



Research Article

Images of Concealment: Pandita Ramabai and the Mukti Mission

Deepra Dandekar
Affiliate Researcher,
Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin, Germany
Email: deepradandekar@gmail.com

Pandita Ramabai Dongre (1858-1922) is well-known as an Indian Christian missionary and an early feminist leader, who established an independent mission—the Mukti Mission for destitute women in 1898 in Kedgaon (Maharashtra). Ramabai was also the first Indian leader to use photography as an advocacy and marketing tool, a technology that had recently become popular in India in the mid-19th century, to document Mukti and portray the lives of its residents. To facilitate deeper understanding of how Ramabai contributed to the late-colonial and missionary establishment of 20th century India, this article analyses some Mukti photographs that were published by Ramabai's friend and missionary Helen Dyer (1900 and 1924). Treating photographs as a primary source for missionary history is an important method for understanding how Mukti presented itself and Pandita Ramabai to multiple audiences at home and abroad: an indigenous proto-Pentecostal mission run by a woman leader; an anticolonial patriotic enterprise that resisted denominational control, but elicited funds from donors abroad; and an early feminist enterprise that saved and rehabilitated women.

Mukti, women, missionary, Ramabai, photographs

Introduction¹

Pandita Ramabai Dongre (1858-1922) was a powerful Christian-feminist progressive reformer and leader who established and ran the Mukti Mission (henceforth Mukti) as an independent proto-Pentecostal mission for destitute women in 1898 at Kedgaon (Maharashtra). An avant garde and pioneering leader of her times, Pandita Ramabai (henceforth Ramabai) used the newly popularised technology of photography (henceforth photo/s) that became popular in India in the mid-19th century to document the mission, Mukti's women residents, and their activities (for a history of photography in India, see Branfoot and Taylor 2014, Edwards 2017, Myrvold 2018, Pinney 2023). Renowned as the most recent Marathi translator of the Bible aimed at women readers, scholarship on Ramabai has lauded and celebrated her, reluctant to locate Mukti in the missionary milieu of late-colonialism. Providing readers with a brief overview of this historiography, this article takes a fresh approach to Mukti by exploring the archival photos that Mukti produced.² In this article, I specifically focus on the Mukti photos published by Ramabai's friend and missionary, Helen Dyer (1900, 1924). Read against the grain, my analysis focuses on Mukti's aim at self-representation and self-fashioning. My aim here is not to reveal any contradictory 'reality' that contrasts with Mukti photos, but to explore the construction of Mukti's image as a quest in itself that transformed it into a marketable product. Mukti photos assumed centre-stage for the mission in Ramabai's time as an advocacy and publicity tool that elicited financial support from missionary supporters outside India, from

¹ I want to specially thank my anonymous reviewers for their insightful suggestions that have greatly helped in sharpening my argument. I also want to thank Eliza F. Kent, Kama Maclean, and Chandra Mallampalli for their invaluable suggestions.

² This research is part of a larger future enterprise at Heidelberg University.

Europe, Australia, and America. Printed at notable professional photo studios in the Bombay Presidency, widely-circulated Mukti photos served to consolidate Ramabai's leadership. A fresh analysis of the Mukti photos may enable us to look more closely at Ramabai's power, wielded not only within missionary circles, but within Mukti itself. I have divided this article into three parts. The first part provides a brief outline of the existing tensions in Ramabai's historiography, while the second part explores the importance of Mukti photos as a source for Ramabai's leadership situated in a history of colonialism. In the last section, I read some of the Mukti photos more closely to show how the Mukti women were imaged as merging with the physical structure of the mission, enhancing their own visibility as part of Mukti's growing visibility, and as an extension of Ramabai's power.

A Brief Overview of the Historiography on Ramabai



Image 2.1: Ramabai and some orphans who were adopted by a missionary couple from New Zealand (Dyer (1924: 41). The photos of the Mukti archive underwent enormous circulation as can be seen from "Page 148" in the right-hand corner indicating another publication from which Dyer took the photo.

The first historiographical position position on Ramabai has to do with her identity as a convert. Ramabai is appreciated by scholars of Indian Christianity as a sincere and authentic Christian convert (Frykenberg 2016). This perspective is cognisant of the social milieu of conversion in colonial India: of how conversion for first-generation converts did not provide them with comparable social belonging among the Indians and Europeans of the time in India. First-generation converts thus remained rooted in pre-conversion caste circles, previously held networks and privileges, and dependent on their personal encounters with colonial authority based on their differential access to modern education (Dandekar 2019). The various denominational missions active in Bombay that managed large educational enterprises like the Wilson School or the Robert Money School played an important role in this context. Schools provided converts with a reformed community network of students, teachers, reformers, and missionaries that produced converts as a vernacular but powerful sub-ethnicity in their own regions. In contrast to this, Ramabai's education and conversion took place outside the institutional network and educational framework of Bombay Presidency, following an entirely different

trajectory unfamiliar to the native Christians of Bombay. Ramabai's conversion in England, and rumours of her subsequent disagreements with her English missionary mentors (Shah 1977, Kosambi 2016, Kent [this volume]) was met with ambivalence, suspicion, and hostility by native Christians in Bombay (Dandekar 2021a)—a rift that Ramabai never tried to resolve either (Kosambi 1992). The hostility to Ramabai encouraged scholars, Ramabai's biographers (ibid),

to view her as a victim of patriarchal violence (also cf. Rao 2008). This view served to obscure some of the competitive aspects of Ramabai's own journey towards missionary leadership. Existing outside the denominational, regional educational framework, Mukti was different and separate from other missions in Bombay. Missions like the CMS or the Scottish Mission had head offices outside India that not only regulated its functioning, but also prescribed fixed pathways for the emergence of native Christian convert-leaders. On the other hand, Ramabai, as Mukti's leader, did not report to any head office or external auditor/ control mechanism. She established herself as an independent missionary leader and ran Mukti as an independent mission, using pathways that were outside the existing parameters available to other native Christian convert-leaders of Bombay. As a result, Ramabai struggled for funds, a struggle to which Mukti photographs bear testimony. This poses more prosaic historiographical questions about Mukti's publicity optics designed to garner much-needed financial support. As seen in image 2.1, Ramabai stands with a small group of 5 adopted children against the backdrop of Mukti's distinctive dressed-granite walls: 2 young children are held by the fostering missionary couple from New Zealand, 2 girls stand in front of Ramabai, one of them looking distinctly hopeful, while a younger girl shyly stands right in front. While Ramabai looks resolute, the missionary couple is seen wearing garlands and holding bouquets of flowers, perhaps honoured for funding the mission, and for adopting the 5 children.

The second, third, and fourth historiographical positions on Ramabai are interconnected, celebrating Ramabai as a feminist, a social reformer, and a patriot. Ramabai is lauded as a feminist leader much ahead of her times, but this approach (Chakravarti 2014, Kosambi 2016, 2000; Anagol 2005) also over simplifies Mukti as a missionary enterprise. While 'feminist' would imply a left-leaning stance that deconstructed patriarchal institutions, this description cannot be entirely borne out for Mukti. While Ramabai rescued women from abuse, she cannot be called an anti-patriarchal agent, especially as she was herself the patriarch of Mukti. A believer in the marriage institution—a deeply Protestant view—Ramabai's missionary identity reconciles poorly with left-leaning feminism. Perhaps, Ramabai can be better linked with Christian feminist leaders like Josephine Butler (1828-1906), who was instrumental in repealing the Contagious Diseases Act of 1869, and became famous for her advocacy against the slavery of women, child labour, and prostitution (Ichikawa 2015, Anagol 2005). While other Christian-feminist rescuers of Ramabai's times, like Amy Carmichael or Ida Scudder, were all Euro-American, white women, Ramabai was the first Christian rescuer of colour. There is no real precedent for Ramabai's leadership, and this apparent absence produces intellectual space for multiple scholarly engagements (Burgess 2006): was Ramabai an anticolonial patriot? Was she a social reformer? Was she a feminist? Was she a missionary? Or was she simply a rebel who resisted control (see Viswanathan [1998] for conversion as rebellion)? This leads us to the next question: it is clear that Ramabai resisted external patriarchal control (Kent [this volume]), but did she allow Mukti women residents to resist the institutional patriarchal control she wielded on Mukti (White 2023)? Ramabai is strongly associated with reform movements—the Brahmo Samaj in Bengal and the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay (Kosambi 2016). Indeed, Ramabai's previous work at the Sharda Sadan (also spelled Sharada Sadan) undergirded Mukti's initial working style and rescue work that proximated Mukti with the Christian reform movement already prevalent in Bombay (Dandekar 2021a, 2021b, 2022, Karhadkar 1979), and the Prarthana Samaj initiated by Hindu reformers. Ramabai was unique for the way she merged Christian and Hindu reform at Mukti, transcending prevalent religious battlelines between reformers, Christian converts and Hindu reformers of Bombay (Dandekar 2021a). Her move to continue with the Sharda model at Mukti perhaps drove a wedge between Ramabai and the polarised missionary domain of Bombay that stridently emphasized conversion and Christian difference. The struggle to define what an authentic Christian or a true reformer encompassed produced the missionary and reformist domain of Bombay as a competitive and confrontational battleground, with Ramabai competing with the other native

Christians of Bombay by keeping Mukti separate and different, and perhaps implying that Mukti was better because of that difference. This automatically also brings Ramabai's anticolonial and patriotic resistance to her English mentors into salience. Historians have often highlighted how Ramabai stood her ground against British missionaries (Kosambi 2016, Shah 1977, Kent [this volume]), and Ramabai's rebellion has often been interpreted as evidence of her anticolonialism and patriotism. However, this view also oversimplifies Mukti and Ramabai's close association with Euro-American missionaries at Mukti, as can be seen in image 2.1.

