BANGLADESH HISTORICAL STUDIES

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The Origin And Early Kingdom Of THE CHANDRAS OF ROHITAGIRI

M. Harunur Rashid

The Significance of the recent discoveries of Chandra epigraphs in Mainamati, Dacca, Sylhet and now Brahmanbaria cannot be over-emphasised. Before these discoveries our knowledge about this dynasty and of its genealogy was both incomplete and uncertain, and nothing definite was known about their position or about their relations with their neighbours. These new records, adequately supplementing the information supplied by earlier discoveries, now give us an apparently complete genealogy of the Chandra dynasty, valuable information about the character and attainments of individual kings, and a detailed account of their military exploits and other activities. They also provide incidental information about the social, political and religious condition of their kingdom with a richness of detail not hitherto available. In many respects these records are comparable with those of the Palas, their counterparts in north Bengal, and the history of South-East Bengal during this period may now be regarded to be equally well-documented. In the following discussion we have utilized the data supplied by

these new discoveries most of which are now published in one form or another.[1]

The Chandra inscriptions leave no room for doubt that Purnachandra, the earliest known member of the dynasty, was a ruler and had a kingdom,what ever be the size. These records, however, do not give us much information about the origin of the dynasty or of their early kingdom. The only hint lies in two controversial references occurring in the plates of Srichandra. In the first, *Candranam-iha Rohitagiri bhujam-vamse,* "in the family of the Chandras (who were) rulers of Rohitagiri",[2] the difficulty lies in the identity of *Rohitagiri.* There is no direct evidence for this identification, but scholars have offered three suggestions : (1) Rohtasgarh in the Shahabad district of Bihar'[3] (2) Lalmai hills near Comilla,[4] and (3) the hilly area lying between the Comilla district and Arakan.[5]

The first suggestion is generally rejected because of its apparent improbabilities.[6] There is no evidence of any sort to connect the Chandras of Bengal with Rohtasgarh or with Bihar ; the dynasty apparently had deep-rooted links with East Bengal and also probably with the Chandras of Arakan. 'In any case, there is not sufficient reason to conclude that the Chandras came from outside Bengal, and in view of the traditions of the long line of Chandra kings in *Bhangala* or eastern Bengal, it is more reasonable to hold that Rohitagiri .. was some where in eastern Bengal.'[7] The second suggestion by N. K. Bhattasali that Rohitagiri may be the Sanskritised form of Lalmai (red earth) hill and therefore

identical with it has hitherto been generally acccepted as more probable, as it seemed to be supported by the Mainamati discoveries. But in view of definite evidence to the contrary supplied now by the Sylhet plate, this identification can no longer be maintained. We know from this source that Samatata did not form the original kingdom of the Chandras and that *Lalamvi-vana*, which may now be certainly identified with Lalmai, was situated near the Samatata capital of Devaparvata. The third suggestion by A. H. Dani does not solve the question ; it only indicates the direction in wich Rohitagiri may lie : "south of Mainamati Lalmai Range spread out several other ranges that cross Chittagong Hill Tracts right into Arakan. These hill ranges also show lateritic deposits.···this is the real 'Roh' country (the hill parts)·· Could we attribute the name Rohitagiri to it ?'[8] This view seems reasonable to us and therofore preferable till we get more definite information. The remains of the Rohitagiri of Chandras, if they still exist are most likely to be found in the area lying between Vanga, Samtata and Srihatta, the eastern Bengel Kingdoms which the Chandras subsequently conquered, and Arakan with which their past is generally associated by tradition.

The only possible solution to the problem seems to us ro lie in further archaeological field work and not in disscussions based on such slender evidence. To this end we in the Department of Archaeology have been consciously following a programme of systematic survey and exploration in the area and a beginning has already been made, but much remains to be done. Work of this nature on a larger scale is

expected to follow. This will obviously take some time and appreciable results may be long in coming. Till then our views have to be based on the available information only, and for that reason they must be regarded as provisional.

