



Victoria Institution (College)

78 B, A.P.C. Road

Kolkata – 700099

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Kamal Kutir (The Residence of Keshab Chandra Sen)

NAME OF THE SITE : Kamal Kutir (The Residence of Keshab Chandra Sen)

NOTIFICATION DATE : 05.09.2006

LOCATION :
District : KOLKATA

APPROACH :
Nearest Bus Stand : Raja Bazar Tram Depot Local Landmark :Victoria Institution

DESCRIPTION :

The Kamal Kutir or Lilly Cottage is situated at Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy Road near Raja Bazar Tram depot in Kolkata. The Kamal Kutir presently houses the Victoria Institution - a premier institute of female education which started its journey in 1932 and completed 75 years in 2007.

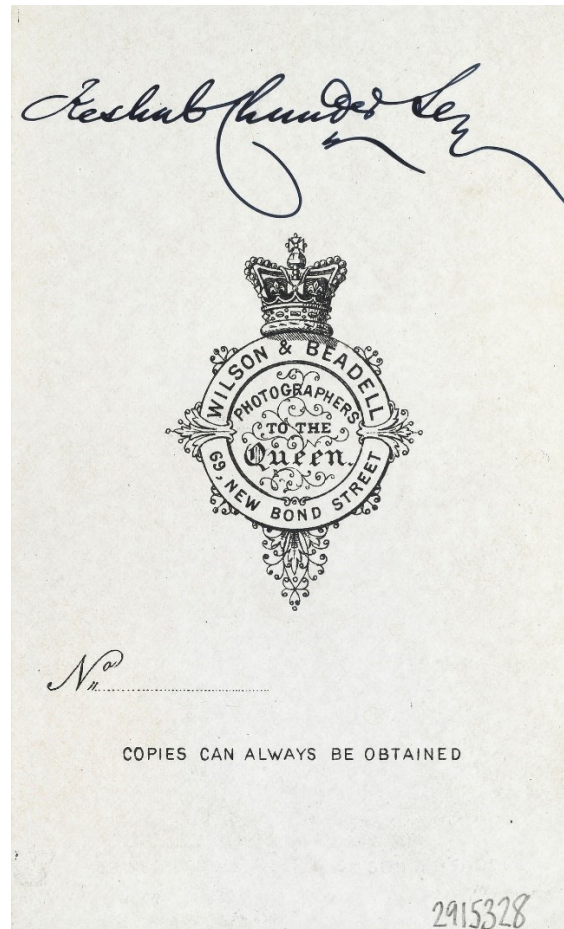
The beginning of this college can be traced back to the Native Ladies Normal and Adult School, established by Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen in 1871. He was one of the noted humanists, harmonizer of religions and a great social reformer of modern India. His purpose was to introduce a comprehensive scheme for female education. In his words, 'specially adapted to the requirement of the female mind and calculated to fit women for her position in the society'. The school started with a handful of fourteen adult students but the numbers soon began to swell. As Sen envisaged that education for women should be both 'natural' and 'national', 'extension lecture classes' were held for the advanced pupils. It would be contextual to mention here that Keshub Chandra's wife, Smt. Jagonmohini Sen was a student of this institution. In 1879, Keshab Chandra founded another school for girls and named it Metropolitan Female School. However, since these institutions had certain inherent weaknesses, Sen established an institution of Higher Education for women at 10 Upper Circular Road. The school was founded on May 1, 1882. According to Keshub Chandra's biography, written by eminent historian Jogesh Chandra Bagal (published by Bangiyi Sanitya Parishad) - since January 1883 this school came to be known as Victoria College. After the death of Keshub Chandra Sen on 8 January 1884, it was renamed as Victoria Institution in 1901. In 1911 the institution received governmental affiliation for teaching up to matriculation.

The college is housed in 'Kamalkutir' or 'Lily Cottage' - a place which bears the footprints of Thakur Ramkrishna Paramhansadev, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Girishchandra Ghosh, Sri Rabindranath Tagore and other luminaries of Nineteenth-Twentieth century Bengal. In 1927 Maharani Suniti Devi of Coochbehar, the eldest daughter of Keshub Chandra and President of the Governing Body, bought the entire property of Lily Cottage - the present premises of the college and donated the same to Victoria Institution through a trust deed. A steady rise in the enrolment and progressively good academic results prompted Suniti Devi and other members of the Governing Body like Sucharu Devi, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy and others to dream that the seeds of female education sown by Keshub Chandra Sen should grow into an institution of higher education, teaching modern courses under the University of Calcutta. Thus, Victoria Institution College came to be affiliated under the University of Calcutta in 1932. Unfortunately, Maharani Suniti Devi did not live long to see the progress of the college. After her demise on November 1932, a solemn memorial service was held in Kamal Kutir, presided over by none other than Rabindranath Tagore himself.



