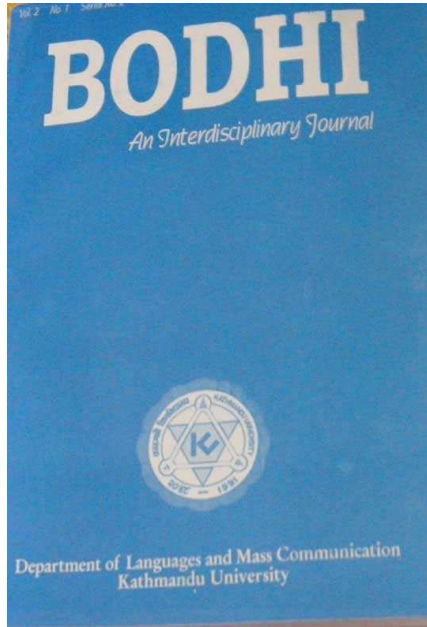


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Understanding Parijat through the Prism of Her Biography

-Janga B. Chauhan

May the delicate drops of the cloud bring stones,
And soft rhododendron boughs blossom flames;
May the prisoned streets collapse;

-- Parijat

Darjeeling Days: the Family

Parijat was born in 1937 as a third child of Amrit Moktan (Mother) and Dr. S.K.Waiba, at Lingima tea garden of Darjeeling. It is not clearly known in which month she was born. However, describing the environment of the time of her birth, her sister Sukanya writes citing the elders, “According to sisters, white *Indrakamal* (a type of flower) had bloomed around our house at the time you were born. Darjeeling is believed to have this flower in the month of Baishakh (April). Thus, we assume that you were born in Baishakh itself” (Sukanya, 1994, p. 91). Parijat herself did not remember both the fragrance of *Indrakamal*, and the beautiful small house of the tea garden in which she was born. Nor did she have clear reminiscences about her mother, who had died after a giving birth to the youngest daughter. About her mother Parijat writes, “I don't know what mother's love means, nor does my sister” (*ibid*).

Her grandmother was alive when her mother passed away. But she was deprived of the love of her grandmother also. Parijat could hardly meet this strict grandmother of hers, not even once a year. Her grandfather, Sardar Dhanman Waiba, had reached Darjeeling from Chainpur (a village in eastern Nepal), in search of good living. Interesting to note, he was cremated in his own courtyard according to his last wish. Her grandmother persisted fulfilling the wishes of her husband despite the urge of the villagers not to do so. She was also cremated right near her

husband after her death. This joint crematory of Parijat's grandparents is visible in this part of Darjeeling even today.

In spite of belonging to such a sensitive family of immigrants, Parijat's father was of a strange nature. He was opposed to traditional values and codes. When his father passed away, he neither shaved his hair and mustache, nor did he fast in the name of observing the funeral rites. In stead, he ate the cake prepared by a Muslim. Parijat, however, did not feel the lack of maternal love due to her father's constant care. Dr. S.K. Waiba was different from other ordinary people. Many considered him eccentric. He initially practiced medicine under the British in Darjeeling, but he defied their authority for his self-respect. He resigned from the comfortable job and status in a rage and shifted to a small three-roomed house of the Limbu village where he started to treat local people independently. He had a small drugstore in the village. More than by sick people, his place used to be occupied by his friends, who talked about politics and philosophy. The visitors were welcomed with tea, betel and cigarettes. Dr. Waiba was engaged in the research of his choice now and then. He not only volunteered to treat the needy free of cost at times, but also offered them financial assistance. Parijat and her siblings were brought up in the shadow of this eccentric and rebellious father. But, despite being the daughter of the doctor who refused to forfeit his self-respect before poverty, Parijat began her formal schooling in a local school.

Dr. Waiba had begun an independent life of luxury even after revolting against the British, but the well-to-do British had an influence in his life style in many respects. Parijat has clarified this in one of her reminiscences, "My father is arrogant. We can't play with children of lower class. He says that friendship with them will spoil our speech and manners. He is an educated man. He has read Marx, Angels, Gandhi and many more, but just reading is not enough for a man's life. He has read, and that's all" (Parijat, 1997, pp. 8-9).