We have no definite information regarding the early history or the original kingdom of the Chandras. We have noticed that the Chandra records mention only three generations earlier than the reigning king. As no record before Srichandra's time is known, no information of the reigns before Purnachandra and only scant information regarding him and the next king Suvarnachandra is available. The earliest known part of the Chandra kingdom, on the basis of our present knowledge, appears to be Chandradvipa. This territory was situated in the district of Barisal ; in the medieval period it was known as Bakla-Chandradvipa, and at times it comprised within its boundaries some portions of the modern districts of Khulna and Faridpur as well[10]. Here Trailokyachandra, the third ruler, is stated to have become king "in the 'dvipa' (island) to which is joined (the word) Chandra, implying that it was conquered and added to the Chadra dominions by him and, therefore, it could not possibly have formed part of the original kingdom. Yet almost all the authorities have hitherto regarded it as the original kingdom of the Chandras.[11]

The only hint regarding the early kingdom of the Chandras seems to be given in a metaphorical phrase of cryptic meaning occurring in the same verse of Rampal plate eulogising Trailokyachandra : *adharo Harikelaraja*

kakuda-cchatra-smitanam sriyam. Scholars differ greatly in interpreting this phrase (or the word *adharo*), and this has led to a good deal of controversy and conflicting views regarding the position and the dominion of the early Chandra rulers. N. G. Majumdar translated the phrase as "(Trailokyachandra) support of the fortune goddesses (of kings) who rejoiced at the umbrella which was the insignia of royalty of the king of Harikela", interpreting that "His kingdom was Harikela i. e., eastern Bengal, including Chandra-dvipa,-which was the home territory of this dynasty, and a number of other rulers were subordinate to him". This view is supported by R. C. Majumdar.[13] R. G. Basak's interpretation is that "Trailokyachandra acquired the royal fortunes of the Harikela kingdom. ...He was at first a king of Chadradvipa but later became the ruler over the whole of Harikela" (taking Harikela as a synonym of Vanga, and further suggesting that Vikramapura became its capital).[14]

All the above three views, therefore, are similar in substance. A different view is held by Dani [15]who offers the following observation: "The words do not claim that Trailokyachan dra was a ruler of Harikela nor do we learn from any other inscriptions about his military advances in the region of Harikela, i. e., Surma valley of the Sylhet district. But he was the main 'support' of the Harikela ruler...must have been on friendly terms with him and further given him a military protection....It is highly probable that Harikela raja was a subordinate ally of Trailokyachandra."

D. C. Sircar, the renowned epigraphist, differs from all others : 'King Trailokyachandra of Chandradvipa was a feudatory or ally of the king of the Harikela country'.[16] Based on this interpretation he constructed the history and origin for the Chandra dynasty which, to say the least, is speculative and without sufficient basis. He has contributed no less than five papers on the subject,[17] but his statements are sometimes quite sweeping and even contradictory. We quote below extracts from him : "Trailokyachandra was the first king of the family...he flourishedas a feudatory of the king of Harikela...This king of Harikela-Vanga, overlord of Trailokyachandra of Chandradvipa, was no doubt the contemporary Pala king".[18] In the next two papers, however, he postulates a different theory. "Harikela was originally the name of the Srihatta region....Trailokyachandra.. seems to have owed allegiance to the line of Harikela kings represented by Kantideva. Srichandra...was the first independent monarch of the Chandra dynasty".[19] In his fourth paper Sircar developes his theory : "The Chandras of Rohitagiri were originally the feudatories of the Pala kings of Bengal and Bihar...But Trailokyachandra seems to have transferred his allegiance to the king of Harikela and was rewarded by the viceroyalty of Chandradvipa... Srichandra threw off the allegiance to the king of Harikela...conquered Dacca and Tippera region"[20]. The Mainamati discoveries and the publication of the Mainamati inscriptions of the Chandras by Dani apparently have not changed his views, for in his latest paper Sircar repeats them.[21]

From the account of Ladahachandra's pilgrimage to Banaras, he concludes that "Ladahachandra was no better than a subordinate ally of the contemporary Pala emperor"[22]. We do not know the circumstances in which this pilgrimage was undertaken or the exact routes which the Chandra king followed, but we know of no instance where such a rite was ever performed by a king who had not the means and authority to do so, and certainly this fact in itself cannot be taken as an indication of allegiance to an overlord whose territory is thus crossed and recrossed without even a vague reference to him.

