Conclusion
Tagore was versed in the epics that gave him much creative inspiration and enlightenment. He was indeed influenced by the epics. He of course knew all the female characters in them. Firstly, he inherited the traditions of the epics, and secondly, namely, the most importantly, he developed the literature traditions of the epic.

He used the sources of the epics as the materials for his creation and took the heroines such as Gandhari, Kunti, Chitraganda and Devayani directly from the epics as the heroines in his works. He took Gandhari as heroine in his drama *The Adedan (Gandhari's Prayer)*, Kunti in the *Kunti and Karna*, Chitrangada in the *Chitrangada* and Devayani in *The Curse at Farewell*. In the epics, five types of female characters were depicted: wives; widows; women in love; educated women and tragic women. Tagore in his works also depicted the same five types of women characters. In each type we can see in his works the shadows of heroines of the epics and especially the images who were completely different from those of the epics.

Tagore, most importantly developed the literature tradition of the epics. He took heroines from the epics as those in his works but his heroines were not the copies of the epics. He used them to develop his plots and express his own ideas on women. His characters were rooted and sourced from the time when he lived and he had his own ideas on women. Tagore in each type described more aspects and more female characters which were not found in the epics.

**Wives:** In the epics, Sita was the paragon of wifehood. Her deep love for Rama no second person could gauge and she was regarded as the leading and foremost personality of the fair sex, a model housewife. Draupadi was a perfect but revengeful wife, an embodiment of courage, fortitude, sense and sensibility, and even pride and prejudice. Gandhari was a wife of devotion and mother of righteousness, noblest and best who exemplified the best ideal of Indian womanhood. Kunti was an embodiment of patience, fortitude and self-sacrifice. Satyavati was a devoted wife. Sumitra was an obedient wife who claimed that according to the holy law she had equal authority to the son. Urmila was an embodiment of sacrifice, endurance and selflessness. Anasuya was a woman of austerity and compassion. Swayamprabha was a model woman of self-abnegation. Mandodari was a devout, faithful woman with sense of righteousness, pious, dutiful and steadfast. Tara was a statesman-like help of her husband. Sarama was a virtuous wife.
Trijata was a pathetic woman. Sabari was a cursed woman secured through unflinching devotion to spiritual guides and Ahalya who was cursed by her husband to become a stone and salvaged by Rama. Kaikeyi and her maid Manthara were condemned by the public because under instigation of the latter, the former was driven by greed and claimed throne for his son instead of Rama who was exiled for 14 years in the forest. It is noticeable that in the epics, most wife characters are from royal families and rakshasas and, that even wife characters from rakshasas also have the natures and characters of human beings. They are vivid images under the pens of Valmiki and Vyasa. In Tagore, we can see the shadows of the characters in the epics, such characters as Asha in the Binodini, a paragon of wifehood like Sita, docile, meek but innocent and deserted wife; Sudrasana in The King in the Dark Chamber, was a shadow of Gandhari in the sense that she could not see her husband in light but only met him in dark chamber while she requested union with divinity for realization of the personal relationship that bound man with God; Sarmila in the Two Sisters, was a Kausalya and Sumitra-like wife, mother-kind wife whose attributes were befitting modesty, selfless devotion, sacrificial spirit and self-effacement; Kiraia in the Castaway had loving heart like Kausalya, Kunti and Satyavati; Kshemankari in The Wreck, and Anandamoi in the Gora were kind mothers like Yasodha and Radha, but Kshemankari was a combination of an orthodox way of wife, refined taste and liberal outlook while Anandamoi was a symbol of motherhood and universal motherhood, a rebel against the customs and conventions of the conservative society. So wife characters in Tagore were more complicated in nature and thus more vivid.

In Tagore some wives were equal with their husbands in families. Nirjharini in the Darpahara was such a wife. Some wives like Sumitra in the Tapata wanted much more than to be only a wife. Haratani in the Land of Cards was a wife with awakening sense to change conventional stagnant social status. Giribala in the Giribala and Mrinal in The Wife's Letter like Nana broke out of family nets because they could not endure any more indifference and neglect of their husbands.

