

Glossary and Notes

Essence of Camphor

dupatta (*dupaṭṭa*): a long, thin, gauze-like scarf, often starched and gathered in a bunch to form creases, worn by women across the bosom and draped backwards across the shoulders.

kafoor (*kāfūr*): camphor.

kafoori (*kāfūrī*): of or pertaining to camphor.

masehri (*masehri*): a bed with mosquito netting draped over it.

salaam (*salām*): a Muslim greeting, meaning “peace.”

takht: an all-purpose low wooden platform found in traditional South Asian homes; can serve as a bed, a seat or a place to eat.

Sheesha Ghat

bazaari (*bāzārī*): of or pertaining to the bazaar; ordinary, common; low, vulgar.

foster father, foster son: “foster” is an inadequate translation of the original Urdu “*munh-bōlā*” (“by-word-of-mouth”). A by-word-of-mouth relationship is not biological, but an informal agreement to assume certain responsibilities, in this case paternal, toward the “adopted” party.

ghat (*ghāṭ*): a ghat is a series of low stone steps or walls built at a spot where people come to the water—whether a lake, river or the sea—to perform their ablutions and rituals and to wash clothing. “Sheesha” means “glass” and sometimes “mirror.” Here the “glass ghat” is the one visited by people from the glass-making settlement, because the sand of its beach contains silica.

Parya (Paryā): given Urdu orthography, it is significant that this word can

also be read both as “Priyā” (beloved; a beautiful woman) and as “Pariyā” (little [water] fairy, water nymph).
Sheesha (*shīsha*): glass. Also see “ghat” above.

The Color of Nothingness

Baba (*Bābā*): a respectful way of addressing or referring to an elderly person; here, the old surgeon.

Ba’i’s Mourners:

nikah (*nikāḥ*): marriage, matrimony.

pahaaran (*pahāran*; from *pahār*, mountain): a mountain woman; often applied to people of Nepal.

Sahib (*Ṣāhib*): a term of formality and respect; Mr.

takht: an all-purpose low wooden platform found in traditional South Asian homes; can serve as a bed, a seat or a place to eat.

Lamentation

chaadar (*čādar*): a sheet.

The Myna from Peacock Garden

Abba (*Abbā*): equivalent of “Father” or “Dad” in Urdu.

Akhtar: literally, “star”; here, pen name of Wajid Ali Shah, the last king of Avadh.

ashrafi (*ashrafī*): a gold coin.

Asif-ud-Daula (*[Navāb] Āṣif ad-Daula*): he ruled the state of Avadh from 1774 to 1798.

Avadh (*Avadh*): the Muslim state in the area of modern Uttar Pradesh, centering around Lucknow, which was annexed in 1856 by Dalhousie, the Governor-General of British India.

Badshah (*Bādshāh*): king or emperor.

basant kanta (*basant kāntā*): a flowering vine.

basant malti (*basant māltī*): a flowering vine.