In any case, if the Palas ever had even a nominal success or superiority over the Chandras, it is most uniikely that we should not have any record in their numerous inscriptions. The Chandra version is narrated by their 14 inscriptions including 11 lengthy copper-plate grants. Of course there are still many gaps in our knowledge and many problems remain to be solved. This state of things naturally lead to theorising often on slender basis or even on no basis at all. But on the basis of our present knowledge, it must be stated with some emphasis that there is no evidence of any kind to suggest that any of the seven Chandra rulers was ever a feudatory of another power, far less of the kings of Harikela, the historicity of whom except for Kantideva (9th century A. D.) is uncertain. As regards the Palas, their only connection with South-East Bengal seems to have been limited to a short stay of Gopala II in Samatata as a refugee. In fact no Pala domination in this region can be definitely established

before Mahipala II's time.[23] The Chandra inscriptions on the other hand leave no room for doubt that all the kings of the dynasty were independent sovereign rulers. The suggestion that they came from Rohtasgarh in Bihar must be rejected as without any foundation until we have a concrete evidence to the contrary. We repeat that all the known links of the dynasty are with south-eastern Bengal and it is reasonable to think that they either originated there or came from an area not very far from it. At present it is not possible to go beyond these assertions. But on the basis of the available evidence, certain inferences can be drawn, and again on the basis of these inferences, certain hypothetical suggestions can be offered.

Since Rohitagiri cannot be definitely identified at present, our conclusion regarding the home territory of the Chandras must be based on the 'Harikela' reference only. Accepting the ordinary meaning of the word *adharo* as 'repository', our interpretation is that Harikela was the paternal kingdom of the dynasty. This seems to be proved by the fact that the Chandra connection with Harikela was regarded as a matter of great pride and honour for the dynasty. And yet the relation could not have been a subordinate one. By the time these records were issued, both Vanga and Srihatta, the two regions with which Harikela is alternatively identifed, were definitely included in the Chandra kingdom. It is inconceivable that the Chandras would glorify their sudordinate relationship with defunct royalty which themselves had liquidated. The other fact to note is that though all the kingdoms in South-East

Bengal are mentioned as conquered by the Chandras, no mention of the conquest of Harikela is made in any of their records. The clear implication is that it was already included in their kingdom and that it is not identifiable with any of the conquered territories, viz. Chandradvipa, Vanga, Samatata and Srihatta mandala. Its identification with either Vanga or Srihatta, based as it is on unreliable late literary traditions, is therefore to be suspected.[24] Since the situation of Harikela in south-eastern Bengal is undisputed, the only other territory of this region not conquered by the Chandras and with which it can be identified is the hilly area of Tripura-Chittagong bordering Arakan. Our suggestion seems to be further supported by the discovery at Chittagong of the copper-plate inscription of Kantideva, the only known ruler of Harikela,[25] as well as by a large number of ancient stone, bronze and terracotta images and antiquities recovered from various place in that district, some of which are still preserved in the locla Buddhist temples.

However, the most positive evidence in support of this suggestion appears to be provided now by the recent excavations at Mainamati. That Harikela was situated in the neighbourhood of Samatata and towards the direction of Aakan is strongly indicated by these new discoveries, particularly by the evidence of the Mainamati coins, on the basis of which we have already suggested this identification elsewhere.[26] The vast majority of these coins, over350 'Bull and Triglyph' type thin silver specimens, includes a few which undoubtedly belong to the kings of ancient

Arakan and also of an 'Akaya' dynasty. The rest bear a legend which was variously read as *Yarikriya, Ari-kriya, Patikera,* etc. Almost the entire colllection of these coins, loosely called 'Arakanese' from the locality of the first find and for that reason hitherto assigned to that country, comes from eastern Bengal. In the course of detailed studies and researches on ancient Arakanese and eastern Bengal coins and epigraphs in U. K. during 1966-68. the present writer found interesting evidence of palaeo-grapic developments in the area, on the basis of which he successfully read the so-called '*Yarikriya*' legend as *Harikela* This reading has now been generally accepted by scholars including Dani. Besides fixing the East Bengal origin and close Arakan relationship of this type of coins, the significance and possibilities of this new reading for the historical-geographical determinations of not only Harikela but also other unidentified ancient places and principalities in this area cannot be over-emphasised. In any case, it appears to have settled quite fairly and squarely—short of a final proof by excavation—the knotty, unresolved Harikela question. If this identification and location of Harikela is accepted, it will make geographical sense of the conquests of the Chandras. It will explain why their first move was towards Chandradvipa in the south-east corner of Vanga, separated from their base country only by the Meghna channel ; but the channel islands must have served, as they still do, as stepping stones. Once they had their foothold in Chandradvipa, which was most probably named after them, there was nothing to stop them from

