebak, Jugantar, Shuktara, Shubhotara, Anandabazar Rabibasariya Alochani, Anandamela, Desh, etc. He came into contact with the famous Bengali writer Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay. He was also in regular contact with famous people, including Ramapada Chowdhury, Sagarmay Ghosh, Abadhuta, Bimal Mitra, Sunil Basu, and others. Khirrod Chandra Majumdar, one of the Supremos of 'Dev Sahitya Kutir' and editor of 'Shuktara' and 'Nabakallol', was very fond of him.

The proximity of famous personalities made his life path smooth. Their blessings were always on him. His life and literary pursuits flowed in the same line. We cannot separate his literary pursuits from and life. His continuous literary pursuits ran parallel to his life. He had no complaints about life. He was a calm, lively, simple, and straightforward person. He devoted his life to literary pursuits until the very end. He was awarded various awards in his life. He was awarded the Chanda Bardai Award, named the legendary poet of Rajasthan, the Shailajananda Award, the Satyajit Samman, the Gajen Mitra and Sumath Ghosh Awards, the Raygunakar Bharatchandra Smriti Award, the Umaprasad Smriti Award, and the 'Bal Sahitya Puraskar' given by the Sahitya Akademi in 2017. A well-known writer passed away on March 3, 2023. He was 81 years old at the time of his death.

II. SOURCE CONTEXT OF PANDAB GOENDA

In his career, Shasthipada Chattopadhyay was an employee of the Superintendent of Police Cordoning Vigilance Cell. With his father's wealth, he traveled to various pilgrimage sites as a teenager. Traveling became a favorite aspect of his life. Without artificial veils, his life is deep and crystal clear. His life is lively, calm, and gentle like a constantly flowing river. Therefore, his works also have liveliness, ease, simplicity, and fluency. All his works can be divided into four main streams - children's literature, travel literature, spiritual writing, and adult novels. He is mainly known in literature for children's literature. He appeared in Bengali juvenile detective literature in the second half of the twentieth century. His writings are for children. He mainly wrote mystery and thriller stories, horror stories, travel stories, and detective stories. Although he wrote mystery, thriller, horror, and travel stories, he became known in the literary world for writing teenage detective stories. The reader feels a different kind of joy while reading his detective stories. His teenage detective story, 'Pandab Goenda', is about teenagers. This is one of his teenage detective stories. Although he began his writing career at the age of fifteen, he had conceived the idea of writing 'Pandab Goenda' in his mind by the time he was twenty-four, in 1965.

A major inspiration for the author to write 'Pandab Goenda' was his beloved dog, Panchu. He brought this dog from his ancestral home, Narugram, near Ramna in Burdwan district, to his residence in Howrah. At that time, his family lived in a rented house at 61 Gopal Banerjee Lane, Howrah. At that time, he developed a friendship with ten or twelve neighboring children. Wherever the group of friends went, Panchu would also go with them. They would form a group and roam around places like Ramakrishnapur Ghat, Botanical Garden, etc. They would go on adventures. As a result, the author developed a great relationship with Panchu. The author considered his relationship with Panchu to be a rebirth. While writing for the magazine 'Shuktara', he told the story of Panchu's exploits many times to Khirod Chandra Majumdar.

While he was an employee of the Superintendent of Police Cordoning Vigilance Cell, he used to wander around alone on the roads during his tiffin. He used to look at various pictures pasted on the walls of the Metro Cinema. Apart from this, he used to fill his mind with a collection of English books and cinema magazines in the bookstores. It was at this time that a wide-backed book came to his attention one day. In which a miscreant is chased by a few children with a dog. In this context, he wrote in an article, "I kept the book in a state of confusion. I read in the Bengali medium. I am not used to reading English, and I don't understand it. I thought, how would it be if such teamwork were written?"¹