At the same time, Tagore did not conceal the shortcomings and weak points of wives.
Their own shortcomings and weak points were somewhat sources of their tragedies and sufferings. Nayantara in the Revenge, and Rani in the Raja and Rani were stingy and envious wives. Shailabala in The Girl Between and Malimalika in the Lost Jewels were misers. Bidhamukhi and Sukumari in the Acquittance were children-pampering and selfish women. Niraja in The Garden was a narrow-minded wife, possessive and jealous, a destroyer of a happy family. Gunavati in the Sacrifice was a conservative of sacrifice and Barodasundar in the Gora was wife with a narrow sectarian outlook.

Widows: In the epics, any of the three lots were waiting for the widows: to suttee, that is to follow their husbands on their funeral pyres; to have progeny for their childless late husbands with their brothers or relatives; and to live lonely till the end of their lives. Madri, wife of Pandu, and Urmila, the wife of Laksmana, followed their husbands to another world on funeral pyres. Ambalika and Ambika, the wives of Vicitravyyaya, with the help of their mother-in-law, Satyavati, gave birth of Pandu and Dhritarashtra with Vyasa, the pre-marital son of Satyavati. Giving up luxurious life of the court, Satyavati with her two daughters-in-law, Ambalika and Abika, went into the forests. Kunti, after the Kuruksetra war, retired with Dhrtarashtra, Gandhari and Vidura retired into the forests where their lives ended in a big fire. In the epics, other widows are not described in details, but they could not escape any of the three fates awaiting them.

Tagore greatly widened the aspects of widows and developed this style in his works. In the time of Tagore, widowhood became a serious social problem. Tagore, with the insight and sensitivity of a writer, touched the problem and reflected it in details and in all of the social aspects through the widow characters in his works. So many such characters in his works are depicted. First, widows were miserable, insulted, rejected and even persecuted by their families and society. Kandambini in the Living or Dead committed suicide to show that she was alive earlier. Radasundar in the Ram Kanai's Foolishness was a widow whose bequeathed properties were seized by her brothers-in-law. Annapurna in the Eye Sore, had to leave all her properties and escort her soul to God. Bara Rani in The Home and the World also went to the Ganges. Many widows were still children when their husbands died. Kshiroda in The Judge, Kusum in the River Stairs, Shalabala in the Prajatatir Nirbadha, Somana in the Runaway, Mashi in the Night of Parting, and Mani in the House Warming became widows when they were too young to know what married
life was. Mahamaya in the *Mahamaya* didn’t succumb to her own adversities. Amabai in the Sati defied orthodoxy system. Kusum in the *Renunciation*, Shyama in the *Yogayoga* and Rukmini in *The Queen Consort Fair* used some devices to attain their happiness. Some widows like Kusum in the *River Stairs* and the Skeleton in the *Skeleton* loved and long to be loved. If they lost love, they had no hope and ended their lives. Kusum drowned herself in the river and the Skeleton poisoned her lover and herself. Rarely seen was a lucky case in the *My Fair Neighbor* where my fair neighbor was loved by two gentlemen and one of them married her. Aunt in *The Rejected Story* and Shailabala in *Bachelor’s Club* challenged conventions. Sohini and her daughter Nila in *Laboratory* were widows of modern ideas. Yogamaya in the *Farewell, My Friend* was a new type of widow who was more modern, liberal and sophisticated. Even more, Manini in the *Chatiranga* was a self-willed, pompous and dominant widow rebelling against religion, a symbol of social change and advancement of women. Binodini in the *Binodini* even surpassed her. At the same time, Tagore was aware that some widows had their own shortcomings. Harimohini in the *Gora* was an unawakened widow and Ruckmini in *The Consort Fair* became degenerated. The widows under Tagore’s pen were very young when they became widows and almost all were childless, which made the writer easy to develop the plots.