conquering the whole of Vanga. But their rear had to be secured by conquering Samatata which inevitably led to the conquest of Srihatta mandala and to the wars with Kamarupa, just as the conquest of Vanga led to the wars with Gauda and the west. We have no information at all about the ruling authority or authorities from whom the Chandras wrested these territories. From the comparative case with which they were removed, it may not be unreasonable to infer that they were petty local rulers, probably with some sort of relationship with the Pala empire. The Chandras do not seem to have encountered any determined opposition from the Palas till their position was fairly consolidated in Vanga and their borders reached those of the Pala empire in Gauda and Varendri. The history of the period suggests that the Palas were too deeply preoccupied with their declining fortunes in the west to notice this turmoil in the south-east till it was too near their border and too late for effective contol. It was also about this time that the Kalachuri king Kokkalla (C 840-90 A. D.) is said to have plundered the treasures of Vanga.[27] This invasion might have paved the way for the rise of the or at Chandras least facilitated their quick success. What ever may be the reason, it is fairly certain that by the beginning of the tenth century A. D., the Chandras were in control of the whole of South-East Bengal.

It must have been quite clear to them at an early stage that such a kingdom could not be properly controlled from their origin al centre which must have receded gradually to a remote corner of their expanding dominions. Hence

the establishment of the new capital at Vikramapura. How well-chosen the site was as a centre of the whole country may be realised from the fact that the capital of the province has remained more or less in the same place or area ever since except for a comperatively short period of the British rule. This location of the original Chandra kingdom as suggested by us also probably explains why the Chandras are generally related to Arakan, though at present this connection cannot be established on any basis other then tradition.

Once the situation of Harikela and the original Chandra kingdom has been determined, it will be obviously easier to locate Rohitagiri, its centre. Pending further archaeoloical investigations and field work, we would prefer to suggest, after Dani, that it was situtaed some where in the hilly areas of Tippera-Chittagong. Suggestions are not solutions, but if reasonable, they often point to the direction of fruitful fieldwork and systematic investigations leading to new discoveries. It is in this context that we further suggest for a closer look into the past of the following places which may be profitable.

Chittagong

The Tibetan historian Tarantha mentions in his *Book of the Seven Mystic Revelations* that 'Chatigram' was the capital of Gopichandra,[28] who is undoubtedly the same Bhangala king Govichandra of Tarnanatha's other book, *History of Buddhism in Indla.*[29] This Chatigram may be identical with 'Samandar' of eaily Arab geographers and 'City of Bengala' of early European writers.[30] The Tibetan source informs us that in ancient times there were many *tirthikas*

(Hindu temples) and *viharas* (Buddhist monasteries) at Chatigram which was the headquarters of the Ramma country, a well known Buddhist centre.[31] Accordiug to Buddhist traditions, the name of the city is derived from *Chaitya-grama*, the 'City of Buddhist Shrines'. The famous 'Pandita Vihara' was probably situated in or near this city. Incidentlly, it was from an old temple in this very city that copper-plate inscription of Maharaja Kantideva of Hraikela was recovered.[32]

Deang or Dianga

Early European travellers and portuguese writers frequently mentioned the harbour town of Dianga on the same Chittagong coast ; they often equated it with 'Chatigaon', and sometimes also with the 'City of Bengala'.[33] The place is identified with modern Bandar opposite the Chittagong port across the river.[34] During the Arakanese domination of the Chittagong region,[35] Dianga was one of their three principalities, with Chakrasala and Ramu. The name, probably derived from Devagram', now survives in the Dianga Pahar, a small low ridge of lateritic red earth that runs along the southern bank of the Karnafuli.[36]

