FOREWORD
To the first Edition
BY

THE HISTORY OF BENGAL PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

The idea of writing a comprehensive History of Bengal on modern scientific lines may be traced back to 1912 when Lord Carmichael, the first Governor of the Bengal Presidency, took the initiative and invited Mr. Haraprasad Sastri to prepare a scheme. It was proposed to publish the history in three volumes dealing respectively with the Hindu, Muslim and British periods. Several meetings were held in the Government House, Calcutta, but what became of this plan and how far it was matured are not definitely known.

Some years later, the late Raja Prafulla Nath Tagore, the grandson of the famous Kali Krishna Tagore, volunteered to pay the entire cost of such a publication, and invited the late Mr. Rakhalidas Banerji to draw up a plan along with some other well-known scholars of his time. Several meetings were held in the house of the Raja, but ultimately nothing came out of it.

Ever since the foundation of the University of Dacca, it was felt that the University should take up the task of preparing a History of Bengal as early as practicable. This idea received an impetus from Sir Jadunath Sarkar, who, in the course of a lecture delivered at the University about the middle of July 1933, emphasised that a History of Bengal on modern scientific lines was long overdue, and that this University, standing as it does in the very heart of an ancient and important seat of Bengal culture, should in the fitness of things take up the work. Sir Jadunath promised his whole-hearted support and active co-operation in this enterprise.

The scheme received a new impetus from Mr. (now Sir) A. F. Rahman, when he joined the University as Vice-Chancellor in July 1934. In his first convocation address next month he emphasised the need of commencing the work, and in his second convocation speech, in July 1935, he announced that some preliminary work had already been done.

By the end of August 1935, the scheme took a more definite shape, as Professor R. C. Majumdar, Head of the Department of History, who had so long been pre-occupied with his own research work on the history of Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East, was now free to take up the work.
Foreword

On the 13th of September 1935, the Vice-Chancellor convened a general meeting at his house, of local citizens and University teachers interested in the subject, and a Committee called the History of Bengal Publication Committee was formed at the meeting composed of the following gentlemen:—

1. A. F. Rahman, Esq., Vice-Chancellor, Dacca University —Chairman
2. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali—Secretary
3. Dr. S. N. Bhattacharyya—Jt. Secretary
4. Professor R. C. Majumdar
5. Sir Jadunath Sarkar
6. Dr. K. R. Quanungo
7. Hakim Habibur Rahman
8. Mr. Sharafuddin

The Committee formally met immediately after the general meeting, and its first task was the framing of a tentative Scheme of Work for the consideration of the Executive Council of the University. Mr. (now Sir) A. F. Rahman very generously announced at the inaugural meeting of the Committee a donation of Rupees one thousand in memory of his deceased mother, and Dr. K. R. Quanungo, Reader in History, promised on behalf of the Friend's Library, Kanungopara, Chittagong, a contribution of Rupees fifty.

The Committee passed several resolutions one requesting the Executive Council to undertake to find funds for the publication of the proposed History, and to make an initial grant of Rs. 1,000/- and another requesting Professor Majumdar to take the necessary steps for the furtherance of the scheme.

In pursuance of the latter resolution of the Committee, Professor Majumdar wrote to the Vice-Chancellor on the 14th September, 1935, requesting him to place the draft scheme before the Executive Council and to move the Council to provide the necessary funds for the publication of the proposed History, and to make an initial grant of Rupees one thousand for meeting the preliminary expenses.

The scheme was recommended by the Academic Council and in a meeting held on 19th December, 1935, the Executive Council finally approved of the entire scheme, financial as well as administrative, and resolved as follows:—

"That the financial and administrative schemes for the publication of the History of Bengal as a Dacca University publication as per Appendix c be approved, that for the purpose of meeting preliminary expenses for the publication of the History, a grant of Rs. 1,000/-
be now made out of the University funds and that the University undertakes to find funds that might be necessary, in addition to the donation raised, for the publication of the History on the definite understanding that the proprietary right of the History should solely vest in the University of Dacca."

It is not necessary to reproduce the entire scheme, but the following extracts may be quoted to give an idea of the administrative arrangement:

'SCH EmE FOR A HISTORY OF BENGAL

1. It shall be published by and at the expense of the University of Dacca under its general superintendence and control.

2. The History shall be divided into three volumes as follows:—
   Vol. I. The Hindu Period.
   Vol. II. Pre-Mughal Period (1200-1576 A.D.).
   Vol. III. Mughal Period (1576-1757 A.D.).

3. Dr. R. C. Majumdar shall be the editor of the first volume and Sir Jadunath Sarkar should be requested to edit the second and the third volumes.

4. The management of the preparation and publication of the proposed History shall be entrusted to a committee to be called 'History of Bengal Publication Committee' composed as follows:—
   1. The Vice-Chancellor—Chairman.
   2. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali—Secretary.
   3. Dr. S. N. Bhattacharyya—Jt. Secretary.

Other members—4. Sir Jadunath Sarkar and 5. Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Editors; 6. Dr. K. R. Quanungo; 7. Hakim Habibur Rahman; 8. Mr. Sharafuddin. The Committee shall have power to co-opt other members."

In the second meeting of the History Publication Committee held on 16th February, 1936, a fund called the History of Bengal Publication Fund was created with the nucleus grant of Rs. 1,000/- made by the Executive Council, and appeals for financial help were also made. In response to these appeals, Sir P. C. Ray made a donation of Rs. 1,000/- and the Government of Bengal offered a similar donation of Rs. 1,000/- to the Fund. Subsequently, the Executive Council sanctioned a sum of Rs. 10,000/- for the printing and publication of the work.