**Women in Love:** It is noticeable that in the epics, in addition to celestials and secular females, some *rishi* maidens in love were depicted. So in the epics, female characters in love were of three types: female celestials; *rishi* maidens both of whom didn’t have any barriers in family grounds, caste, dowry, conventions; and secular female characters. For the female celestials and *rishi* maidens, their love was free. They were free to choose any one they like, from male celestials, and mostly secular males like kings, sages, to princes and any other males. Urvasi as a nymph in heaven chased Arjuna and king Pururavas although Arjuna rejected her. Gunakesi, the daughter of Matali, the charioteer of Indra, loved the serpent boy Sumukha irrespective of the fact that he would be eaten by Garuda in a month. The lusty and vicious Surpanaka, the sister of Ravana, to fulfill her desire, asked for love from Rama and Laksmana. Devayani expressed freely her long cherished love to Kacha. Hidimba asked Kunti to persuade Bhisma to marry her and Srutavati observed an austere *tapas* with the object of getting Indra as her husband. Pramadvara
was initiative to win love of sage Ruru who sacrificed half of his life to save the former for the sake of love when she was bitten by a poisonous snake. Sakuntala was a model in love with king Dusyanta. To win love of Agni, Svadha stood on his way of *tapas*. We have some more love models of women. Parvati did over thousand years’ penance to have Siva attracted. Damayanti selected the king Nala as her desired husband. Savitri, knowing that her desired lover Satyavan had only one year to live, married him without any regret and seized him from Yama. Subhadra, the sister of Krishna, reciprocated Arjuna’s courting. Chitrangada, the princess of Manipur, tried her efforts to win Arjuna’s heart. Similarly the love between Skuntala and Dusyanta, Savitri and Satyavan, Arjuna and Subhadra, Rukmini and Krsna, Ulupa and Arjuna, and between Citarangada and Arjuna was love in a real sense. But Indrani, Indra’s wife, warded off enticement of males. In the epics, to destroy penance or power of some sages or gods, some celestials were deputed to entice them. Nymph Menaka was assigned to entice Visvavasu, Visvamitra and Mankana. Varga became a crocodile for enticing hermits and Tilottama was deputed by Brahman to create split between demon brothers and made them fight to death. Such enticement was a desire but not a love in real sense. Sobhana, a frog spirit was a game player of love. The marriage between Bhasvati and Anala, between Sukanya and Chyanva, between Lopmamudra and sage Agasty was not love but a sacrifice of their beautiful youth. In the epics, love beyond family was also described. Puloma loved his childhood mate who had the same name with her behind her husband Bhrigu. Bhadra had sex affairs with Varuna without the awareness of her husband Uthathya. Ruci met Indra secretly irrespective of her husband Devasarma and had some feeling with Vipula, the disciple of Devasarma. From the epics we know that the love beyond family did not begin from modern time but from ancient time. It is a human nature for women to have more love and sex in addition to their husbands. Test of love was told in the epics. Suprabha loved Astavakra. To test the love, her father, Sage Vadanya sent Astavakra to Himalayas. Tapati advised her lover, king Samvaran not to be drowned only in love but take care of his kingdom. Her love was not merely for marriage but for the kingdom and the world. *Swayamvara* between Sita and Rama was a half-love marriage, because the bride did not have free choice but the man who won. But Draupadi was an exception who, having Arjuna in her mind, rejected Karna who was winning and she chose Arjuna.
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But this was a case of caste prejudice because she knew that Karna was the son of a suta. Gandhari was real love because the couple loved each other. Love between Sakuntala and King Dusyanta was a good case. Secular females who took the initiative for love were far less than celestial female characters with only two cases in the epics. Pingla, a desiring and enticing court dancer, displayed many tricks to entice king Atirath who rebuked her for her dissoluteness. Her love failed. But for the kingdom Anga where there was a serious drought, Santa, the princess enticed muni Risyashringa. She succeeded. It was interesting that in the epics, love of rishi maidens was described. Rishi maiden Lapika loved sage Madapal. Sulabha, the rishi maiden loved king Janaka. The epics reflected feelings and desires of rishi maidens because they were human beings and they could not suppress their natural desires. The epics described pre-marriage pregnancy and child-deliverance by secular female characters which were not described in Tagore. Satyavati delivered Vyasa from sage Parasura. Kunti got pregnant from Surya and gave birth to Karna. River Shukmati bore two children from the Kolahala mountains. Madhavi, sacrificing her own body as gurudaksina to a sage and delivered babies of four kings. But what was more interesting was that they all remained their virgins even after this because these were all specially divine-induced pregnancies. Amba changed her love into hatred. The feeling between Kunti and Vidura was a secret love.