He was hardened by several unexpected deaths in the family. Amrit Waiba, his wife, also died leaving altogether six children in his hands. This pushed him completely towards atheism. He kicked away the Hlasem Dhan, the Buddhist worshipping place of his house, to initiate his distrust towards godhood. He even buried in the drain the monuments of Buddha and guru Rempuche. The previously banned pork began to be cooked in the house. As death had its course, just after three months of the beginning of this rebellion, three other members of the family met with an untimely demise. This incident rather intensified his rebellion to such an extent that he was even prepared to denounce the funeral rites, but counsels of his villagers prevented it.

Parijat not only witnessed this atmosphere of revolt in her childhood, but also experienced it herself. All religious and traditional codes got dismantled in that family of the emigrant Tamangs. But Dr. Waiba still had “a silver lining” at heart. Parijat remembers this soft part of her father,

We consider him the world’s greatest story teller. We get enchanted by his stories. He always keeps the story in a tickling suspense, and we are only made to go to sleep with a craving for tomorrow evening. He advises us to be a hero and a genius. He does not scold and beat us. He always tries to provide us a clean and progressive environment. There is no rule and coercion; we are free to express whatever we wish, and speak for our rights any time. (Parijat, 1997, p. 8)

Parijat grew up in Darjeeling, the queen of hills, under the loving caresses of Mt. Kanchanjangha. She was inspired by poetic feelings from her childhood itself. She had gradually learnt to reciprocate with different facets of nature like green hills, trees, forests, flowers, sunrise, sunset, lakes, rain, clouds, horizon, and blue sky. In fact, the atmosphere was free and aesthetic within and beyond the house. But Dr. Waiba had set strict rules in things like singing and dancing. He hated these forms of aesthetics for some unknown reasons. It was not his

old habit though. This change in his nature could be attributed to the repeated tragic incidents in the family, otherwise he once used to be a soft-hearted man. He used to welcome Gaaines (wandering bards) to his house and spend nights reveling and crying to their songs. Parijat took to singing and dancing despite her father's restrictions. This later became a part of her life.

The role of one of her cousin brothers is very significant in giving Parijat the impetus to her literary inclinations. This cousin himself was an active youth in the village. He had a strong liking for sports. Besides, he used to publish a handwritten magazine there. His writings were attractive, and they touched Parijat. He was also the first person to sense the poet in her. He had once said to her, "Why don't you write poems, sister?" (Parijat, 1997, p. 15). Then she had written the first poem of her life, but unsuccessfully. It had not come from her heart. The same brother once again inspired her to write stories. She had read stories of "Madhumalati" and "Lalhira", and with their inspiration, she wrote a love story. It only made her friends laugh with an indication that it was not mature enough to inspire readers. However, this did not dishearten her. These initiations and the constant inspiration from her cousin kindled in her the spirit of literary creations.

Parijat's own brother Shiva Kumar Waiba had a strong fondness for painting and horse riding. He had a collection of stories from which Parijat read Totamaina, Birshikha, Gulabkali, Premlahari and Akbar-Birbal. These stories put her to the habit of reading. Besides, she began to study from her school library also. She gradually got engrossed in the world of tales like Peterman, Robinhood, The Arabian Nights, Sindbad the Sailor and Robinson Crusoe. She further selected the light novels of Sexan Blake, Kushwaha Kant, Pyarelal Awara and Govinda Singh. Her initial reading was indiscriminate. She had no particular plans about regularizing and enhancing her reading habits. Habit became an instinct and the horizon of her reading expanded. In this course, she got familiar with other noted writers like

 Bachchan, Nirala, Sumitranandan Pant, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Tennyson. Sharad Chandra, Premchand, Rajagopalachari, Govind Ballav Pant, K.M Munsri and Brindaban Lal later brought her into the wider world of literature. Thus, begun with not-so-serious writings, her study was spontaneously directed towards more profound works of world literature. Meanwhile, she wrote some stories, but tore them in discontent. She knew that she had not matured enough to be a writer.

As time passed, she took to reading the verses of Lekhanath Paudyal and Dharanidhar Koirala, and developed a strong liking for them. In this course of enjoying verses, one day she heard the following lines of Laxmi Prasad Devkota recited by one of her classmates:

To which temple are you going,
 O pilgrim, which temple?
 Riding human shoulders, O pilgrim,
 To which divine land are you going?