Mukti Photographs: Seeing, Being Seen and Being Shown



Image 2.2: Ramabai disguised as a Mahar (lower-caste) woman (Dyer 1924: 24). Given Ramabai's power to rescue the destitute, her 'disguise' as a poor woman only visually enhanced her power as privileged enough to 'play' at reality. Wearing the clothes of what the region's historically marginalized castes could afford, made her look even more Brahmin. Given her distinctive features and fame, news of Ramabai's arrival must have preceded her presence, making the disguise unnecessary. As can be seen from similar disguises frequently donned by other white women missionaries, this cross-ethnic dressing is a theme that is closely associated with missionary power in India.

Shifting to Mukti photos introduces other themes into the discussion such as Ramabai's missionary zeal that inspired her rescue missions. Saving famine-stricken destitute women and children constituted a hallmark of Mukti. But this also introduced additional tensions about the Protestant conviction of rescued women among missionaries. Cox (2002: 163) describes the moral implications of using famines as an opportunity to make Christians, and Midgely (2007: 111) argues that rescuing orphans expressed the White feminine privilege of the maternalist Christian-imperialist mission. From a more global perspective, Swain and Hillel (2010) have underlined how the rescue of children was discursively created, spread from 19th century Britain to Canadian and Australian colonies, to produce Victorian knowledge about the correct treatment of indigenous children, and inform their conceptions about childhood. Evangelical child rescue organisations problematised and blamed poorer families, creating them as incapable of providing proper child care. In the early years of Mukti, Ramabai travelled in the Deccan region, the Central Provinces, and Gujarat, rescuing famine-stricken destitute women and children (image 2.2). However, their status as rescuees who wanted to convert were dissonant with Protestant anxieties about Christian conviction. Suarsana (2014) describes how the 'Mukti Revival' in 1905 inaugurated change in that direction, heralded by Minnie Abrams, whose arrival in Mukti gave rise to a new proto-Pentecostal evangelism among the

Mukti women that resulted in them talking in tongues. The revival resolved any lingering doubts about Christian conviction and served to ensconce proto-Pentecostal evangelism at Mukti as its primary Christian nature (cf. Sahoo [2018], Singh 2016) and even reconciled Ramabai with some stalwart native Christian leaders of Bombay (Dandekar 2021a).

Mukti's evangelism did more than influence its devotional style. It also transformed the mission by bringing Mukti women more international visibility as the new Protestant women of India, and attracting more missionary interest and funding to the mission. This interest led to the intensification of the Mukti photo archive that documented its evolving physical structure, its rescued residents, its funding requirements, and its activities showcasing industrious and happy, educated Protestant women. Mukti photos found increasing circulation across contexts, matching the diverse authorial interests that underlay their citation (see caption of image 2.1). In addition to the Mukti newsletter and mouthpiece *Prayer Bell*, various versions of the same photos were published in other reports and books, where the photos were differently contextualised, depending on what viewers were asked to see. Mukti photos published by Helen S. Dyer, Ramabai's friend and missionary (*Pandita Ramabai: The Story of Her Life* [1900], *Pandita Ramabai: A Great Life in Missions* [1924]) are a great example of this circulatory trend. Historian Uma Chakravarti has recently argued (2023) that these photos illustrate and represent Ramabai's carefully crafted and archived self-representation of feminist leadership.³ Having written about Ramabai and her times as constituting a new era of feminist assertion and leadership in the Bombay Presidency (2014), Chakravarti celebrates Mukti photos as a reflection of Ramabai's feminist and anti-patriarchal spirit that constituted a radical alternative to how Indian women were photographed until then—within conjugal contexts, controlled by husbands. Chakravarti argues that Ramabai was radically different in her depiction of women, formulating alternative pictographic families that were made up of women. Quoting from Chakravarti's article:

Ramabai's use of the photograph to document women's non-conjugal existence, the redefining—even the subversion—of the family happens through the photograph. Moving away from the husband-wife photograph which ultimately became the visible symbol of new conjugality in the 19th century (and continues to dot our drawing rooms to this day, proudly displayed by families as necessary symbols of the modern household) Ramabai rewrote even the 'happy family' photograph, as she used the camera to capture the battered conditions under which child wives/ widows arrived at the doorstep.

Chakravarti writes about how the Mukti women were photographed in the same poses as married couples, and arranged together in larger collectives that simulated clans. They were imaged at other times in smaller, more intimate groups that refashioned immediate families. The smaller groups often consisted of mother and child/ children that included Ramabai posing with her daughter Manorama. Quoting from Chakravarti's online article:

These amazing photographs, captured by using some technique to piece together segments of the group to make a whole at a time when the wide-angle lens was not available, stunningly show us how dramatically Ramabai pressed against the boundaries of conventional thinking in her own life and work, never failing to document that process with all its dramatic intensity... I read this move on her part as a new way to think about reproducing the family in a situation where there were few conventional resources at her disposal.

³ "The 19th Century Woman Who Challenged the Image of Indian Coupledness: Historian Uma Chakravarti on Pandita Ramabai's Radical Photographs of Conjugalities and its Discontents" (<https://behanbox.com/2023/03/16/the-19th-century-woman-who-challenged-the-image-of-indian-coupledness/#:~:text=History-,The%2019th%20Century%20Woman%20Who%20Challenged%20the%20Image%20of%20Indian,of%20conjugalities%20and%20its%20discontents.>), accessed 03.12.2023.