As mentioned already, Tagore was greatly influenced by the epics and developed the tradition of the epics. While some female characters in love in Tagore were directly drawn from the epics, he did not just repeat the stories of the epics. He rather developed his plots with the help of these characters and used them to express his own ideas on women issues. From some of his characters we can see the shadows of the similar characters in the epics. Here when we say that he developed the tradition of the epics, we mean that he described women in love from all the classes and all the backgrounds and that he told us almost all the aspects of love of Indian women in his age. His description of women in love was a mirror from which we can take a whole glimpse of the women in love of his age. It showed that the desire of human being was natural and difficult to suppress. Devayani initiiatively expressed her desire frankly and ardently to Kacha while for his duty, though loving the girl more, Kacha had to suppress his love and with great agony in his heart he declined her love. Chitrangada’s heating love to Arjuna showed that
love from internally spiritual beauty was far more valuable than the external physical appearance. Kamala in *The Wreck* was a Sita-Savitri-style woman in love. From her the shadows of Sita and Savitri could be seen. Many young women in Tagore were deprived of love like Subha in the *Subha*. Some girls like Pramoda in the *Maya Khela*, Ratan in the *Post-master*, Sonamani in the *Guest*, and Madhavi in the *Apasambar*, Aruna in the *Stolen Treasure*, Surabala in the *Single Night*, and Kumari in *The Wedding Garland* were suppressed in love. Even educated girls like Amiya in *The Rejected Story* could not have their love fulfilled. Caste was a great barrier to free love. In *The Outcast Girl*, Prakriti, the Chandalika could not get her love dream come true. Dowry was like a rock lying on the way of love. Haimanti in *Haimanti*, Sumitra in the *Stolen Treasure*, Kalyan in the *Unknown Maidens* and Sairabli in *A Resolute Accomplished* lost their love and even their lives due to the condemnable dowry. Child-marriage was a cancer due to which many girls married before they knew what love was and many families were destroyed by it. Mani in *Mashi* was such a case. Tagore depicted some girls who loved against the conventions. The heroine in the *Acquittance* chose her love despite of the family background of the boy, valuing intrinsic goodness and sincere love. In *The Victory* the princess loved the court poet. Charu in the *Broken Net* loved Amal, a student because her husband was too busy to devote his heart to his young wife. Kajari in the *Parir Parichaya* deserted her Hindu prince as she did not love him any more. Tagore depicted triangular love in his works: love between Nikhil and her husband and Sandip, a revolutionary in *The Home and the World*. Some girls loved at the cost of another boy who loved her like Syama in *Syama*. In Tagore, we know the oldest unmarried girl Sarala in *The Garden* who remained unmarried even at 31. We learn from Hemnalini in *The Wreck* the love of new emerging educated women, their conflicts with traditionalists. Tagore depicted heart-striking and immortal love. The heroines such as Kamal in *The Beggar Women*, Aparna in the *Sacrifice*, Bidyamala in the *Ritimata Novel* sacrificed their lives for the sake of love. Tagore in the *Gorai Galad* gave us a vivid contrast of the attitudes to love of three sister-like girls: Indumati who strove for real love; Kamalmukhi deposited her love on destiny and Kamdabini who loved only for property. In the *Cast Away*, Kiran was a woman who loved ahead of her time. In sum, Tagore in his works first inherited the tradition of the epics in description of women in love and secondly, developed the tradition as he
depicted all the classes of women and almost all the aspects of women in love.