These lines from Devkota's "Yaatri" (the traveler) for the first time stirred Parijat -- to such an extent as to induce her to writing. On one hand, then, she was growing up with a strong fervor for literature, on the other, she had stepped into adolescence. Interesting to note, there came a 'season' for romantic lovers in Darjeeling. Her own brother was in love with someone. Her friends had started to compose love letters. Not that they all knew the meaning of love. Exchanging love letters, dating or eloping with partners was all that they understood as love. Parijat volunteered to write her friends' love letters. But she could not remain untouched herself. In the course of boosting friend's love relations, she herself happened to fall in love with one local boy. They wrote letters, and so did emotions deepen. She was only fourteen then. For some reasons, later she ended the relation herself. Whatever the reason for ending this relation that was begun with a pledge to everlasting faithfulness before Mt. Kanchanjanga, she was never able to get rid of it in her later life. She has reminiscenced her experiences in this way, "After all, the same sense of guilt got rooted in my heart as a complicated fear.

It was a great mistake of my life. It was not a pain to myself alone, I pushed in the state of utter sorrow and despair the person whom I loved very much” (Parijat, 1997, p. 24).

It is felt that Parijat herself bore the pangs of lifelong guilt for the injustice she had done to her first love. The wound of failed love and the sense of everlasting psychological burden are found occasionally relapsed in her initial literary creations, personal letters, and conversations to close friends. It is not known, perhaps to Parijat herself, why she had made this painful decision of ending her love affair despite knowing that the subsequent feeling of remorse would continue to haunt her later life. Speculations are made about the real reasons, but nobody knows for sure if they are true. She was perhaps afraid of the life of surrender with a house, a husband and a family. Her repulsion with family life is believed to have been heightened by the life of dejection that her elder sister (from her step mother) had to suffer under the horrid manhandling of her husband. Or this could in itself be a form of absurd rebellion. Really, how complicated the flow of her life was! She has written about the complications in 1982 in one of her letters, “My life happened to be very difficult. I did not plan to live thus. My attempt to overcome one complication produced another. I had only planned to live a life slightly different from the ordinary one” (cited in Maskey, 1997, p. 13).

Analyzing her letters about her first love and the subsequent feeling of guilt, Maskey writes,

There were many intelligent young boys, who loved Parijat not only as a teenager, but also when she was a mature woman, but nobody reached the height of her first love. This means, no one appeared in her life to win her heart as much as the first man. Was the love that she is supposed to have heartlessly rejected really rejected? It had rather continued to survive in her entire life as an honorable relation with that man, and glowed within her

as an imperceptible but profound feeling. (Maskey, 1997, p. 14).

Parijat's only brother (Shiva Kumar) died in 1953 getting accidentally drowned in a pond. He was intelligent in studies. He did painting, played flute, and horse riding, as mentioned earlier, was his hobby. He amazed his sisters with his gossips. However, with the passing of his teens, he had developed inclinations to bad things also. He had ended his life in the pond during a downpour while trying to save a practicing boy. This accident brought a turn in the family. Dr. Waiba was intensely bereaved. The house observed a strange solemnity for a long time, and grief overpowered the doctor. It almost pushed him into depression.

Struggle in Kathmandu: the making of the writer

Parijat came to Kathmandu in 1954. She resumed her reading here also. She read Gorky, Tolstoy and Rahul Sanskritayan from the collection of one of her cousins. After this reading she realized how incomplete her previous reading had been. Life was not easy here. Her economic condition did not improve. Her family life was as usual full of problems.

Although she had completed her secondary education from a missionary school in Darjeeling, she passed her SLC examination from Padma Kanya Bidhyashram, Dilli Bazar in 1954. She completed I.A. in 1956, and B.A. in 2058 from Padma Kanya Campus. Her formal education came to an end when she left her M.A. studies incomplete from Tribhuvan University, Tripureshwar. Her college life during her B.A. studies was very worrisome. She remembers those days, "Those two years give me the greatest amount of solace today. They were circumstances close to madness" (Parijat, 1997, p.143). She did not have money to pay exam fees for her final year. Her sister Sukanya was in the same class with her. Having lived in half starvation for a long time, however, they had spared money just enough to pay for the exam of one of them only. They

pressurized each other to take the examination, in a form of contest of one sister's sacrifice for another. They could not devise a solution for a long time. But, fortunately, they got a kind help of Mrs. Chandrakala Kiran, the then headmistress of Demonstration School, and filled their examination forms. Parijat passed her B.A.