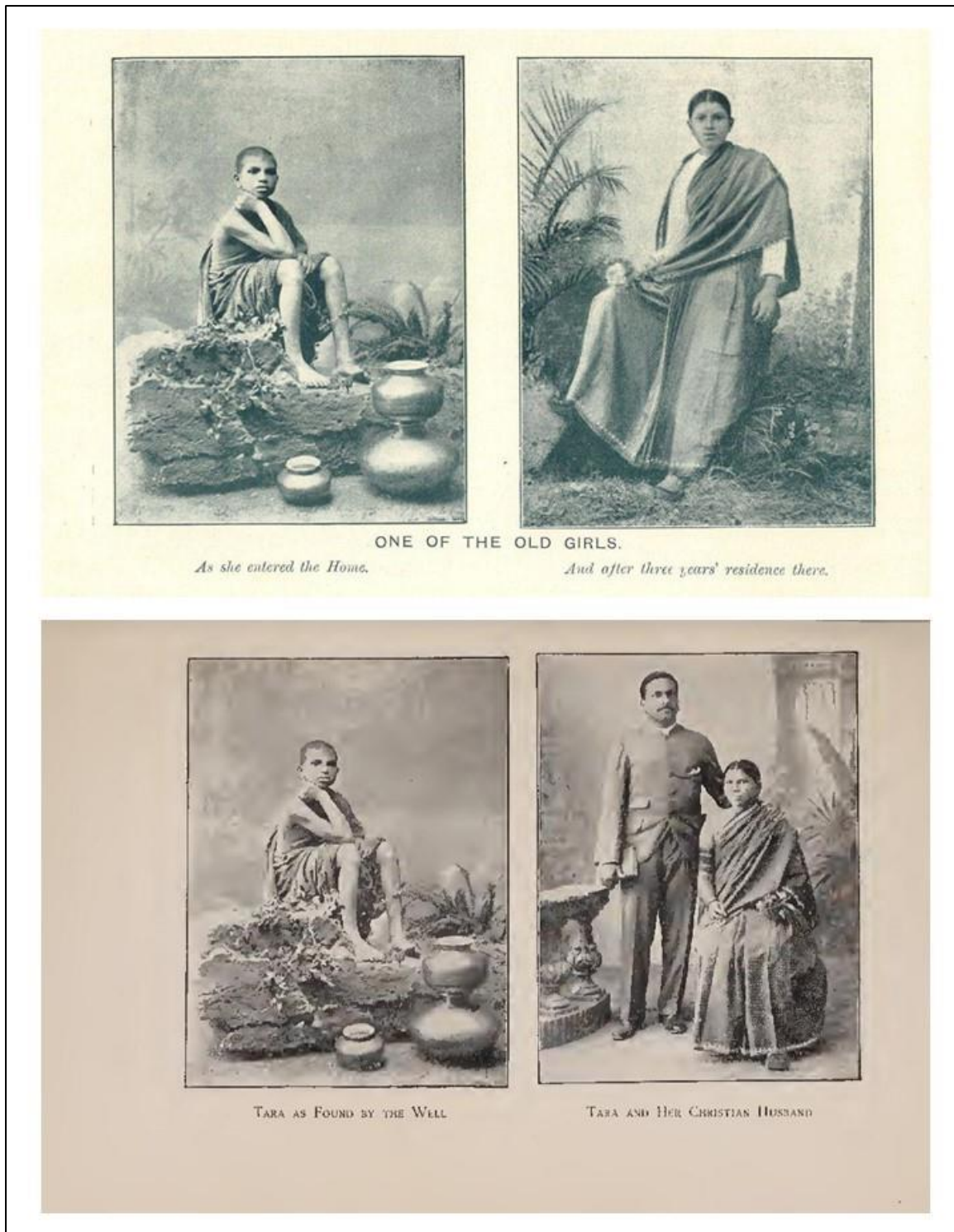


Image 2.3: The top two pictures are used by Chakravarti in her online article (2023), and are drawn from one of Dyer's numerous hagiographies of Ramabai and Mukti. But, as is typical of Mukti's circulating photo images, another book also by Dyer (1900: 88) sports the bottom two images that recount a different story of Tara in which she is shown as married to an Indian Christian.

There are several issues that immediately crop up, especially from a subaltern feminist perspective. One might ask: who were the largely anonymous women in Mukti photos? We know little about their lives except for some of their names and short descriptions. What ultimately became of them? How did their biographies or resistance find any representation in Mukti documentation? How extensively were their photos replicated and circulated across contexts—used as representative musters to illustrate the catastrophic nature of famine, and

women's misery under patriarchy? While it is true that images of Mukti women did not represent the patriarchal interests of husbands and marital families, these photos nevertheless represented Ramabai's interest in showcasing Mukti as a stellar and competitively successful mission. In the light of scholarly adulation, how can Mukti be analysed anew as a missionary institution that was part of a competitive domain, where Ramabai was seeking to strike out on her own? What we need to ask is: how can the support Mukti received be contextualised in the history of missions from late colonial Bombay Presidency (cf. Koven's [2023] analysis of the nexus between missionaries, converts, and colonial governmentality)? If Mukti photos constituted a radical shift in visually producing alternative families, then what underlay the production of these carefully crafted self-representations?

The alternative conjugality argument assumes that Ramabai and the Mukti women were equals. It assumes that not just Ramabai, but Mukti women too had also already deconstructed marriage and the patriarchal marital family and were performing feminist subversion with natural grace by self-reflexively mimicking and parodying it. The idea that Ramabai disregarded the value of matrimony as a Protestant missionary is impossible to consider, especially given the fact that many Mukti women were married off to eligible Christian men, many of them widowers. But what feels even more unimaginable is the subversive mimesis of the marital family motif itself. Why would the marital family motif, containing haunting traces of its absence, continue to dominate the photographic representation of destitute women at Mukti—women, whose families were lost in reality—especially if Ramabai was a feminist? And who was meant to see this performance of alternative conjugality? Instead of arguing that these photos showcased Ramabai's feminism, I would argue that they showcased Ramabai's power. Ramabai was displacing the family, replacing it by Mukti in the photos, presenting Mukti to viewers as a place that was more than a mission. Ramabai was presenting herself, not just as an

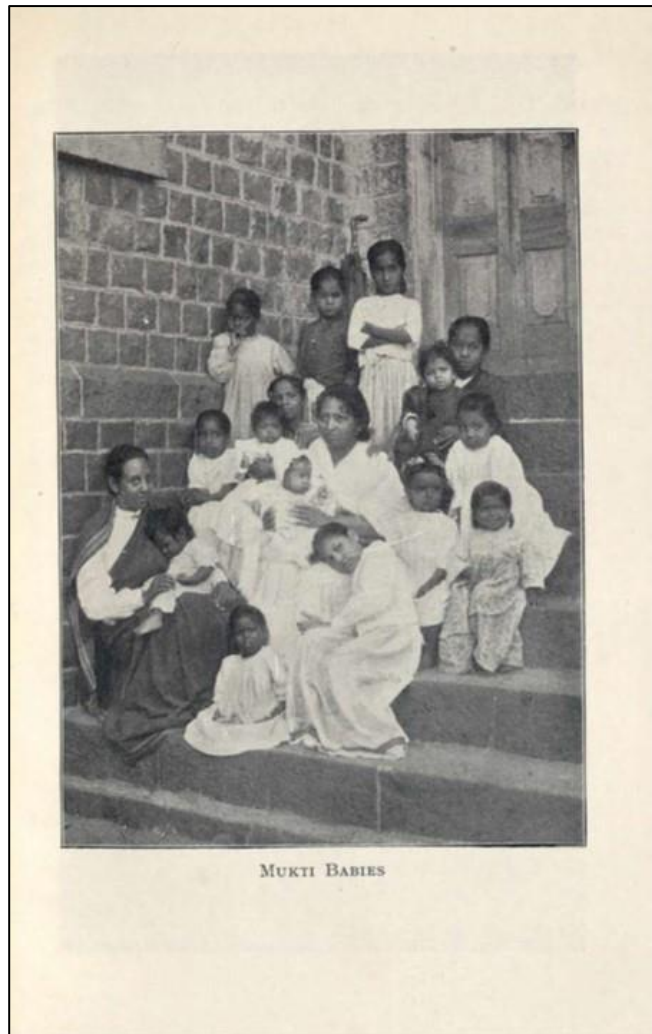


Image 2.4: (Dyer 1924: 152) simply titled "Mukti Babies" shows four adult women with Ramabai in the centre, Manoramabai (her daughter) sitting a step below her, and another two women, along with 13 orphaned girls, many of them infants.

institutional and missionary head, but an emotional, familial patriarch. Image 2.4 for example, titled "Mukti Babies," shows Ramabai's emotive power as the absolute head of an ersatz family. While both Ramabai and Manorama look stoic, more interestingly, the children have been specially dressed up. They pose to show viewers how lovingly they are cared for, with one of them laying her head on Ramabai's lap while simultaneously looking at the camera.

Addressing the question of image 2.3, Chakravarti notes Ramabai's efforts to rehabilitate destitute women through the example of Tara's before-and-after photo:

...she used the camera to capture the battered conditions under which child wives/ widows arrived at her doorstep. Sometimes she coupled them with pictures taken years later, showing the transformations in the personality of the girls who had spent a few years in the Sharada Sadan, her home for widows.

However, this particular before-after photo poses interesting conundrums. Butler's (1922: 25) account of Tara says that she had been branded by hot irons when discovered. Dyer's book (1900: 88) contains other additional photographs and information of Tara, wherein it is said that Tara was discovered near a well, perhaps sitting there with the intention to commit suicide (as a child widow). This information is hardly contradictory—Tara could have, all at once been branded; found starving; and sitting near a well wanting to commit suicide. The cluster of information about Tara serves a rhetorical purpose—to show that Ramabai saved Tara, also borne out by the photo captions. In the bottom two photos (placed by Dyer on the same page p. 88), Tara is shown in a typical marital and conjugal pose with her Christian husband. While this placement could have been Dyer's choice or the choice of the publisher, it complicates Chakravarti's (2023) criticism of the valorised Hindu marriage and conjugal photo that might be dotting contemporary *Savarna* homes. How can we, using Tara's instance, say anything to the contrary? Did Tara's 'happily married' photo not valorize Protestant marriage? Could the photo, at least in principle, not dot the walls of Tara's decedents and family home? Drawing on Majumdar's research (2009) on marriage as a simultaneously ancient and modern institution in 19th-century colonial Bengal, one can say that Mukti, too, remodelled the Indian Protestant-Christian marriage as an institution that was simultaneously religious, patriarchal, and a modern reformed institution that promoted widow remarriage, along with the conversion and education of women. Apart from demonstrating the extensive circulation of Mukti photos from the various combinations in which Tara's photos were reassembled and published, the Mukti photos also demonstrate an emancipated Protestant marriage model, where the marriage of converted Mukti women produced a new form of sociality for the nascent Indian Christian community in Western India that was strongly based on the reformed Hindu marriage.⁴ In many ways, and being based on it, the Protestant marriage model retained its *Savarna* Hindu components that were simultaneously reformist, arranged between compatible adult partners (see Dandekar [2022], also Chakravarti [2014] for the first divorces initiated by women in Bombay for marital incompatibility). The Protestant marriages of Mukti were hardly rid of the trappings of *Savarna* patriarchal components. For many Mukti girls, the mission trained them for future marital roles exactly like Hindu reformist families did. In Dyer's words (1924: 136):

The young women make good, thoughtful wives. None of them are idle. They do their own cooking and washing, take care of their babies, and, in addition, each has some duties at Mukti which employ them several hours daily. Many of the girls from Mukti have married Christian men and have gone to live in distant parts of India, where they are testifying to the heathen around them of the Saviour's love.