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Carte de visite photograph of philosopher and social reformer Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen. Signature of Keshub Chandra Sen on the verso of Wilson and Beadell.

Keshub Chandra Sen and his wife Jaganmohinee Devi, during their stay in Britain in 1870, met Queen Victoria. During this visit, Wilson & Beadell, official photographers of the Queen also took this portrait of Sen.

Source: Wilson & Beadell official website



Carte de visite photograph of Jaganmohinee Devi, wife of philosopher and social reformer Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen.

During their 1870 stay in Britain this was taken by Wilson & Beadell.

Source: Wilson & Beadell official website



India post had issued a commemorative postage stamp of 30 paise, as a token of honour to social reformer Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen in 1980.

Source: Mintage World website and Philamart.

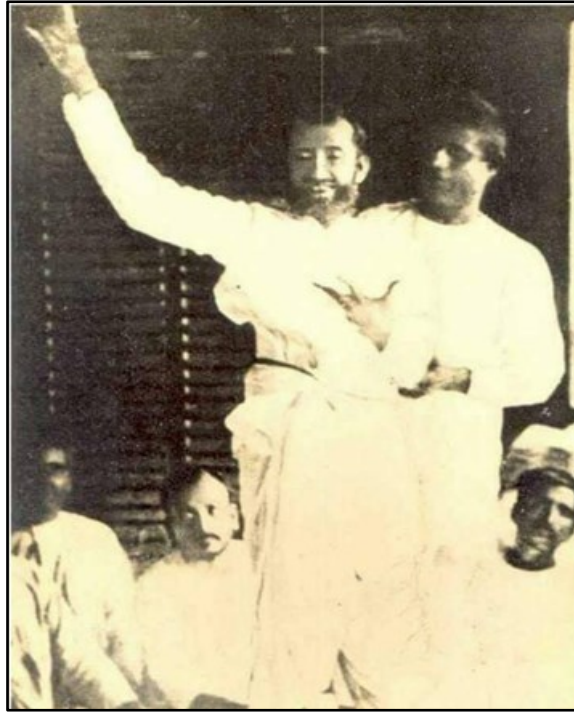


On this day in 1866 the Brahmo community in Calcutta, still in its early years, officially broke up, with one of its young leaders, Keshab Chandra Sen, setting up another branch of the community.

A difference of opinion on the importance of integrating elements of Christianity, advocated by Sen, had distanced him from Debendranath Tagore, one of the founding members of the Brahmo movement. In November 1866, Sen founded Bharatbarshiya Brahmo Samaj (Brahmo Samaj of India). At that time it had 54 community members in India. The branch that was led by Tagore distinguished itself as Adi Brahmo Samaj.

A report published in The Telegraph, dated November 11th 2022.

Source: Telegraph website



First ever photograph of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his nephew Hridayram Mukhopadhyay taken on 21st September, 1879 at Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen's residence, Kamal Kutir. The photograph was taken by Bengal Photographers of Radhabazar.

Source: Getty Images

MARRIAGE, DUTY AND CIVILIZATION: KESHAB CHANDRA SEN AND THE CUCH BIHAR CONTROVERSY IN METROPOLITAN AND COLONIAL CONTEXT

JOHN STEVENS

Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia, SOAS, University of London, London, UK

Abstract

The marriage in 1878 of Suniti Devi, the thirteen-year-old daughter of the Bengali Brahmo religious and social reformer Keshab Chandra Sen, to the Maharajah of Cuch Bihar constituted one of the most controversial matrimonial events in late colonial India. The marriage controversy was significant not only in terms of its effect on religious and social reform organizations in Bengal, but also in terms of the ways in which it served to challenge British attitudes towards the proper regulation of female sexuality in the empire. The British press took considerable interest in the marriage, celebrating it as an instance of the continued ability of the empire to spread civilization to India. However, this celebratory account served to occlude deeper contradictions. The contradictory character of the marriage fractured Keshab's relationship with the English Unitarians, Nonconformists and reformers who had long acted as his champions, and led to the demise of Keshabite Brahmoism as a force for national transformation in India. Through an exploration of responses to the marriage in both Bengal and Britain, this article demonstrates that varied and mutable conceptions of what constituted a male 'civilized subject' were intertwined deeply with discourses surrounding the regulation of female sexuality in both metropole and colony.

Keywords: Bengal; British imperialism; gender; marriage; Brahmoism

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