Parijat's arrival to Kathmandu, her studies and the life of struggle here shaped her creative ability. In fact, Parijat became Parijat only after she had come to Kathmandu. Before that, she was only Bishnu Waiba of Darjeeling, a person with desire for expression who was waiting to be expressed. The lama priest had named her "Chhekudolma" at her birth, which meant Tara-Rani (star queen). She was a very sensitive girl, and sometimes went to the extremes of romanticism. She had explored her writing potential with sentimental love letters. Perhaps, she had developed the spirit of poeticism in her prose with these initial emotional writings. Kathmandu had a different literary environment from that of Darjeeling, and was gradually giving impetus to the poet within her. At the same time, she was bothered by the sense of love, separation and anguish. In this state of mind she began to write poems. One day she got a chance to read her poem to Chitranjan Nepali when she had met him for suggestions regarding examination in Nepali. Chitranjan was the first person to urge her to continue writing saying that her poems were good. He also initiated the publication of two of her poems in *Dharti* (the earth), a magazine edited by Bhawani Bhikshu. In this way, in 1956 she reached the readers for the first time as a poet.

This beginning put her deeply in the field of poetry. She began to see poems everywhere. Poems came both to her sleeps and waking life. She had already learnt to smoke, long before in Darjeeling, and with the puff of smoke she now began to be absorbed in the world of poems. She got accustomed to journeying that world along with the tune of the flute played close by. In this course of writing and reciting poems, in 1957, she joined a literary organization named Rodighar. This was her

first ever affiliation with an organization of the type. Rodighar proved for her a forum for public appearance as a young poet in literary seminars inside Kathmandu. She also got acquainted with the then young literary figures like Mohan Himanshu Thapa, Bhupi Sherchan, Ramesh Bikal, Bashu Shashi and Dwarika Shrestha. In this course, her first collection of poems, *Akanksha* (longings, 1957) was published. Her poems in this collection and almost all those she wrote till 1961 are inspired by the spirit of romanticism. Her poems written between 1955 - 1964 appeared to reflect her sense of guilt after the first love and her experiences with the mundane life of Kathmandu. They also seem to express the sense of bitterness she had undergone, mentally and physically, from the early age of fourteen.

Parijat wrote four novels during her studies at Padma Kanya College: *Sangharsha* (struggle), *Manab Antaryami* (omniscient human) *Sharada* and *Barpipal*. They were romantic and aesthetic in nature. The first of these, *Sangharsha*, was rejected by publishers. The rejection disappointed her but she did not stop writing. This continuity had actually given birth to other three novels. Written around the themes like love and romance, separation, poverty, sentimentalism, accidents, death, lust and decadence, these early creations did not satisfy the author herself. The fact that she herself burnt all of them shows her own discontent towards these early works.

Despite destroying the initial creations, Parijat's enthusiasm for novel writing did not die; it grew intensely in her. But when her ambitions were getting higher, she contracted a terrible orthopedic complication, which sent her abed for three years. This same complication, on relapse, put her into lifelong disability later. Those three years were painful for her both physically and mentally. Regular medication slowly pushed her into deeper financial crisis. In utter hopelessness, she began to see darkness everywhere and perceive the absurd underlying human existence. This state of despair and restlessness gave birth to her famous novel *Shirishko Phool* (*Blue Mimosa*). This novel not only stood as a landmark creation as literature of the

absurd and existentialism, but also deserved the honor of the prestigious *Madan Puraskar* in 1965. Moreover, its publication and subsequent popularity elevated her personality in the milieu of Nepali literature. She earned overnight recognition. Commenting on the artistry of this novel, famous literary critic Basudev Tripathi writes, “Parijat’s *Shirishko Phool*, in fact, stands as a best novel written in Nepali language after Rup Narayan Singh’s *Bhramar* (the bumble bee, 1992), in the parameters of novelistic art” (Tripathi, 1994, p. 119).

In an interview Parijat has revealed about the background of *Shirishko Phool* in this way,

Before beginning the novel I had a desire to discredit the Gorkha soldiers. In my childhood in Darjeeling, I had heard of the terrorism caused by white soldiers. Also, such incidents used to occur there off and on. Later I thought that the Gorkha soldiers, who sacrificed themselves senselessly in the service of those whites, must be base themselves. After some time I got a chance to interview three ex-Gorkha soldiers: my brother S.K Lama and his friends J.M. Moktan and Badrinarasingsh, who had escaped from the ‘death valley’. This paved the way to the creation of *Shirishko Phool* in the then setting of Kathmandu. This same book won popularity and awards later. (cited in Adhikari, 1994, p. 283)