The possibility that Mukti remodelled the Indian Protestant marriage and nascent Christian community is evident from the anxiety that the post-marital exit of women to the outside world caused the Mukti community, wherein missionaries feared that Mukti girls, once back into the

⁴ See Arondekar (2023) of how the headshots of women in the *Samaj Sudharak* magazine run by the Gomantak Maratha Samaj drew on existing musters and photographic genres.

Hindu mainstream, would lose their Christianity. Dyer clearly describes this anxiety in the following words (1924: 137):

Occasionally it has been found that some of the girls and young women rescued during famine times have been married in their heathen days, and the husbands or some relative has come to claim them. One of these, a peculiarly fine girl, thoroughly converted and on fire for souls, was claimed by her husband from Gujerat. After ascertaining that his claim was genuine they were permitted to meet, when the young woman consented to go with him on his promise to allow her to remain a Christian. She wrote afterwards thanking Ramabai for what had been done for her, and telling of her endeavours to spread the Gospel message in the place where she was. Several others have boldly declined to go back into their heathen homes where they would not be allowed to confess their faith in Christ. It was a joy to Ramabai to stand by one and another of these as they testified boldly to their people.

Chakravarti identifies some before-after photographs of famine victims from the Mukti photo archive (image 2.5). There has been significant theoretical writing on the 19th-century genre of famine photography in colonial India (Chaudhary 2012) that served to consolidate colonial control, based on the shared emotions of sympathy that viewing the photos evoked. Chaudhary argues that the shared sympathy for the photographed object produces an affective bond between photographer and viewer that allows the latter emotional access into the staged photographic productions of the former. Hence (ibid: 171-172), sympathy for famine victims, and the visual horror of famine becomes an important conduit of imperial intervention, bringing suffering populations under imperial control: “an irresistible tending toward the other and therefore an affirmation of the self” (p. 183). Similarly, Mukti famine rescue before-after photos also consolidated Mukti’s power, allowing its viewers to share in Ramabai’s rescue drive. It is not difficult to predict the evolution of a similar empathetic conduit when beholding Mukti famine photos either. Beholding the photos might have allowed Mukti funders to emotionally participate in Ramabai’s rescue mission and strengthen it. In some senses,

images 2.4 and 2.5 functioned in the same way: as publicity materials to garner financial support from donors. Mukti famine photos not only showcased Ramabai’s success and Mukti’s power to bring women back from near death—an almost Biblical power—they also demonstrated the material power of Mukti that afforded hundreds of women food, clothing, medicines, education, work-learning opportunities, and rehabilitation. This was no small achievement and not too different from other globally active missionary enterprises like

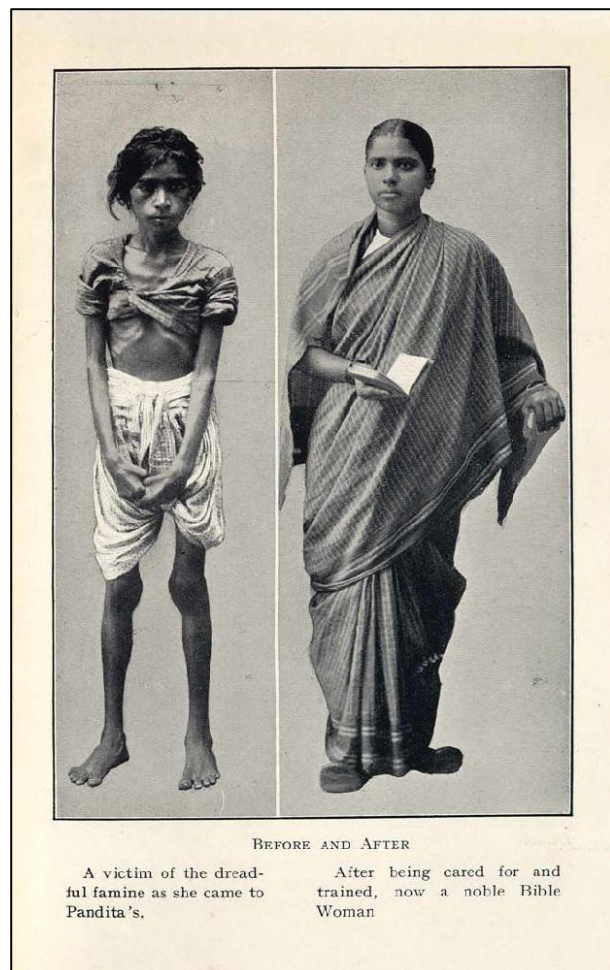


Image 2.5: A before-and-after famine photo from Dyer (1924: 72).

boarding schools and orphanages. The showcasing of Mukti's power generated a powerful convergence at Mukti, wherein Ramabai and the photogenic among Mukti girls visually produced the mission as chosen by God, a conduit of divine miracles, teleologically creating Mukti as both the result and wielder of miracles.

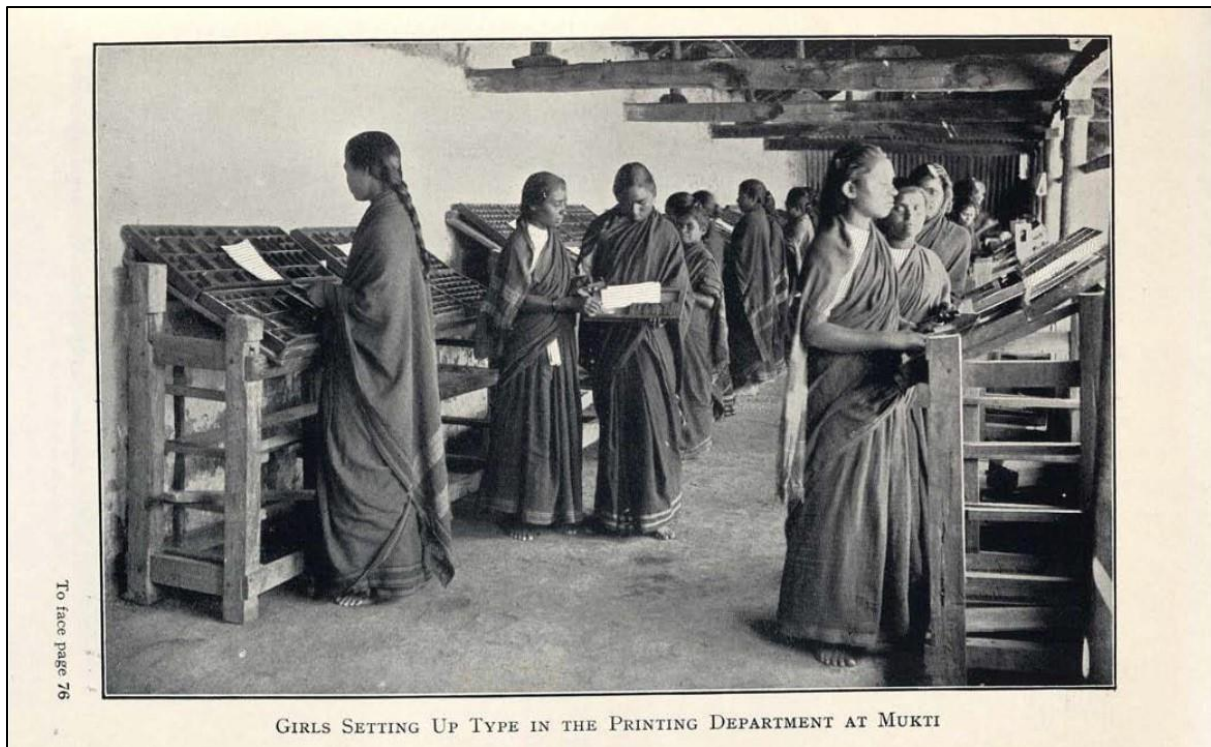


Image 2.6: Women working at the Mukti Mission printing press where Ramabai's translated Marathi Bible was also printed (Dyer 1924: 76).

