



Interface  
An Interdisciplinary Lecture Series  
Bankura University

Fulbright American Studies Inst



by the Department of English & the International Training Office



# *Nationalism from Below* *Folk Nationalist Formations of Mukunda Das*

Speaker

Professor Deb Narayan Bandyopadhyay  
Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Bankura University

Conference Hall, Room 101

April 24, 2019 2:00 p.m.

Dear Colleagues,

You'll be delighted to know that Professor Deb Narayan Bandyopadhyay, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Bankura University will present a research seminar on his recent study on Mukunda Das (1878–1934), "Nationalism from Below: Folk Nationalist Formations of Mukunda Das" on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

All are invited to participate in the seminar and make it a grand success.

Coordinators

Dr Kaushik Ghosh, Assistant Professor of Political Science

Sukhendu Das, Assistant Professor of English

Nirupam Hazra, Assistant Professor of Social Work

## **About the Research Seminar**

Late nineteenth-century proto-nationalist consciousness in Bengal was largely negotiated in terms of a distinctive moral absolutism. There had been an increasing debate on national cultural forms;<sup>1</sup> with the gradual spread of English education, after the recommendations of the Hunter Commission in 1882,<sup>2</sup> debate on the rival East/West alignment set a new cultural politics in motion. In many quarters, a supportive stance for mimicry of the West was looked upon as opportunism, negotiated through the agency of Bengali elitists. Contrastingly, the Orientalist segment of nationalist thought encapsulated a position of alterity; this was in the context of the enigmatic (as well as invasive) proliferation of Western cultural production. This implosive design formed part of the indigenous project of dismantling an appropriated culture.

The attempt to get beyond this boundary between the national and the Imperial involves a cultural re-orientation, or a process of 'de-amnesia', that articulates and restores the historical consciousness of a pragmatic nationalist community. This explains the necessity of forming a counter-discourse, constructing a heterogeneous praxis in terms of popular cultural modes. Against the Western models of liberalist philosophy, enunciated through Hindu religious and cultural movements of Bengal such as Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, and the Ramakrishna Mission, indigenous folk forms such as bratakatha (narration of religious stories forming part of ritualistic practice), Laxmi Panchali (narration of stories related to Laxmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth), palagan (narratives in the form of indigenous songs), and jatra (an indigenous form of theatre) continued to express an indigenous model of nationalist discourse. This essay seeks to address the question of the nationalist strategy explicit in the popular swadeshi jatra or nationalist plays of Charan Kavi Mukunda Das (1878–1934).