In course of the long period of composition and completion of the work, several noteworthy changes took place in the personnel of
the Committee as well as in the scheme of the work. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali resigned the office of Secretary on 25. 5. 36 and Dr. S. N. Bhattacharyya was appointed in his place. Dr. A. F. Rahman resigned the office of Chairman on 8. 4. 37 and Dr. R. C. Majumdar was appointed in his place. Professor R. C. Majumdar resigned the office on 29. 6. 42 and Professor M. Hasan succeeded him. Mr. Shara fudin ceased to be a number of the Committee, and Professor S. K. De, Dr. M. Shahidullah, Dr. M. I. Borah, and Dr. D. C. Ganguly were added as members to the Committee. Dr. D. C. Ganguly was appointed Joint Secretary on 19. 9. 40.

Some changes in the scheme of work, particularly in the distribution of chapters to different scholars, were also made from time to time. The names of the writers finally selected are mentioned in the Table of Contents under each chapter. The Committee convey their thanks to all of them for their valuable co-operation.

Though the work was initiated early in 1936, its progress was delayed for several reasons, to which reference has been made by the editor in the Preface. It is a matter of great satisfaction to all concerned that in spite of all difficulties and handicaps the first part of the work is at last completed and published.

The Committee take this opportunity of expressing their gratitude to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, C.I.E., for commending the work to the University and for accepting the onerous duties of editorship of Volumes II and III of the history. They desire to offer their grateful thanks to Sir A. F. Rahman, for his services in regard to the initiation and promotion of the work during the period of his Vice-Chancellorship. The Committee feel especially indebted to Professor R. C. Majumdar, who, in spite of his heavy administrative duties as Vice-Chancellor, accepted the editorship of Volume I, contributed to it so many chapters, and saw the book through the Press. His energy and enterprise alone have made the early publication of the work possible.

The Committee take this opportunity to convey their thanks to Sir P. C. Ray for his very generous donation for the publication of this work.

The thanks of the Committee are also due to various persons and institutions for the help rendered by them in the publication of this work. Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit, M.A., F.R.A.S.B., Director General of Archaeology in India has most generously lent free of charge the blocks preserved in his Department and also supplied prints of negatives at the usual cost. With his kind permission, the Superintendent, Archaeological Section, the Indian Museum and the Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle, Calcutta, have
rendered all facilities for the study of the sculptures and taking photos wherever necessary. We take this opportunity to offer the Director General and the members of his Department our most grateful thanks for the very valuable services rendered by them. The authorities of the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University, Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parishat, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Indian Society of Oriental Art, Dacca Museum, Greater India Society and Indian Science News Association, and Messrs. O. C. Gangoly, N. K. Bhattasali, J. N. Banerjea and S. K. Saraswati have lent us free of charge blocks and photos in their possession and we offer our heartfelt thanks for the readiness with which they have offered their co-operation.

We wish we could say the same thing about the Varendra Research Society at Rajshahi, the only institution in the whole of India from which we have failed to receive the help and sympathy we had every reason to expect, in view of the past history of the institution and its illustrious founder who has rendered yeoman's service to the advancement of the study of the History of Bengal. This Society alone possesses all the illustrated Buddhist manuscripts, definitely known to be written in Ancient Bengal, whose whereabouts are known at present. It is hardly necessary to point out that the coloured illustrations in these mss. are necessary for a proper study of the art of painting in Ancient Bengal. In spite of repeated requests, the Society refused to lend them to us and only gave permission to consult them at Rajshahi. The Vice-Chancellor (who was also the Editor) personally saw the President of the Society and explained that it was impossible to prepare tri-colour blocks at Rajshahi and offered the guarantee of either the Dacca University, or the University of Calcutta (which he hoped to secure from its Vice-Chancellor) for the safe-keeping and return of the mss. if they were sent for a few days to Calcutta. This the Society persistently refused to do with the result that the History of Bengal, containing the first comprehensive treatment of the art of painting, had to be published without those illustrations which have not yet seen the light of the day although the Society has been in possession of the mss. for a quarter of a century. As regards photos of sculptures, the Society offered the use of eleven, already in their possession, only on payment of Rs. 50/- which amounted to the entire cost of their original preparation for the use of the Society. Without pursuing this unpleasant topic any further, it may be said that after prolonged correspondence two photos were lent free on condition that the "Dacca University would give to the Museum free of charge, in return, the blocks of these photographs prepared by them" and "acknowledge duly in the proposed work the courtesy
thus extended." While we take this opportunity to acknowledge the courtesy that we have received from the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, and thank them for their help, we cannot but regret that it was not forthcoming in a larger measure.

As it has not been possible to indicate under each illustration the source from which its photograph was obtained, a separate 'acknowledgement' list has been inserted for this purpose. It is to be definitely understood that the right of reproducing the illustrations is reserved by the persons, authorities and institutions who lent their blocks or photographs.

Finally, we wish to place on record our appreciation of the services rendered by the General Printers and Publishers Ltd., the printers of this volume. The Managing Director of this company Mr. S. C. Das, M.A., an ex-student of the Dacca University, has taken special care to see this volume through the Press and has spared no pains to expedite the publication in the face of exceptional difficulties. Our special thanks are due to him and to Mr. R. K. Ghoshal, M.A. who has not only revised the proofs and prepared the Index, but also made many valuable suggestions for improvement.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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I. BLOCKS


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(5) Mr. O. C. Ganguly:—Frontispiece.

(6) Indian Science News Association and Dr. N. K. Bhattacharji:—Map of Van den Broucke.

II. PHOTOGRAPHS


(2) Dacca Museum:—23, 54, 63, 149, 164, 169 and 171.


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(6) Dr. J. N. Banerjea:—Nos. 13, 14, 25-26; 28 and 33.

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