Dyer's Mukti photos are replete with Protestant messaging about the redemptive power of labour, with women residents working cheerfully at chosen vocations and enjoying their well-earned meals at congregations. Neatly dressed and industrious (image 2.6), Mukti women were showcased as adept at technologically advanced gadgetry and industrial tasks that required knowledge and training. This was combined for them with intellectual and spiritual growth as Bible women (as the in-photo caption of image 2.5 reveals). Images of a 'good' Mukti were a potent message beamed out to donors and supporters, and functioned perfectly as publicity materials for an institution that was additionally described in eulogistic terms by visitors, mostly, Ramabai's friends (cf. Butler 1922). The in-image caption of image 2.6 gives an impression of Mukti being a formal office, an industrial unit with different departments like the "Printing Department". Two women are seen at the centre of the frame of image 2.6, posing as if they are consulting each other over a sheaf of papers held in their hands. They give viewers an impression of being candidly photographed, their pose bearing a striking resemblance to government officers. The product that image 2.6 markets is not the Mukti printing press or the printed materials that came out of that press, but Mukti women themselves, who were successful at running it and who encompassed a new generation of Indian Protestant women.

With publicity materials being vital to Mukti's survival and financial viability, Mukti photos revealed the simultaneous presence of two Muktis: one that was photographed and one that was not. I am not arguing that the un-photographed Mukti was 'bad', lurking underneath the 'good' photographed Mukti, or that there were two 'good' and 'bad' Muktis. Instead, I draw attention to the constructed and mediated nature of Mukti itself, the 'good' Mukti promoted visually, marketed through self-fashioned images. Mukti was a closed institution where evaluation did not take place independently of the discourse generated from within, and the

visually available 'good' Mukti is interesting for historians exactly for its conspicuously perfected effortless projection of uniformity among photographed women. This uniformity was important for Mukti's public image, as it is equally important to note that there were no dissenting voices from inside Mukti that were ever included in its outward-projected discourse. There must have been a complex process, perhaps including a cadre of photogenic women, like the famine-rescued Mukti woman of image 2.5 or Tara from image 2.3, whose successfully rehabilitated state could be visually mobilised to strengthen Mukti's public image. While the success stories of the many photographed/ photogenic Mukti women were not concocted, their images were certainly reassembled and deployed within Mukti's discourse (image 2.3). It also goes without saying that this cadre of photogenic women, if it at all existed, was hierarchically junior to Ramabai and Manorama, whose images were never used as illustrative examples or musters that demonstrated a 'convert's life', or an 'Indian destitute woman's/ widow's life', or a 'mission resident's life'. Despite being heavily photographed, Ramabai and Manorama primarily represented themselves, a mark of their power and hierarchical superiority. The only instance we find of Ramabai depicting 'Others' comes from an example where she 'plays' at cross-caste dressing. Commonly encountered among white missionary ladies traveling in India at the time who were self consciously photographed as 'native' women wearing 'native' clothes, Ramabai too engaged in 'playful' disguise (image 2.2). Wearing the 'native' clothes of a lower-caste woman, Ramabai, like the traveling white missionary ladies of her time, also posed at an Otherness that simultaneously underlined her caste privilege, implicit in the act of 'playing' (image 2.2). While her 'disguise' as a "low-caste" woman in image 2.2 has been explained by supporters as a necessary prop to facilitate the rescue of orphans from the famine-stricken countryside, the backdrop of image 2.2—a faux Taj Mahal with faux palm trees—proves otherwise. This was not a necessary costume that enabled Ramabai to work better; it was Ramabai 'playing', something attested to by Ramabai's niece in the latter's memoirs (Dongre and Patterson 1963: 42-44).

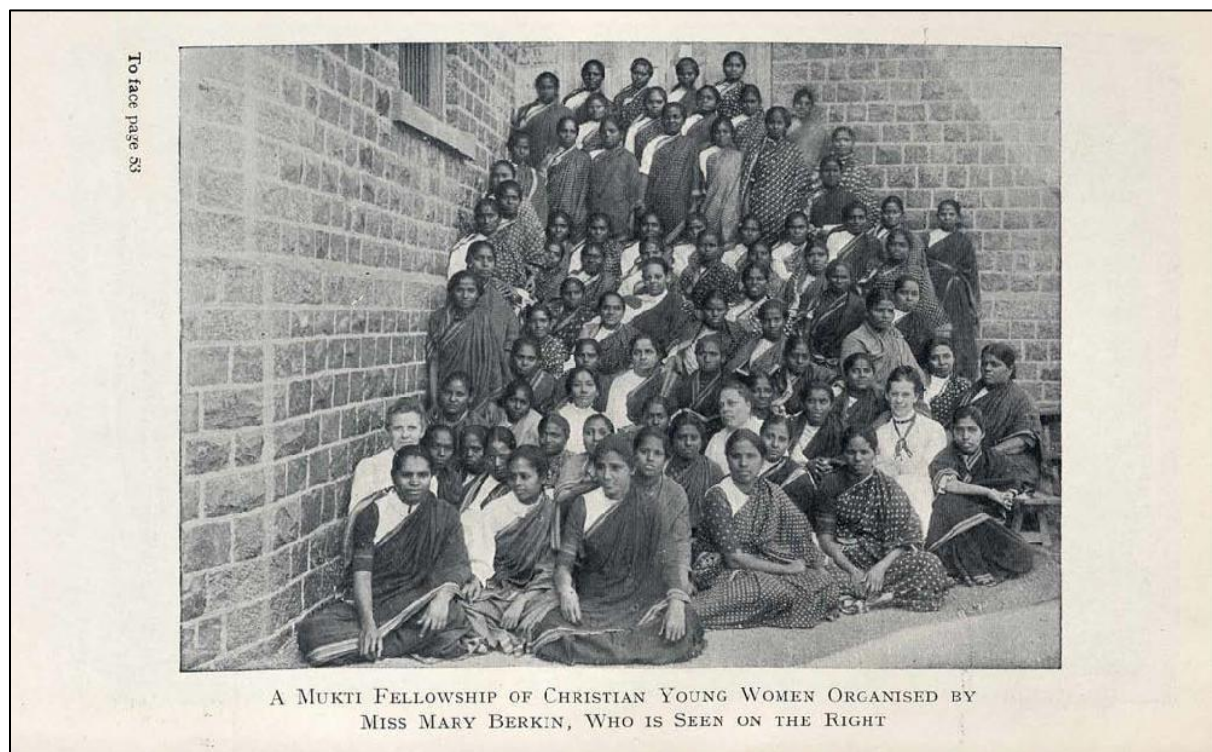


Image 2.7: Some Mukti women photographed together with Ramabai (Dyer 1924: 53).

Ramabai's interest in beaming out the public image of a 'good' Mukti was produced through a complex process that merged Mukti women's rescue narratives with her story of rescuing them.

Evident from the photos of Mukti women, who drew immense meaning from being photographed with Ramabai (image 2.7), the consensus between their co-written narratives of rescue-rescuing empowered Mukti women too, or the more photogenic among them, to embody Mukti, even if at the expense of de-individualizing their personal stories. Each photo of a rescued Mukti woman was thus indirectly a photo of Ramabai's rescue mission and 'good' Mukti itself, producing uniformity among photographed women. Being photographed at self-fashioning was thus a reward for self-fashioning itself; it was contractual and hence not without empowerment (images 2.6 and 2.7). Being consensually photographed allowed for a transaction to take place between women and their agency to self-fashion (Pinney 2023: 1-62), and not only did Mukti women show themselves in agential ways, they also saw themselves as future viewers of their own agential images. Their desire to see and to show themselves in compelling ways, as modern, global woman Protestant citizens from India built a powerfully aspirational, and reconstructive bridge, a reward, or justice mechanism. When considering some of her innumerable photos with Mukti women, one cannot help but notice the light radiating out of Ramabai, accentuated by the white colour of her sari (image 2.7—third row, fifth from the right). But Ramabai's power in these photos also draws from the intensity of the Mukti women photographed with her, who lean in towards the 'centre', towards Ramabai. Coloured in greyer tones due to their darker saris in the black and white format, Mukti women, apart from the same projected uniformity seen in image 2.6, embody Mukti as Ramabai's extensions, simultaneously radiating towards her and out of her. They collectively present viewers with a vision of a unified 'good' Mukti, the new Protestant woman whose proto-Pentecostal evangelism was similar to the Black churches of early 20th century American Christianity (See Napierala [2021] for the 'different' evangelism of Black churches of the early 20th century). Given the complexity of this desire, it is unlikely that Mukti women ever rejected Mukti and the power and potential for visibility it afforded them. In fact, photos were a new forensic tool that bolstered Mukti women, their images turning into 'evidence' that proved that they were indeed the 'Mukti women', something of importance for families that kept the Mukti photos of their ancestresses. These photos kept the door open for Mukti women, for their possible return to Mukti in case circumstances did not bode well for them in the outside world. This is not to say that their Christian conviction was strategic (cf. Roberts 2012); having the security of evidence that proved that they were indeed 'Mukti women' photographed with Ramabai also meant that the material anxieties, desires, and aspirations of Mukti women were inextricable from their spiritual and religious lives.

