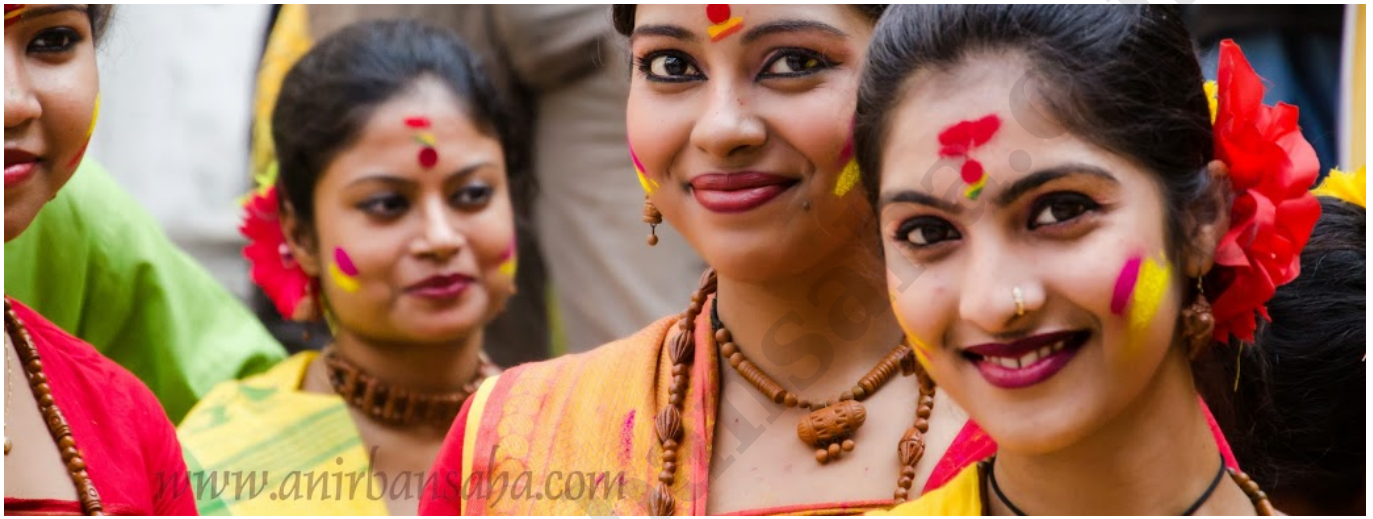


Information: Boshonto Utshob 2016 celebration in Jorasanko Thakur Bari is scheduled on 15th March.

Like most other Bengali children, I got introduced to Rabindranath Tagore at quite an early age. As a child, I never did really understand him, but loved humming the tunes, at times accompanied by my mother or my grandmother. Gradually with time, the enthusiasm faded until I came across the first low in my life. Rabindra Sangeet (Tagore's composed music) helped me survive. Since then, I have been listening to recorded Rabindra Sangeet and improving my Bengali skills to read Tagore in Bengali. After I got recruited to Tata Consultancy Services Ltd, I got myself admitted to Dakshinee music school. I loved the entire time with Saikat da and Shekhar Kaku. Later I sought tutorage under Sounak Chattopadhyay.



Holi is celebrated as "Boshonto Utshob" in Shantiniketan. In Kolkata, Boshonto Utshob is celebrated in Rabindra Bharati University and a place in Golf Green (South Kolkata). Students of the university, perform Tagore's songs and dance (Rabindra sangeet and Rabindra nritya) and it is a spectacle every year for all Tagore lovers. In Shantiniketan, traditionally it starts early in the morning with "Ore Grihobashi, khol dwar khol ...laglo je Dol." And continues with the other songs he composed for the season of spring. It ends with "Rangiye diye jao, jao go ebar jaabar aage...". The students and the visitors gang up in groups and the party continues with more music not restricted to Tagore any more. Groups, singing and dancing mixing with the wonderful background and the serenity Shantiniketan provides, it's a treat for Tagore lovers, music lovers and yes, photographers.



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This year for the first time, I made my way to Jorasanko Thakur bari for Boshonto Utshob. For me, it was heaven. It is the ancestral home of Rabindranath Tagore. The house in itself is a phenomenon, Tagore's statue, Rabindra Sangeet and the performances and the entire Boshonto Utshob was like a dream combination for me. We also had non Rabindrasangeet performances by the students, based on Indian classical Raagas and pure instrumentals. Saimantick and Siddharth went along with me. While Siddharth disappeared, Saimantick stood there statue like awe struck by the instrumental music performance. I believe he had a great time, and I am looking forward to his blog post.



It started at near 3:45 PM, and as is the tradition, they started with "Orre Grihabasi", with the student dancers forming the queue and dancing all the way around the field to the middle of the field where the singers were already seated and singing. One after the other music and dance performances followed. "Nil Digante, oi phooler aagun laaglo", "Orre bhai, phaagun legeche bon'e bon'e", "Aaji Dokhin duwar khola", "Jhoro jhoro jhoro jhoro jhore ronger jhorna", "Ora okaron'e e chonchol.." with some Indian classical music, Nazrul geeti, pure instrumental performances and one Shruti natok.

It ended with "Aaj Khela bhaangar khela" and the euphoric crowd burst into celebrations greeting each other with colourful aabir. Some mad dance followed but was not stretched for long.



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Happiness is singing the songs while the performances are on... happiness is to photograph the girl who broke into laughter seeing me laugh at another photographer. Happiness is the sly smile the girl had when my kurta tore, and I embarrassingly asked her for a safety pin. Happiness is when Asha Hossain scolded me and made me travel by metro, all coloured in green and pink. Happiness is to see Saimantick shiver in sheer joy of having witnessed the Indian classical instrumental performance - Dotara, khol, matka, Tabla with Sarod. Happiness is when he messaged me at the night, "I am listening to your Guruji's Aaji dokkhino duwar khola". Happiness was to see the man dance having lost himself to the music, while playing his khol and at times, frantically running across the field singing by himself. Happiness is when the girl sprinkled a bit of colour on me from an arms distance just before the last song performance. Happiness is Boshonto Utshob.











I had loved the experience and I am looking forward to more Holi experiences in Bengal. Did you like the photographs? Let me know if I have gone wrong somewhere, do suggest betterment in my photography. Or simply, share your holi story with me, leave a comment below 😊

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