

Lesson 3

The Legend of Gazi

A. Warm up activity

□ Discuss the following questions:

- a. What is meant by indigenous art?
- b. Have you seen a *paat* or scroll painting?
- c. If so, what are some of the images depicted in it?
- d. What other forms of indigenous art can you think of?

B. Now read the following text and answer the questions that follow.

The Legend of Gazi

According to some myths and legends, Gazi Pir was a Muslim saint who is said to have spread Islam in the parts of Bengal close to the Sunderbans. He was credited with many miracles. For example, he could supposedly calm dangerous animals and make them docile. He is usually depicted in *paats* or scroll paintings riding a fierce-looking Bengal tiger, a snake in his hand, but in no apparent danger. According to some stories, he also fought crocodiles who threatened the people of the region full of canals and creeks, indeed, a kind of watery jungle bordering the Bay of Bengal.



Because of his alert and vigilant presence, all predatory animals were said to have been kept within bounds. It was also believed that he enabled villagers to live close to forests and jungles and cultivate their lands. Consequently, people of these regions would pray to him for protection. The story of Gazi Pir has been preserved in folk literature as well as art and has been performed in indigenous theatre. Some *Gazir paat* scrolls are part of the collection of the British Museum.

C. Find out the meanings of the following words.

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|----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| legends | docile | scroll | creeks |
| vigilant | predatory | collection | indigenous |

D. Answer the following questions.

- a. What kind of extraordinary power did Gazi have?
- b. What was the geographical nature of the region where Gazi performed his miracles?
- c. Why, do you think, was Gazi admired in parts of rural Bangladesh for a long time?
- d. What are the different art forms in which the myth of Gazi is kept alive in Bangladesh and even outside the country?

E. Notice that the passage about Gazi contains words and phrases such as *for example, also, indeed and consequently*. These words and phrases are used either for emphasis or for transitions. What part of speech do these words belong to? Which of them are used for emphasis and which for transitions? Why are they needed in the passage and how different would the passage be without them?

Now, make sentences with these words and phrases.

Finally, try to make a list with these and similar adverb words and phrases that you can use for emphasis and transitions.

F. Rearrange the sentences in the right order to make a paragraph.

1. Gazi Pir was gifted with the power of miracles.
2. In fact, some of these *paats* are preserved even in the British Museum.
3. Another miracle associated with Gazi is that he could fight the crocodiles.
4. These two examples of the miracles he performed, along with some others, are preserved in folk literature.
5. In addition to literature, the miracles of Gazi are also portrayed in art, especially in a folk art form called *paat*.
6. For example, he could tame hostile animals and make them obey him.
7. This is how the British museum pays tribute to this legendary Muslim saint and preacher.

G. Write a paragraph of about 150 words explaining what folk art is and your personal experience of some forms of folk art.

H. Follow up activity: Group Presentation

In class, discuss the different forms of the folk art of Bangladesh. Then form groups where each group gives a presentation on one of these forms.