The 'Burning' Within

But what happened to those hundreds of women who were never photographed? For all those who were photographed, there must have been many others who were not photographed. Their images (like in image 2.9) perhaps contributed to large Mukti crowds, visually representing Mukti's bulwark and testifying to the numerical strength of the Mukti product. As part of a crowd, these women were mostly nameless and sometimes indistinguishable (cf. Spivak [2000: 324] for a discussion of feminism and subaltern silence). A question I have often returned to while looking at Mukti photos is: who were the other Mukti women seen in crowds (like in images 2.7, 2.8, and 2.9)? Mukti women did not write candid critical autobiographies that resisted power or asserted individuality, much in contrast to Brahmin women outside missions like Lakshmibai Tilak (cf. *Smritichitre* 2017). It is also unlikely that Mukti women wrote resistant narratives, their security in the mission being at stake. They are lost to the archival record today, apart from some chance appearances in group photos. For example, consider the 3rd woman from the left in the first row (counted horizontally) of image 2.9 who looks away from the camera (I am unsure if she is smiling); it is also difficult to tell whether she looks away deliberately. Similarly, in case of the first lady in the 2nd row from the right in image 2.7. While her looking away does not seem deliberate, I would suggest that though photographed

consensually, those who looked disinterested and away in the Mukti photos were perhaps indeed disinterested in the contractual agency that being photographed afforded women. While I do not have their voices to ascertain whether they were really disinterested, or qualify the nature or reason for this disinterest, I can only analyse their looking away by placing it within the Mukti context. For many destitute women, the world ended with Mukti walls. They had no relatives outside who came seeking them in Mukti; they were alone in the world with nowhere to go. For women, whose lives were limited to Mukti; they perhaps gained little from the contractual agency of being photographed. Looking polite and passively disinterested was therefore indeed an expression of actual potential disinterest, their physical presence supplied by themselves and inserted into photos to add to Mukti's bulwark.

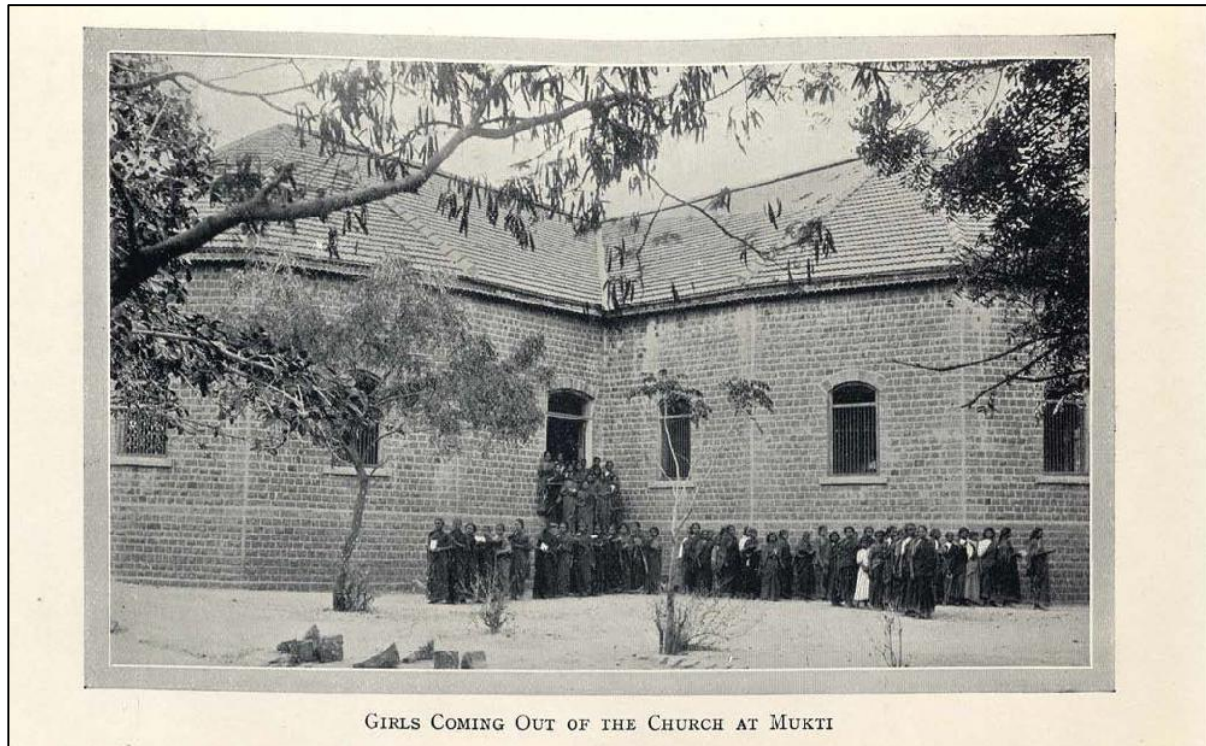


Image 2.8: The Mukti women photographed in front of the Mukti Church (Dyer 1924: 52).

Camp's writings on photography (2017) documents the experiences of black subjects within the diaspora, and she poignantly asks us to listen to images and the imagery produced through physical movement or even humming (pp. 3-4), as a counterintuitive force. Camp argues that photographs produce a vernacular, quotidian form through the haptic mundanity of everyday images that resists and opposes the creator's intention (ibid: 7-8):

As a vernacular practice mobilised by black people in the diaspora, photography is an everyday strategy of affirmation and a confrontational practice of visibility. Vernacular photographs are banal as well as singular; they articulate both the ordinary and the exceptional texture of black life.

Accepting Camp's invitation to listen to the images of Mukti women and analyse their belonging to Mukti (like in image 2.8), brings us to a consideration of what was necessary to attain that state of belonging. To be saved and rescued, Mukti women had to somehow make themselves be 'seen' by Ramabai, a prerequisite for their subsequent inclusion in Mukti. This transformed Ramabai's rescue of women into a powerful 'seeing' process, with the women eliciting Ramabai's gaze and showing themselves to her, a process that was akin to receiving *darshan*. Dyer recounts an example of the power of Ramabai's 'seeing' and the urgent need

among women to elicit Ramabai's gaze, resulting in their rescue. Recounting a time when Ramabai was touring the Central Provinces, Dyer writes (1900: 119):

When Pandita was bringing widows from the Central Provinces, a deaf and dumb woman insisted on coming. Pandita refused to bring her. She came and sat in the train. They made her understand that she could not learn in school, hence could not be taken. She told them by signs that she would grind, cook, wash clothes, scrub, etc. She literally refused to leave the train and at the last minute Pandita laughed and bought her a ticket. She has been true to her word and works cheerfully. She always preserves a reverent attitude during worship. When the women were asking Pandita for baptism, she persisted in having her name written. Pandita tried to put her aside, but again she was persistent. One day she rose to testify. We all felt God's presence as she stood in silent eloquence before God. The girls said aloud, 'Mookkie [the dumb one] knows God as well as we'. On two occasions she tried to speak and made a low sound. She received baptism with the others.

Mookie's example is poignant, and also powerful, due to her dumbness. Her case constitutes an example of how women needed to be urgently 'seen' at the moment of their rescue, to be rescued. And this 'seeing' depended on Ramabai. Mookie's determination to be seen by Ramabai, by missionaries like Dyer, or the other girls who were the recipients of Ramabai's gaze, and who noted Mookie's dumbness, and finally by God who accepted her soul, exemplifies the transactional energy of 'seeing' and 'showing' that empowered Mukti women, their contribution to Mukti rewarded through the forensic, photographic documentation of their presence and contribution. I have yet to find a single photo of Mookie.