**Educated woman characters:** Education systems were quite different between the epic age and Tagorean age. These two different education systems produced out educated women characters of different characteristics. In the epic age, women were taught either at home, or by preceptors or by their fathers who were teachers. They were taught the Vedic hymns, initiation ceremonies, arts and other branches of knowledge. Draupadi in the *Mahabharata* and Sita in the *Ramayana* were taught at home and were versed in religious lore. Some of the educated women were ascetics who were well versed in highest lore. Sulabha in the *Mahabharata* had a life of celibate ascetics in search of the highest truth—the highest lore. Also those like wife of Prabhasa, Gautami in the *Mahabharata* were versed in the knowledge of Brahman or highest philosophical lore. Tara, Vali’s wife, Kaikeyi, the second wife of king Dasaratha were versed in the Vedic lore. Gandhari, the wife of blind king Dhrtarashtra in the *Mahabharata* was even grounded in politics and deeply religious in nature. Women were also permitted to enter the forest *asrama* to learn highest philosophy. Satyavati, Kunti and Satyabhama were such models.

In the epics, those who were entitled to learning were all from the royal and noble families. Their subjects were mainly religious. Educated women in the epics were very few and far from making a social class. The characters portrayed were not as characteristic, vivid and moving as those of Tagore, either.

In Tagorean age, education of women went out of the family. Much fewer women had celibate life as ascetics to learn the Vedic lore. Few went into forest *asrama* after death of their husbands. Schools of different levels were established, from primary schools to universities. Women, in principle, of different castes and backgrounds, were allowed to learn in schools. Subjects were far from mainly being religious. They could learn all the branches of knowledge in science and liberal arts. They could study for bachelor’s, master’s and even doctoral degree. Some could even go abroad for studies. Educated women went out of family and entered the society. Thus educated women characters in the works of Tagore were much more characteristic, vivid and moving. Labanya in the *Farewell Song* was an educated woman of dignity, self-respect, independence and sympathy. She was a thorough and thorough realist. Hemnalini in *The Wreck* was a true representative of the newly emerging class of emancipated woman of the early 20th
century who heralded the new age of liberated and progressive women who were free from the prevailing traditional notions and superstitions. Ela in the *Four Chapters* was noted for her beauty, intelligence and independent thinking. She was the bravest of all the heroines drawn by Tagore. Sucharita in the *Gora* was an educated woman who heralded the age of modern women. Sissy and Lissy in the *Farewell Song* were two modern educated girls. Pushpamala in *The Way of Deliverance* exposed the hypocrisy of the guru. Amiya in *The Rejected Story* became a revolutionist. Lolita in the *Gora* was a rebel against tyranny and oppression far ahead of time.

At the same time, Tagore in his works frankly pointed out the shortcomings of the educated women of his age. They, like Suriti and Silina in *The End of Progress*, were not mature enough in politics and prone to come to extremity. What they did was not what they said. Kalika in *The Patriot* was such a woman.

Different from those of the epic age, educated woman characters of Tagore were from different classes and backgrounds. They formed an intellectual class in society and played their roles to strive for the equal rights and contribute to the society. They were representatives of modern time.