He was not proficient in English, so he could understand from the book cover that there is teamwork in the book. But he thought of writing a detective story, but did not write it. There were other reasons for writing as a team. By 1952, due to the Sino-Indian War, writing in the 'Rabibasariya Alochani' of 'Anandabazar' magazine was stopped, so he started writing various types of writing for children in the magazine 'Shuktara'. All his writings from that time were published continuously. No writings were returned to him from 'Shuktara', whatever he sent was printed. As a result, he came to the attention of the editor, Khirod Chandra Majumdar. Since his writing was fluent, he would print every writing. He once told the writer, "...many writers are angry with me. That is why I do not print everyone's writings. I return three or four writings and then print one writing. However, when I get your writing, I print all your writings."²

Despite being a very wealthy man, Khirod Chandra Majumdar was very fond of Sasthipada Chattopadhyay. He had instructed the writer to write because his writing would be published in the 'Shuktara' newspaper every month. According to Khirod Babu, Sasthipada Chattopadhyay's writing was very fluent, but he sometimes wrote ghost stories, funny stories, and sometimes ordinary stories, due to which he could not stand out in any one type of writing. So he advised him to write detective stories. He said— "...Your writing is very fluent. But the fault is that sometimes you do not write in one way. Sometimes ghost stories, sometimes funny stories, sometimes ordinary stories, sometimes fairy tales. If you write like this, how will you stand out? From now on, you write detective stories."³

It was with such enthusiasm from Khirod Chandra Majumdar that Sasthipada Chattopadhyay dared to write detective stories for children. But he can't think of how to write a detective story. He doesn't know anything about that. At that moment, he suddenly remembered that English broadsheet book. In which a miscreant is chased by a few children with a dog. He got an idea. He decided to start writing such a teamwork Story with his five, but he didn't start writing. As a result, Khirod Babu said to the writer, "I've told you so many times to write a detective story, but you don't write. If you write, you can. Start writing a detective story by creating a teamwork with your five."⁴

To encourage the writer to write detective stories, he showed the writer a couple of books by the English children's writer Enid Blyton. And he said that many such detective stories have been written abroad. But the writer did not know how to read English, but he understood that teamwork was also at work in this book. The writer says in an interview, "...Khirold Babu said, 'Writing a detective story is not such a difficult task. Suppose you and your group of children are going to the garden to collect cicadas, suddenly, on the way,

some evil man snatches the necklace from the neck of one of your daughters and runs away. ... But no one could catch him. At this time, your panchu went and jumped on him, and the man was caught. Then what happens is, the police station. Can't you write like this?"⁵

Khirod Babu gave the writer a lot of encouragement in writing detective stories for children. Inspired by him, he wrote the story of Pandab Goenda. When he finished writing, he named it 'The Adventure of the Five Pandavas'. But since this name, he did not like this name, he changed the name to 'Pandab Goenda'. Because if he named it 'The Adventure of the Five Pandavas', no one would read it, thinking it was a mythological story, hence the change in the name. In the story 'Pandab Goenda', Panchu became the hero; the author put himself at the level of Bablu, and Bilu, Bhombal, Bachchu, and Bichchu also found a place.

In this context, it should be said that at that time, Sasthipada Chattopadhyay was a regular visitor to Tarashankar's house in Tala Park. Tarashankar's son Sanatkumar sent his father's writing 'Shatabdir Mrityu' through Sasthipada for Nabakallol. Sasthipada carefully took the writing and compared it with his own writing, 'Pandab Goenda'. The next day, Shuktara went to the office and gave the two writings to Khirodchandra. 'Pandab Goenda' became very popular as soon as it was published in the magazine 'Shuktara'. He started writing detective stories for children in the magazine 'Shuktara'.

III. CONCLUSION

In the background of writing 'Pandab Goenda', Sasthipada Chattopadhyay received constant encouragement from Khirod Chandra Majumdar, the editor of 'Shuktara' magazine. Although he could not read the English book by Enid Blyton given by Khirod Chandra, he accepted the idea of teamwork. The events and the environment of the story are the author's own. The author's very favorite Panchu has become the centerpiece of the story. In writing detective stories, the author has shown innovation in the variety of crimes, character development, and the uniqueness of the story. The story has elements of adventure and travel literature. 'Pandab Goenda' is one of his juvenile detective stories. He wrote it in a series format. He completed the detective story series in thirty volumes. There are total of forty-one missions in the Pandab Goenda series. This 'Pandab Goenda' series can be said to be the author's own original creation for juvenile readers.

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