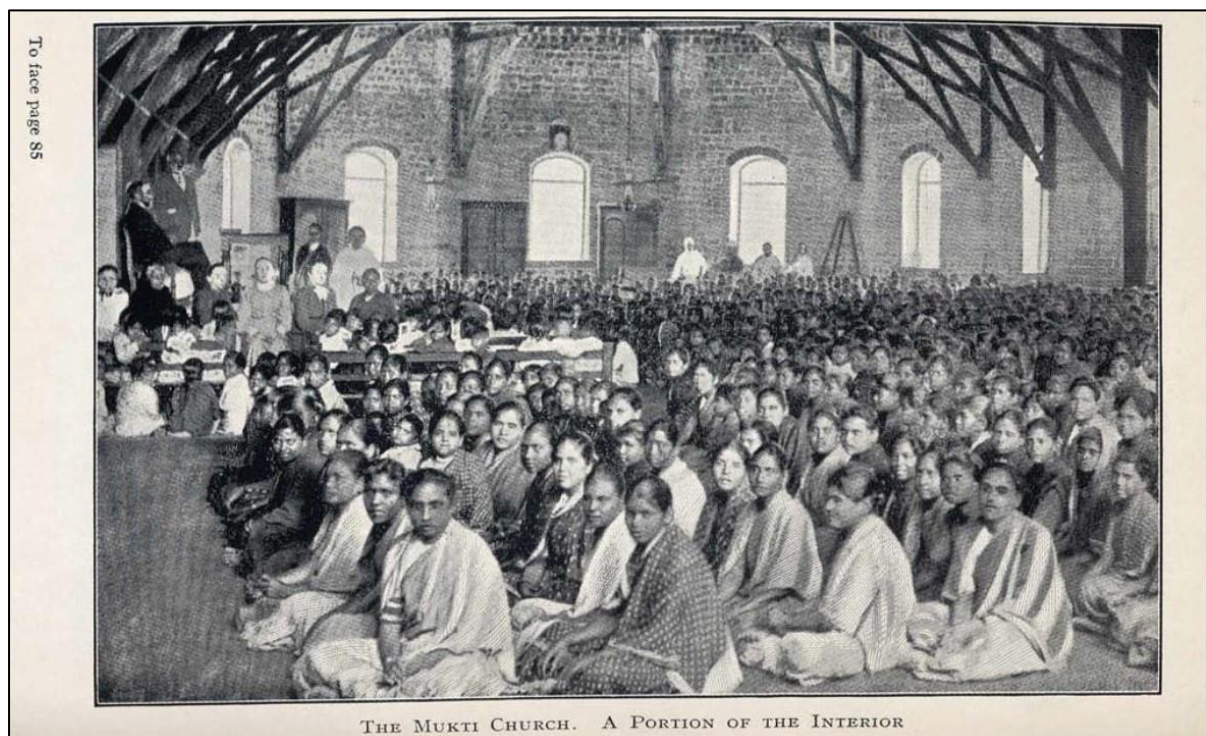


Image 2.9: Mukti women inside the Mukti Church (Dyer 1924: 85).

The necessary justice of being 'seen' has been sensitively pointed out by Hatcher (2023) when describing the empathy implicit in Vidyasagar's seeing of the Bengali widow's distress. But Vidyasagar was not a missionary leader, and his seeing remained limited to legal activism. The

empowerment and justice of being 'seen' by missionaries who saved and rescued was hardly static or even worldly. It was not simply always there once conferred. This power had to be remade, reformulated, and maintained with care. This need to be permanently 'seen' was an important context for conversion. We see in Mookie's case, how the need to remain permanently seen by Ramabai, other missionaries, and the other women residents was a powerful context that resulted in her step towards baptism. On the other hand, for women who had already been saved and would never leave Mukti, being seen was more passive and perhaps grew personally uninteresting over time. Perhaps every girl like Mookie, enthusiastic in the beginning to be seen, gradually turned passive once she had been saved, and once she realized that was going to turn into one of Mukti's permanent residents.

'Seeing' and 'showing' converged at Mukti at the moment of proto-Pentecostal Revival in 1905 that democratised the gaze, substituting Ramabai's gaze with God's gaze. Revival thus played a positive role, according women democracy through God's universal gaze bestowed on them. This divine gaze replaced the anxiety of remaining unseen by Ramabai, facilitating mass-scale conversion and religious experiences accompanied with tremendous fervour. Mondal (2017: 113) describes the experiences of Mukti Revival as generating a 'burning' sensation among Mukti women, resonating with the imagination of what a Sati would experience, a feared fate in case widows had not been rescued. Feeling the 'burning' at the moment of revival functioned as an ultimate form of redemption from Sati, Hinduism and marital patriarchy, and some women even saw tongues of fire as part of their spiritual experiences connected with conversion. Mondal quotes Dyer (ibid: 123-124):

They experienced "trembling, shaking, loud crying and confessions, unconsciousness in ecstasy or prayer, sudden falling to the ground twisting and writhing during exorcisms, and 'joy unspeakable' manifested by singing, clapping, shouting praises and dancing"...The series of events—the Holy Spirit entering the woman's body, the sensation of fire at its entrance, the all-consuming nature of the event, the sometimes indecipherable crying aloud, and the writhing on the floor or other uncontrollable bodily movement—privileged the body as a site of pleasure and pain, as the ultimate bearer of direct revelation from and communication with God...The "fire" experienced during the revival redefined the association between burning and widowhood. Dyer described how "the burning within" shaped the women's transformation: "their faces light up with joy, their mouths are filled with praise." In a religious context that did not encourage sati and that permitted widow remarriage, the "burning within" brought laughter, songs, and renewal. The "baptism of fire" thus significantly recast widows' subjectivity towards self-expression rather than self-denial, to a new life rather than death.

Revival helped the Mukti women gain new visibility, and legitimacy, but it also led to greater fame and fund-raising success for Mukti, which in turn financed ambitious construction projects. Camp's approach (2017) invites us to carefully examine the photos celebrating this success. Images 2.8 and 2.9 displays the enormity of the Mukti Church begun in 1899. Completed in 1905, it assumed centre stage in many Mukti photos and dwarfed the women standing in front of it (image 2.8). While women on the left-hand side in image 2.8 leaned on each other, the women on the right-hand side lean against the Church walls, looking away from the camera as if redirecting the viewer's gaze to the Church. In image 2.8, Mukti women are seen/ shown as being part of Mukti's physical environment, its campus, its space, and buildings. While the Church's enormous structure adhered to the fashion of the day, its construction plan was nevertheless deliberate. In contrast to intimate smaller chapels that women could have inhabited with friends and children—practical and intimate spaces—the

Mukti Church was the opposite (image 2.9). It demonstrated God's power and mandate about Ramabai's success and victory in the competitive missionary domain of Bombay and beyond. Shaped in the design of a cross, the Church's centralised space could seat hundreds of women at once (image 2.9).⁵

Conclusion: Breaking the Glass Ceiling



Image 2.10: Rambai and Manorama posing with colleagues and missionary associates (Dyer 1924: 169).

I began this article by arguing for a historiographical approach to Ramabai that would reinstate her as a competitive missionary leader of the 20th-century late-colonial context in Bombay Presidency, a context that had Hindu reformers enter the competitive fray against missionaries. Ramabai possessed tremendous charisma and acumen. Over time, she gained financial stability for Mukti from missionary benefactors outside India, especially after the Revival. She enjoyed rich networks among Hindu reformer friends in India, and apart from elite educational opportunities, Ramabai had enough caste privilege to allow her to straddle both reformers and native missionaries in Bombay, enough to break the racialised glass ceiling that native convert leaders usually faced. Breaking this glass ceiling, Ramabai's leadership reached new transformative heights, producing her as almost-white, akin to other white missionary ladies of her time (image 2.10). Her power surpassed the native missionaries of her time in Bombay, as she launched her own independent Bible translation, and built an enormous Church that represented Mukti's success. In this last image (image 2.10), Ramabai and her daughter Manorama take centre stage, with Ramabai being the only one seated on a throne-like ornate sofa. The others either stand, or sit around her on stools, chairs, or on the floor, with Manorama resting her elbow intimately on her mother's knee. Most interesting is the in-photo caption that names only Ramabai and Manorama, categorising the other white Euro-American missionaries

⁵ See Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission Church (<https://www.pmmm.org.in/projects/pandita-ramabai-mukti-mission-church/>), accessed 03.12.2023

as “workers and friends.” It would be difficult to claim that Ramabai shared power with the rescued women of Mukti, girls like Mookie, who struggled to be seen. In fact, Ramabai’s power of ‘seeing’ women was inherent to her hierarchical superiority. It is thus difficult to claim that Ramabai was a ‘feminist’, especially since the term has an intellectual genealogy inspired by detailed Marxist analysis about women’s labour within patriarchy. Similarly, it is equally complicated to claim that Ramabai was a ‘patriot’ for resisting English missionaries, jostling for power and control over the definition of what Indian Protestantism encompassed for Hindu Brahmin converts like herself (Kent [this volume]). Ramabai had a vast network of Euro-American missionaries and benefactors as well and Mukti also benefitted from them. Ramabai became famous after the Revival and this gave Mukti and its proto-Pentecostal women residents fame as well—evident from their photos. However, the enormity of the Ramabai-Mukti project also obscured women’s individual differences, producing them as the enterprise’s mass-produced and uniform products.