**Tragic women:** In the epics, because only women from noble families were depicted, tragic woman characters were almost all from noble backgrounds, very few were from other backgrounds. Only Surpanaka was a *rakshasa*. Satyavati was daughter of fisherman, but she was the wife of king Santanu. Kaikeyi was a woman greedy for power, but was spurned by the public including her own son Bharata. Surpanaka was a *rakshasa* who was deformed for her passion. Gandhari covered her eyes the whole life since her husband was blind and was swallowed by *asrama* fire. But her tragedy was caused by her traditional concepts. She was a victim of traditional concepts. Satyavati was a lonely widow who spent the rest of her life in the forest. Ambika and Amblika were two forlorn sisters who also spent more than half of their lives in lone forest ashram. Urmila was the most lonesome wife and victim of sati. Amba was the most tragic woman because she lost everything: her love, her youth and even her female gender and her life. She gained nothing from her revenge. In fact, in the epic age, there were surely much more tragic women in other classes of the society. But in the epics they were not mentioned.

What has to be pointed out is that in the epics some characters played not only one role.
That is, they played some roles. For example, Gandhari was a wife of devotion and the mother of dharma. But at the same time, she was a tragic woman because 16 years after the war she lived rest of her life in forest ashram and ended her life in a forest fire. Urmila was the embodiment of sacrifice and selflessness, but at the same time she was a sitee and most tragic wife. Amba was a great a heroine, a great revenger but was also a love loser and a most tragic woman because she attained nothing but the life of Bhism. She lost youth, beauty, love, sex and even her life. So such women characters appear in different chapters in this dissertation.

In Tagore, tragic women were from all the different backgrounds. The tragic women were those who were neglected, deserted, insulted, persecuted and even murdered. Kamala in The story of a Mussalani was a helpless girl. Karuna in the Karuna was kicked out of the house by her ungrateful husband and died before him. Bindyabashini in the Atonement of Expiation was stolen off all her money by her husband who married an English lady. Bindu in The Wife's letter was parentless and took refuge in her married sister's home whose family forced her to marry a lunatic. She had no way to go but to kill herself. Mokshada in the Devater Grash was forced to throw her child into the angry sea to quiet down the wrath of both God and the people. Dakshinas in In the Middle of the Night, the devotee in The Devotee, Khirada in The Judge were all such women. Chandara in The Punishment was the most tragic who was sentenced to death by her husband's charge of murder which she did not commit at all but by his brother. Srimati in The Worship of the Dancing Girl was a religious heroine who was killed by conservative forces because she wanted to defend a new religion. Tagore also pointed out that in some degree, the tragedy of women was the result of their own weakness. Nanibla in The Broken Ties was a typical case.

In sum: Tagore portrayed as many as 242 women characters in his short stories, novels and dramas; about 62 of them were heroines and the rest were either secondary heroines or minor heroines while there were about 45 female characters in the epics and only 2 (as Draupadi in the Mahabharata Sita and in the Ramayana) of them are heroines and about 7 were secondary heroines (like Sakuntala, Satyavati, Damayanti, Savitri, Kunti, Gandhari, Amba), about 12 are minor characters (Ahalya, Kausalya, Urvasi, Chitrangada,
Ganga, Rukmini, Kaikeyi, Mandara, Sati, Parvati, Surpanaka, Devayani) and the rest are non-class characters. From this it is known that while inheriting the tradition of the epics, Tagore described much more women characters. In the epics, only noble women and celestial women were depicted and few of the women of other social classes were mentioned. In Tagore, the women characters from all the social classes were portrayed. In the epics only the conditions of noble women could be seen while from Tagore the conditions of women in all social strata in his age could be seen clearly. So in Tagore the content of women characters were much more than that in the epics. Of the five types of women, in both the epics and in Tagore, wives were described most. Women in love were second. Then next were widows and educated women. Tragic women were least described. This agreed with the conditions of the two societies themselves. Because tragic women were not many after all.

Different from the epics, Tagore pointed out that the women in each type had their own shortcomings which were somewhat the root of their sufferings and tragedies.

Confined by the society where they lived, Valmiki and Vyasa fixed their eyes only on the noble women while women in other classes were not observed or were not in their hearts. This was why the women in other classes were little mentioned. But Tagore's eyes were on all the women in the society. That was why he created women characters of all the classes.