Shirishko phool elicited a lot of criticisms amongst the Nepalese intellectual circle and earned more popularity. Its fame reached beyond the national boundaries. Translated by Tanka Bilash Varya by the name *Blue Mimosa*, the novel now is contained in the curriculum of Maryland University, USA. Japanese translator and linguist Haruhito Noju is believed to have attempted its translation into Japanese also. Noju considers *Blue mimosa* an excellent creation, capable of an identity in world literature. German scholar Ingrid Kreidl (1994) writes the universal characteristics of the book,

The secret of her success was to portray the life of ordinary people, of the lower and middle people with whom her readers would identify. She also questioned the main values norms and restraints with which everybody has to get along but hardly anyone talks about. In *Blue Mimosa* her main characters disclose their most intimate, and vulnerable and human sides” (p. 170).

Shirishko Phool has also been criticized as infectious and cynical. Govinda Bhatta had a harsh, demeaning comment on the novel, “Is it *Shirishko Phool* or *Kagazko Phool* (a paper flower)?” (Bhatta, 1997, p.110). Writers from the progressive wing, Khagendra Sangraula, Ninu Chapagain, Rishi Baral, Chaitanya, and Murari Aryal have repeatedly criticized this novel.

At a time she was wishing a release from this absurd world, enveloped by the cloud of despair, Parijat reflected the sense of desolation, dissipation and futility in her works including *Shirishko Phool*. Her poems “Rogi premikako patra” (letter from a diseased lover), “Mrityuko angaloma” (in death’s embrace), “Nasodha yo ghau” (ask not this wound), “Mero poplar ko rukh” (my poplar tree), “Sangai maraun” (let’s die together), and “Upayahin saanjh” (remediless evening) are reflections on the need of that release. In course of time, the attempt to take the rebellion of an individual to that of the mass led to the formation of Ralfa, the ever popular literary-artistic movement of Nepal in which Parijat was an active part. Parijat’s life began to take a different course within Ralfa. Her absurdist/existentialist rebellion appears to have become relatively more conspicuous in these years. The Ralfas went to the people, worked in creating awareness about different facets of life and the world. Their principal messengers were their intellectual and artistic but inherently rebellious songs sung in folk tunes of typical rural settings. Patriotism and humanity were the chief themes they sang to the people. Ralfa was a revolt against conservatism, but it was not unaffected by the

sense of egoism and ambitions. Only after it had come to fame, people began to question its ideological base. It was further influenced by the ideals of French student leader Regis Debrei, and by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. The works of Che Guevara, especially *Reminiscences on Cuban Revolution* and *Diary of Che Guevara*, were popular at that time. The Ralfas studied these works with a result that they developed inclination towards Marxism gradually. Parijat was no exception to this development. This change in ideology, consequently, influenced her writings in the years to come.

Some progressive youths of the time had brought Ralfa into existence. As stated earlier, it was the group of poets, singers, composers and thinkers assisted by Parijat herself. Poet Manjul reminisces, “*Ralfa* was the embodiment of their youthful enthusiasm. More than that, it was a fire against the vices of the contemporary society. Ah! How much Parijat *Didi* (sister) used to back us with courage and zeal!” At a time she was feeling insecure and helpless herself, Parijat also had got support from the Ralfa generation. But, in spite of the support, she does not seem to have lived a fully secure life” (Manjul, personal communication, August 3, 2008). Her own words reflect this sense, “But I was not very happy inside Ralfa. I was living as if hanging in the gallows of anguish” (cited in Adhikari, 1997, p. 283).

Entangled in such state of mind, Parijat wrote absurdist stories and poems while in Ralfa. She had the fire of rebellion within, and it was taking the form of a rebellion against the society itself. She had rather begun to feel peace in this state. Meanwhile, the Ralfas, influenced by leftist ideology, began to get tangled in internal conflict. This transition from absurdist to progressive thoughts was very significant for Parijat. She admits herself, “I began my progressive life as a Ralfa. Ralfa itself was such a forum that obliged me to be progressive both subjectively and objectively” (*ibid*).