Lying as it is on the sea shore and the bank of an arterial river with a strategic and commanding position between the mouths of two rivers, the Dianga ridge is excellently situated to have been an ancient settlement of some importance. A recent survey of the area by the present writer revealed unmistakable evidance of ancient remains, and finds of bronze, stone and terracotta images, coins, beads and pots from the area have been reported,

Jhewari

In the village of Jhewari at the foot of the Dianga ridge, an important archaeological discovery was made in 1927, While digging earth, a local villager recovered a pot containing a valuable treasure of ancient Budhist relics--64 votive images, two replicas of votive stupas, and many fragments.[37] Twenty five of the images bear short decicatory records inscribed on their back or on their pedestal in charactesr of the 9th to 11th centuries A. D. On stylistic grounds these objects may be dated from the 7th to 11th centuries A. D. This was the largest and most important find of ancient Bengal bronzes outside Mainamati, and they bear close resemblance with the Mainamati images.[38] Only a few of them are stilt lefl in Bangladesh, preserved in the Buddhist Temple at Chittagong. The jhewari hoard provides, together with other finds from the area, an important evidence regarding the antiquity of the Dianga region and its ancient links with Samatata and Arakan, the two neighbouring kingdoms, thus offering a subsantial corroboration to the evidence of ancient traditions, literature and other sources.[39]

Ramu And Ramkot

In ancient times the country to the south of Tripura and north of Arakan was called 'Ramma' (from Sanskrit Ramya = beautiful).[40] Ramu, a large village and a market town near Cox's Bazar on the Arakan road, may have been its centre.[41] Ralph Fitch who visited India between 1583 and 1591 refers to it as the kingdom of 'Rama' ruled by the

Arakan king.[42] Manrique visited 'Ramu', the seat of Arakan governor, in 1630 on his way to Arakan from Dianga.[43] This Ramu, Ramma or Ramya represent, according to R. C. majumdar, the kingdom of Rahma or Ruhmi of the Arab writers.[44] If Harikela, 'the eastern kingdom of eastern India' of the Chinese records and pre-Muslim epigraphs,[45] was situated hereabouts—and we have reasons to believe so-Ramu is most likely to reveal some clues to its location and history. Fortunately, Ramu has an archacological background worth investigating.

On a ridge near Ramu and adjacents to Ramkot *Banasram* on the old Arakan Road, there are traces of ancient ruins covering a considerable area, and the surface is littered with antiquities : brickbats, potsherds and fragments of stone and terracotta images. At places there are indications of structure buried underneath the mounds.[46] Amateurish digging here are reported to have yielded some interesting antiquities which include an inscribed stone slab, a number oft reracotta plaques and a few Buddhist stone images and fragments.[47]

Chakrasala

A well-known archeological site in the region north of Ramu is represented by the ancient ruins at Chakrasala in Haidgaon (=Hastigrama) near Patiya.[48] Local traidtions associate the placc with several princes : Manibhadra, Rakia, Jayachandra, etc., presumably of the period of Arakan rule in Chittagong. From surface investigations the place does not seem to be of any great antiquity, but excavation may yield better result.

Unakoti (Tripura State)

The hilly region of Tripura, strategically situated between Srihatta mandala, Samatata, Chittagong and Arakan, seems to hold the key to many of our archaeological problems. Unfortunately, very little is known about its early history and culture. However, a Saiva religious site was discovered here in 1914 at Unakoti.[49] The ruins consist of a number of loose stoes sculptures lying on top of the hill and a series of colossal heads and figures carved partly in the rocky bed of a stream and partly on the rock-face on both sides of the stream stretching for a considerable distance. Conspicuo us among the rock-out figures are a Siva head, 30 feet high, and a seated Ganesa, 22 feet high, both on the stream bed, and a standing figure of Durga on the rock-face above the stream. They are crude and primitive and have no known parallels in style or iconographic detail. The site is dated on stylistic considerations of the other group, the detached sculptures, from the 9th to 12th centuries A. D. No ancient settlement has yet been discovered near, but its existence is naturally inferrred. *

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*We are sorry that proper diacritical marks for the Sanskrit words could not be used.