But it cannot be denied that Tagore, as a great poet and thinker, could not get rid of some ideological limitations. From the *Trial (Laksimir Pariksha)* written in 1897, we can see that Tagore exposed his conventional concept of caste discrimination. That was, servant could never be a queen. Kshiro was a female servant of the widowed queen Kalyani. The generosity of queen Kalyani caused great heart-burning to her small-minded servant Kshiro, who alone wanted to fleece her mistress. Kshiro wished she were in Kalyani's place. Her wish was fulfilled in her dream and she became a queen by the grace of goddess, Laksimi, without however and corresponding changes in her character. Despite her newly-won plenty, she remained, what she had been, her old mean and stingy self. As she awoke from her dream she learned the lesson of submitting herself to her lot and decided to serve her mistress ungrudgingly forever. Tagore dramatized a variation of
the theme of appearance and reality, for Kshiro became a queen outwardly, but not in reality. The queen plainly told Kshiro that her nature would not change. Foreshadowing her later change of fortune she bragged: "Had goddess Laksmi been kind to me, I would have shown what true charity is." She in a sleepy state prayed for Laksmi's favor. And she had it. From here on, Laksmi's test began. At midnight Kshiro dreamed that Laksmi had appeared before her. And the interesting exchange that took place between the two was a turning point in the course of action. It took Kshiro some time to realize that Laksmi, the goddess of fortune, was actually before her. The cross-grained Kshiro nearly drove away the goddess mistaking her for one of the unwelcome nuisances. But on realizing that she had before her the goddess of fortune herself, the wily maid managed to have the divine grace which turned her fortune. The omniscient goddess told Kshiro home truths for which she had answers ready. Laksmi charged her with flouting the law of morality, for she had no scruple in fleecing her gracious mistress to the top of her bent. Laksmi's moral aphorisms were wasted on the unprincipled maid. Kshiro replied that it was her poverty that made her resort to cheating. She was reminded that the goddess simply was dearer than crookedness. Asked whether she would practice charity if she had enough money, Kshiro asked the goddess to test her. Referring to queen Kalyani, the maid said if their positions were reversed, their characters would also be different. As a maid servant she behaved only like a poor servant, but if she was made a queen she would show the moral nature of a queen. With the boon of the goddess, Kshiro, who prayed for a change in her lot was made a queen. Contrary to expectation, the character of the cunning, lowly Kshiro worsened as her fortune took a turn for the better. But Kshiro's meanness and self-centeredness led to her exposure. She could not stand the test of unexpected good or fortune. Her character let her down. She took to task Bini, her niece, for giving one of her bangles to Mallika, a poor maid servant. Rich though she was, her inner partook of insolence and unkindness. Devoid of kind feelings, Kshiro exhibited her disdainful attitude to the poverty-stricken subjects who had approached her for relief and redress of their hardship. Her sudden highness went to her head and her arrogance increased. The invidious comparison between the un-queenly Kshiro and Kalyani's natural queenliness annoyed her and this made her punish the favor seekers when the queen Kalyani came to her for shelter. But Kshiro dismissed her with much ado. Then
Laksmi appeared in the guise of an old respectable lady introduced as Thakurani. The goddess pretended to have fallen on bad days and begged Kshiro to help her. In her characteristic mean manner Kshiro declined to render any help. Greatly pained at her conduct, Thakurani glorified the ideal of charity and asked her to direct her to the house of a person where she could have her desire fulfilled. Ironically Kshiro directed her to queen Kalyani, famed for her gracious nature. Laksmi now revealed her identity and told her that she went away disgraced. But before leaving she asked Kshiro to remember that wealth by itself did not elevate character. Kshiro descended from the world of dream to the world of reality, but with a much-needed lesson, that of self-knowledge. The moral that her dream-begotten experience drove home was that she was cut out for a maid servant and not for a mistress. This was just the reflection of conventional caste concept of Tagore.