At a time the Ralfas were themselves unsure of a direction, and she was herself seeking a particular ideal to stick to, Parijat wrote the novel *Mahattahin* (the trivial), and some stories of the anthologies *Aadim Desh* (the primordial country), and *Sadak Ra Prativa* (the street and the genius). She seems to have cherished the sense of social responsibility during the later times of Ralfa. This responsibility, however, was yet devoid of any specific ideal and a class, and was founded upon extreme individualism. Parijat had the usual fires of youthful vehemence at that time, and it was the time when the ideals of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro had tenaciously resided in her. As a result the book like *Bainsako Manchhe* (a man in his youth) took birth. It is considered to embody her ideals nurtured while in the Ralfa. Parijat is known to have started to admit her affinity with progressive ideology in the course of facing the criticisms elicited by this book. She describes her transition from existentialism through *Ralfa* to progressivism,

She came to the mainstream progressive line as a writer in the course of seeking relief from the state of meaninglessness, despair, inferiority complex, illusion and agony, and in order to give proper direction to the feeling of rebellion and aggression resulted from that state. Her conception of life was shaped by such diversity of experiences. This had ultimately led her to join Nepal Communist Party (CPN), Chautho Mahadhibeshan (fourth general convention) in 1974.

As a landmark to her progressive affiliation, Parijat wrote the novel *Toribari bata ra sapanaharu* (mustard field, paths and the dreams). This and other writings projected her as a leading progressive writer of the time. The novels *Usale rojeko bato* (his chosen path), *Parkhal bhitra ra bahira* (in and out of the wall) and *Anido pahadsangai* (along with the sleepless mountain); the collections of stories like *Salgiko balatkrit ansu* (the raped tears of Salgi), *Badhashala janda aunda* (to and from the slaughterhouse); and the collection of poems *Bainsalu bartaman* (youthful present) are some of the works that depict her as a progressive writer.

Parijat's career as a writer began in 1957 with the publication of the collection of her poems, *Akanksha* and ended in 1994 after another collection, *Bainsalu bartaman*. In the span of her active writing from 1957 to 1993, she wrote 21 books of different genres. They are three collections of poems: *Akanksha*, *Parijat ka kabitaharu* (the poems of Parijat, 1987) and *Bainsalu bartaman* (1994); four collections of stories: *Aadim desh* (1968), *Sadak ra prativa* (1975), *Salgiko balatkrit anshu* (1986) and *Badhshala jaanda aunda* (1992); ten novels: *Shirishko phool* (1965), *Mahattahin* (1968), *Bainsako manchhe* (1972), *Toribari bata ra sapanaharu* (1975), *Antarmukhi* (the introspective, 1978), *Usale rojeko bato* (1978), *Parkhal bhitra ra bahaira* (1978), *Anido pahadsangai* (1982), *Paribhashit aankhaharu* (defined eyes, 1989) and *Boni* (1991); three reminiscences: *Dhupi salla ra laliguranshko phedma* (under the pines and rhododendrons, 1986), *Euta chitramaya shuruwat* (a picturesque beginning, 1988) and *Adhyayan ra sangharsha* (study and struggle, 1993), and one collection of essays on women's liberation, *Aadhi aakash* (half sky, 1991). Other two collections -- one of essays and the other of plays -- and a part of reminiscences are believed to have remained unpublished.

Parijat was honored with various awards and felicitations. Madan Puraskar awarded in 1965 for *Shirishko Phool* was one of the most prestigious awards. She was given Ganki-Basundhara Award for her memorable contributions to the field of Nepali novel writing. Her *Bainsalu bartaman* was to get the Sarbashrestha Pandulipi Puraskar (the best manuscript award), but she passed away the morning of the day the award was announced in her name. In 1991, Sahityakunj, Central Department of Nepali, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, felicitated her. Similarly Nepal Tamang Ghedung Sangh and *Janamat* Literary monthly honored her in 1992. Even Royal Nepal Academy offered her Bidwatbritti (fellowship) in 1975. The inclusion of *Shirishko phool* in the curriculum by Maryland University, USA, is in itself a considerable recognition of her contributions. After her demise, Parijat Memorial Centre was founded and a monument was erected in her residence.