- chobdar* (*ḥbdār*): the macebearer of the king, whose job it was to carry messages and announcements.
- Falak Ara (*Falak Ārā'*): Ornament of the Sky.
- Darogha (*Dārōghā*): Captain or Commander [of guards].
- Hakeem Sahib (*Hakīm Ṣāhib*): an honorific way of referring to a traditional doctor of *yūnānī* (Greek) medicine.
- Imambara (*Imām-bārā*): generally, a gathering place used during Muḥarram by Shī'a Muslims, sometimes featuring a Saint's tomb.
- jalebis* (*jalēbī*): cheap pretzel-shaped sweets made of fried chick-pea flour batter fried in oil and soaked in sugar syrup.
- jelo-khana* (*jelō-khāna*): courtyard of a palace where processions assemble before starting out.
- Kale Kale Khan (*Kālē Kālē Khān*): i.e., "Black, Black Khan."
- kamni* (*kāmnī*): a flowering tree.
- khichri* (*khīḥṛī*): cooked mixture of rice and lentils, sometimes with vegetables added.
- khwaja-sara* (*khwāja-sarā*): eunuch palace officer.
- kurta*: a long shirt traditionally worn over pajamas by men, with a front button placket and, usually, pockets in the side slits.
- lungi* (*lungī*): length of cloth worn as a sarong-like lower garment.
- Miyan (*Miyān*): a respectful or affectionate term of address for men, sometimes akin to "Mister."
- Mohini (*Mōhinī*): a feminine name meaning "enchantress."
- Munshi (*Munshī*): a court clerk and petition writer, with considerable power to represent clients' cases.
- naubat-khana* (*naubat-khāna*): large gateway with a chamber above for musicians, whose job it was to announce processions and times of day by playing their instruments.
- Nasiruddin Haidar Badshah's English hospital: a Western style hospital founded by a former king of Avadh.
- qavvali* (*qavvālī*): ecstatic devotional songs popular in South Asian Islam; the performers are usually professional, and performances are usually held at mosques or at shrines of saints.
- Rumi Darvaza (*Rūmī Darvāzā*): "The Turkish Gate"—ornate 18th-century ceremonial gateway near the Great Imambara of Lucknow.
- Shah Mina (*Shāh Mīnā*): a Sufi saint.
- shehnai* (*shehnā'ī*): reed instrument similar to a clarinet.
- takht*: an all-purpose low wooden platform found in traditional South Asian homes; can serve as a bed, a seat or a place to eat.
- Wajid Ali Shah (*Vājid 'Alī Shāh* [1821–1896]): the last king of Avadh before

its takeover by the British.

Remains of the Ray Family

salammed (from *salām*): a Muslim greeting, meaning “peace.”

Nosh Daru

Abba (*Abbā*): equivalent of “Father” or “Dad” in Urdu.

Amalatas (*amaltās*): the Indian Laburnum.

Attar, *attar* (*ʿattār*): a druggist, an apothecary.

Baba (*Bābā*): a respectful way of addressing or referring to an elderly person; here, father.

Bhagvan (*Bhagvān*): Hindu word for God.

Bhai, *bhai sahib* (*bhāʾī ṣāhib*): *bhāʾī* means “brother”; *ṣāhib*, which is the equivalent of Mr., is often added to names and titles to indicate respect.

bhujīya (*bhujīyā*): fried or cooked greens; a vegetable dish.

Chacha (*Čāčā*): uncle; used also to show respect.

Dada (*Dādā*): grandfather; used also to show respect to an elderly man.

dhoti (*dhotī*): a cloth worn round the waist, passing between the legs and tucked in behind.

hakeems, *Hakeem*, *hakeem* (*hakīm*): a practitioner of Arab-Greek medicine; a physician; also, though not here, a sage, a wise man, a philosopher.

hikmat (*hikmat*): the practice of Arab-Greek medicine; also, wisdom, knowledge, science, philosophy.

Ji (*jī*): a suffix added to personal names and titles for respect, regard, and affection.

kurta: a long shirt traditionally worn over pajamas by men, with a front button placket and, usually, pockets in the side slits.

Lallua (*lallū*): from *lalā* or *lallā*, a boy; dear boy, darling.

majun (*maʾjūn*): something kneaded; here, drugs mixed up with honey or syrup.

makko (*makō*): *Physalis Peruviana*, Cape gooseberry, Brazil cherry, “winter cherry.”

pan (*pān*): betel; a rolled leaf containing a chewing mixture of crushed betel nut, spices, cured lime and catechu pastes, and often tobacco.

Panja-e Taʾus (*Panjaʾ-e Tāʾūs*): *panja* means a paw, claw; also clutch, grasp, and power; *tāʾūs* is peacock; here, the two together stand for the name of a medicinal compound/mixture.

- sahib* (*ṣāhib*): a term of formality and respect; Mr.
- salaam* (*salām*): a Muslim greeting, meaning “peace.”
- sharbat*: a cool drink/beverage prepared from fruit extracts and sugar; sweetened and diluted fruit juice, sherbet.
- tahmad* (substandard for *tah-band*): a cloth worn round the waist and passing between the legs.
- takht*: an all-purpose low wooden platform found in traditional South Asian homes; can serve as a bed, a seat or a place to eat.
- Ustad* (*Ustād*): teacher, master, mentor.