As historians, one often works with asymmetries, absences and silences expressed through fault lines (De Certeau 1996 [2000]). To write a more realistic and prosaic history of Ramabai, it is important for historians to shift focus from her to Mukti, the real context of her work.⁶ In turn, to write a more realistic history of Mukti women, it is important to shift focus from a methodology that peruses eulogistic narratives about Mukti written by Ramabai’s friends to examine other archival sources, such as Mukti photos that can be read critically and against the grain to reveal more information about the lives of Mukti women. While writing a history of the Mukti women—the new Indian Protestant woman—through their photographs is a daunting task reserved for the future, this article attempts to begin the journey by outlining how being ‘seen’ not just by Ramabai, her associates, other Mukti women, and the camera, but later after the Revival, by God inside Mukti’s massive Church, remained at the centre of women’s agency, empowerment, and justice. Their urgent need, that they not be forgotten after being ‘seen’ and rescued once, but remain constantly and perpetually ‘seen’ as individuals, brings conversion into salience. Conversion always takes place in a social context of personal crisis that demands self-definition (Viswanathan 1998), where gendered expression of desire and pleasure play an important role in the journey towards self-assertion (Dandekar 2018). For Mukti women, conversion took place in the context of Mukti itself, defined by their desire and aspiration to be seen, to break the glass ceiling at their own levels that threatened to conceal them as uniform and merged embodiments of a ‘good’ Mukti.

References

- Anagol P., (2005). *The Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850-1920*. Hampshire: Ashgate.
- Arondekar A., (2023). *Abundance: Sexuality’s History*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Branfoot C., Taylor R., (2014). *Captain Linnaeus Tripe: Photographer of India and Burma, 1852-1860*. Munich: DelMonico Books.

⁶ A similar methodological shift is demonstrated by Miller (2003) in his research on the Basel mission in Africa which shows how material organizations recreated their independent spiritual profile, dictated by the context of their operation. The missionaries of the Basel mission at one of their mission outposts in Africa ended up changing the quietistic character of the mission, due to the real-time context in which the mission operated.

- Burgess R.V., (2006). "Pandita Ramabai: A Woman for all Seasons; Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati Mary Dongre Medhavi (1858-1922)." *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 9(2): 183-198.
- Butler C., (1922). *Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati: Pioneer in the Movement for the Education of the Child-widow of India*. London and Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company.
- Campt T.M., (2017). *Listening to Images*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Chakravarti U., (2014). *Rewriting History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai*. New Delhi: Zubaan Books.
- Chaudhary Z., (2012). *Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-Century India*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cox J.L., (2002). *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818-1940*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Dandekar D., (2018). "Translation and the Christian Conversion of Women in Colonial India: Rev Sheshadri and Bala Sundarabai Thakur." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 41 (2): 366-283.
- Dandekar D., (2019). *The Subhedar's Son: A Narrative of Brahmin-Christian Conversion from Nineteenth-Century India*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dandekar D., (2021a). *Baba Padmanji: Vernacular Christianity in Colonial India*. London: Routledge.
- Dandekar D., (2022). *Yamuna's Journey* (Author: Baba Padmanji). New Delhi: Speaking Tiger.
- De Certeau M., (1996 [2000]). *The Possession at Loudun*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Dongre R.K., Patterson J.F., (1963). *Pandita Ramabai: A life of Faith and Prayer*. Madras: The Christian Literature Society.
- Dyer H.S., (1900). *Pandita Ramabai: The Story of Her Life*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company.
- Dyer H.S., (1924). *A Great Life in Indian Missions: Pandita Ramabai, Her Vision, Her Mission and Triumph of Faith*. Glasgow: Pickering & Inglis.
- Edwards S., (2017). "Photography in Colonial India," in Dohmen R., (ed.). *Emire and Art: British India*, pp. 110-143. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Frykenberg, R.E., (2016). "The Legacy of Pandita Ramabai: Mahatma of Mukti." *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 40(1): 60–70.
- Hatcher, B.A. (2023). *Against High-Caste Polygamy: An Annotated Translation* (Author: Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar). New York: Oxford University Press
- Ichikawa C., (2015). "A Body Politic of Women's Own: Josephine Butler, Social Purity, and National Identity." *Victorian Review* 41(1): 107–23.

- Karhadkar K.C., (1979). *Baba Padmanji: Kal va Kartutva* [Baba Padmanji: Life and Achievements]. Mumbai: Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Sanskriti Mandal.
- Kosambi M., (1992). "Indian Response to Christianity, Church and Colonialism." *Economic and Political Weekly* 27(43/44): 61–71.
- Kosambi M., (2016). *Pandita Ramabai: Life and Landmark Writings*. London: Routledge.
- Kosambi M., ed. (2000). *Pandita Ramabai through Her Own Words: Selected Works*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Koven S., (2023). "Brahman Wives and Pedagogies of Conscience in Mid-nineteenth Century British India." *Modern Asian Studies* 57(1): 100-166.
- Majumdar R. (2009). *Marriage and Modernity: Family Values in Colonial Bengal*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Midgley C., (2007). *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790-1865*. London: Routledge.
- Miller J., (2003). *Missionary Zeal and Institutional Control: Organizational Contradictions in the Basel Mission on the Gold Coast, 1828-1917*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Mondal S., (2017). "Hindu Widows as Religious Subjects: The Politics of Christian Conversion and Revival in Colonial India." *Journal of Women's History* 29(3): 110-136.
- Myrvold K., (2018). "Visualizing Sikh Warriors, Royalties, and Rebels: Photography in Colonial Punjab," in Jacobsen K.A., Myrvold K., (eds.). *Religion and Technology in India: Spaces, Practices and Authorities*, pp. 43-74. London: Routledge.
- Napierala P., (2021). "Black Churches and African American Social Activism: The 'Opiate View' and the 'Inspiration View' of Black Religion in the Selected Literature." *British and American Studies* 27 (27): 95-111.
- Padmanji B., (1877) (ed.). *Annotated New Testament in Marathi: Nava Kararavar Tika*, Volume 2 (in Marathi). Bombay: Bombay Tracts and Books Society.
- Pinney C., (ed.) (2023). *Citizens of Photography: The Camera and the Political Imagination*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rao, P.V., (2008). "Nationalism and the Visibility of Women in Public Space: Tilak's Criticism of Rakhmabai and Ramabai." *The Indian Historical Review* XXXV(2): 155-177.
- Roberts N., (2012). "Is Conversion a 'Colonization of Consciousness'?" *Anthropological Theory* 12(3): 271–294.
- Sahoo S., (2018). *Pentecostalism and the Politics of Conversion in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shah A.B., (1977) (ed.). *The Letters and Correspondence of Pandita Ramabai*. Bombay: Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture.
- Singh H., (2016). *Rise of Reason: Intellectual History of 19th-Century Maharashtra*. London: Routledge.

- Spivak G.C., (2000). "The New Subaltern: A Silent Interview" in Chaturvedi V., (ed.) *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, pp. 324-340. New York: Verso Books.
- Suarsana Y., (2014). "Inventing Pentecostalism: Pandita Ramabai and the Mukti Revival from a Post-colonial Perspective." *Pentecostudies: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Research on the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* 13(2): 173–196.
- Swain S., Hillel M., (2010). *Child, Nation, Race and Empire: Child Rescue Discourse, England, Canada and Australia, 1850-1915*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Tilak L., (2017). *Smritichitre: The Memoirs of a Spirited Wife* (Engl. Trans. Gokhale S.). New Delhi: Speaking Tiger.
- Viswanathan G., (1998). *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- White K.J., (2023). *Let the Earth Hear Her Voice: The Life and Work of Pandita Ramabai*. London: WTL Publications Ltd.

Online Resources

- Anonymous, (no date available). "Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission Church"
(<https://www.pmmm.org.in/projects/pandita-ramabai-mukti-mission-church/>), accessed 03.12.2023.
- Chakravarti U., (16.03.2023). "The 19th Century Woman Who Challenged the Image of Indian Coupledness: Historian Uma Chakravarti on Pandita Ramabai's Radical Photographs of Conjugalities and its Discontents"
(<https://behanbox.com/2023/03/16/the-19th-century-woman-who-challenged-the-image-of-indian-coupledness/#:~:text=History-,The%2019th%20Century%20Woman%20Who%20Challenged%20the%20Image%20of%20Indian,of%20conjugalities%20and%20its%20discontents.>), accessed 03.12.2023.
- Dandekar D., (27.10.2021b). "Baba Padmanji". *Oxford Bibliographies Online (Hinduism)*:
(<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399318/obo-9780195399318-0244.xml>), accessed 20.04. 2024.