Political and social involvement

Parijat was a versatile writer, but she did not limit herself to writing only. In spite of adverse physical state, she was actively present in various literary and non literary organizations. She was involved in the anti-Panchayat movement of 1978-9, and was later elected the president of the women's wing under her party. She also devoted her works to secret awareness campaigns for women. She helped in the formation of Pragatishil Lekhak Kalakar Sangh (association of progressive writers and artistes) in 1979, and took up the role of a central member. Her affiliation with Bedana Sanskritik Pariwar is in many respects remarkable. She travelled to several parts of Nepal and India in the course of disseminating "people's music." From 1986 to 1988, she was keenly involved in the publication of *Utsa* (enthusiasm), a monthly publication of the aforementioned Kalakar Sangh. At the same time, in 1987, she held an honorary position as the President of Indreni Sanskritik Samaj (rainbow cultural society). In 1988 she became the founding vice president of Nepal Manav Adhikar Sangathan (Nepal human rights organization). Then with an objective to fortify women's movement in Nepal, she took up post of the founding president of Akhil Nepal Mahila Sangh (all Nepal women's association). Above all, she was also active during the revolution of 1989. She continued her struggle in favour of justice and truth even after the success of people's movement in 1989. She played a remarkable role as a coordinator of Pragyik Sangharsha Samiti (committee for academic struggle) for democratization of Royal Nepal Academy. In 1991 she founded Bandi Sahayata Niyog (institution for the aid of prisoners), and became its president. Besides, she was also involved in various international organizations like International Feminists' Association, Outright, Society for Women Geographers, Amnesty International among others.

Parijat also inspired new writers through the literary magazines *Sahitya Sandhya* (literary eve) and *Prativa Prawah* (flow of genius). That a person like her should be able to take up

multiple roles in literary and other social organizations despite crippled physical condition is one of the rare cases in the context of the world itself.

When CPN, Chautho Mahadhibeshan split due to internal conflicts, Parijat was slightly close to Ekata Kendra (unification centre) first and Sanyukta Jana Morcha (united people's front) later. But towards the close of her life she chose to live only as an independent leftist writer. In the writings of this period, she has raised her voice against socio-economic irregularities, and taken up the line of critical realism. This is why some of her works portray her feminist ideologies. At this period of time, she also appears to have wished to see her earlier works reviewed by the contemporary critics.

Parijat and the state

O My country of the aged mountains,
My country of the primitive beasts;
I refuse to be a beast in your name
I refuse to surrender in your name.

O My country of the aged mountains:
I refuse to be advertised in your name
I refuse to be dedicated in your name
O my country of the primitive beasts.

(Parijat, against the common absurdities of state politics)

Parijat is a great daughter of Nepal, and a genius born in and for the new generation of the Nepalese new era. However, the governments of Nepal neglected her. She has not been acknowledged to the extent she deserves. During the Panchayat, because of her leftist alignments, her rebellious nature, and her affiliation with national and international human rights organizations, she was ignored by the state. Even after the restoration of democracy, she was not granted the citizenship of Nepal because of the common political and bureaucratic

 hurdles, and had to remain only as a “special” Nepali citizen till she died. Such neglect, therefore, can be attributed to the fact that she was against all types of governments, and her rebellion was against any form of power worship.

In spite of this, she had a strong sense of patriotism. She fought for the restoration of democracy in Nepal, but not a single “democratic” government took timely heed for her treatment even though the issue was raised in the parliament. An appeal was demanded by the authorities from her relatives for managing her treatment – a worst example of how predominant bureaucracy was in the case of assisting a national personality. As a result, the process of taking her out of the country for treatment was much delayed. When finally she had to sign her passport, she was too weak to do it. It was a pity, and an irony of fate! She had passed most of her life working with a pen, but when the time had come to use it for life itself, she had to put a fingerprint in the passport in place of her signature that too with the help of her sister Sukanya. It did not work after all; and amidst the then political and bureaucratic hitches, we lost this prominent personality of literary, social and political world on 18 April 1994 in the intensive care unit of Bir Hospital.

Attempts were made to relieve her from her life-threatening ailment (paralysis), especially in Velore (1969) and Delhi (1972, 1973, and 1974). She was admitted in hospitals several times in the country also. But, regardless of all this, the so-called people’s governments did not take much care of this people’s writer. We are all responsible in one way or other for the sad end of this symbol of self dependence and perseverance. We could not help her when she was living a painful life with a disabled body. Some despised her as a communist writer, and some reproached her denial to remain within a narrow periphery. Some just remained indifferent towards her conditions. Even her close friends had gradually broken their personal and human relations with her, perhaps because of their personal and political preoccupations. They could not actually perceive the hard and soft aspects of her ideals, imaginations

and curiosities. They could not recognize her emotions, courage and resolutions, and could not read her pains through her perspective.

Passion for music

Parijat was very fond of music and songs, and this was why she was in Ralfa. This is why she liked “Seto ban, neelo joon ra ghamka amila nishwasharu” (white jungle, blue moon and sour breaths of the sun) and “Bagar mathiko janawar mrityu” (animal death upon the sandbank). She changed her ideals at times, but continued to feel the romantic touch of sweet music all the time. She particularly liked these lines of Manjul in Raamesh’s voice:

I watched till my eyes were tired
The wild fog has covered the hills
My moon did not appear tonight
Along with the dew, and the stars

Later, she reveled in the following lines sung by Aavash in *Aastha Pariwar*:

The fog has begun to float
The fog has begun to float over the hills
Thick black clouds have blocked the blue sky
Colorful feathers are flying directionless
There are spots of mist in the hopes of creation....

Why did such songs touch Parijat in the later stage of her life? Why did the gazals of Lalijan Rawal sometimes make her weep? These questions are yet to be answered through a careful research. In Parijat’s own words, “Even though the monuments of Lenin are uprooted from the streets and squares of Russia, those of the hearts can never be removed.” Parijat is said to have planned to write a song titled “Leninko shalik dhaldaina (Lenin’s monument does not fall apart)” (Raamesh, 1994, p. 50). Though this plan was never accomplished, the fact that she

 had a wish to put Lenin's photo upon her head after death shows what her life's ideals were.

Dreams

Like any ordinary person, Parijat also had dreams and choices. She liked monsoon among the seasons and rhododendron among the flowers. Chhwela (a typical Newari dish), Momo, dry bread, and tomato pickle were some of her favorite food items. Above all, she loved the tune of the flute. Among the relatives, she adored her sister Sukanya. About Sukanya she writes,

I don't know how pure the river Ganga is. But Sukanya has the sense of cooperation in her heart as infinitive as the water of Ganga. The more you scoop, pour or dive into it, the more it overflows. She has set such many examples to me and to others near her. Only a completely unselfish heart can perceive who Sukanya actually is. (Parijat, 1997, pp. 139-40).

Parijat had a keen desire to be a wanderer. She travelled to several places of Nepal and India in spite of her physical disability. She possessed all the common human desires like cooking, singing, dancing and roaming in the jungle picking wild flowers and in the riverbank gathering beautiful stones. She has written about this in her memoirs,

Parijat is the person who has an unfulfilled desire for skating in a smooth pitched road, has a craving for a journey round the world recording the feelings of euphoria in her personal diary, has not yet got a chance to sing in a full-throated voice; and has not yet given her adroit hands to the kitchen. She is the one who longs to pass a peaceful night under a tree, and one who wants to run amok in a garden in a clear night after a rainfall. Deprived of all these opportunities, I feel I have in me a woman whose desires have been murdered, and whom the present Parijat cannot caress wholeheartedly. There certainly is the emblem of my

true self behind this impenetrable veil. (Parijat, 1997, p. 98)

Parijat sometimes used to be very disappointed at the perversion of human beings due to selfishness. This sense of disillusionment is best expressed in these words, “Tearing the veil of atheism at least once, I’d like to invoke thee, O God, if rebirth is possible, let me be born a free bird. I no more wish to be a human being even if I am blessed with a chance to lie on a bed of flowers” (Parijat, 1997, p. 79).

Conclusion

Each creation of nature needs to be studied in the light of its own existence and pace. The pace is not always straight; it goes through vicissitudes time and again. It applies to Parijat also. The attempt to understand her beyond her own pace will be either incomplete or partial. Her progressive ideas require to be judged with reference to her own time and context. In this regard, no matter what ideals and themes they portray, her creations appear best in their place. After her death all her readers -- those who liked and adored her, and also those who shunned her -- sang their own elegies. Parijat herself used to say, “How irritating a single death can be here. When I think of it, I am rather scared of rituals than death itself” (Parijat, 1997, p. 40). Ironically, her own funeral rites were observed in typical Lama traditions, with lama incantations and tunes. All her well-wishers in their own way sensed the absence of Parijat, of *Shirishko Phool* and of the “sleepless mountains”.

Not in her physical existence, but in the sentimental and rebellious ideas of her works shall we meet this immortal genius of Nepali literature. She is blooming with the ‘blue mimosa’, and reveling with the ‘mustard field, streets and dreams’. She is standing ‘in and out of the walls’ and like the ‘sleepless mountains’, inflexibly in the soul of this country. She is roaming in the ‘shades of pines and rhododendrons’, in the rhythm of pure breeze blowing in our pure hills and mountains.

 She is living in our hearts -- the embodiment of our faith,
 Parijat.

(Translated from Nepali by Hem Raj Kafle)

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