FOOT NOTES

1. With the publication of the Mainamati plates, the Chandra records with one exception, the just-discovered Brahmanbaria plate of Kalyanachandra in the Dacca Museum, may now be regarded as well-documented and known. For the new records see *Pakistan Archaeology* (Pak. Arch-), No. 3, Karachi, 1966, p. 22 ff.; A. B. M. Habibullah (Ed.) *N. K. Bhattasali comm. volume*, Dacca, 1966, 166 ff.; *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Congress, Aligarh*, 1960, p. 36 ff.

   The generalities of the Chandra records and the history and chronology of the period have been discussed in some details by the present writer in his Ph. D. Thesis, *The Early History of South-East Bengal*, Cambridge University, 1968 (Rashid, South East Bengal). The details are not repeated here, but a table of the Chandra genealogy and a list of their known inscriptions are given at the end.
2. N. G. Majumdar, 'the Rampal Copper-plate,' *Inscriptions of Bengal* (IB), Vol. III, Rajshahi, 1929, pp. 4, 6.
3. *Ibid.* p. 3; *Epigraphia Indica* (EI), Vol. 139 ff. *ibid.* Vol. XXVIII, p, 337 ff.; *ibid.* Vol. XXXIII, p. 134 ff.; *Indian Culture* (IC), Vol. VII, p, 405 ff.; *Journal of Indian History* (JIH), *Vol. XLII*, p. 661 ff.
4. N. K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929, p, 9 ff; *EI*, Vol. XVII, p. 342 ff.; *Indian Historical Quarterly* (IHQ), Vol. XVI, p. 635 ff.; R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *History of Bengal* (*HB*), Vol. p. 194; *Bharatavaarsa*, 1348 B. S. p. 768 ff.
5. *Pak. Arch.* 3, p. 28
6. *HB.* I, p. 194, *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, p. 635 ff.; *Pak Arch.* 3, p. 27 ff.
7. *Pak. Arch.* 3, p. 28
8. *Ibid.*

9. The tradition is preserved in Taranatha's *History of Buddhism in India* and in the Burmese Chronicles. According to Taranatha, Bhangala (Vangala) was the leading country in eastern India before the rise of the Palas; its domination extended over Tirahuti (Trihut), Kamarupa and presumably also Gauda, and it was ruled by powerful Chandra dynasty. These Chandras are generally connected with the Arakan Chandras, more or less their contemporaries, who ruled from Vesali, not very far form the capital of the Bhangala Chandras at Chatigrama (Chittagong). Some kind of relationship between the Bhangala and Rohitagiri Chandras is quite plausible, though we have as yet no definite information. Cf. *IHQ*, XVI. p. 219 ff.; *HB*, I, p. 182 ff; A. P. Phayre, *Coins of Arakan, of Pegu and of Burma*, London, 1882, y. 1 ff.
10. Hunter's *Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. V, p. 224; *EI*, XXVII, p. 54
11. *IB*, III, p. 2; *EI*, XXVIII, p. 54.
12. *IB*, III, p. 2-3.
13. *HB*, 1, p. 195.
14. *EI*, XXVIII, p. 54.
15. *Pak. Arch.* 33, pp. 32-3
16 *EI*, XXVIII, 338
17 *IC*. VII (1441), p. 405 ff.; *EI*, XXVIII (1949), p. 337 ff.; *ibid*, XXXIII (1959). p. (134), ff.; *IHQ*, XXVIII (1952), p. 51 ff.; *JIS*, XLII (1964), p. 661 ff.
18. *IC*, VII, p. 411
19. *EI* XXVIII, p. 338
20. *IHQ*, XXVII p. 53
21. *JIS*, XLII, p. 661 ff.
22. *Ibid*, p. 662
23. The question has been discussed in some details by the writer in his paper 'Pala Rule in South-East Bengal', *Journalof the Varendra Research Museum*, Rajshahi, Vol. III, 1974, pp. 27-47.

24. The 12th century lexicographer Hemachandra mentions *Harikeli* as a 'synonym of Vanga and two Dacca University MSS of late date refer to *Harikola* as, being synonymous with Sylhet, against the clear evidence of the Mainamati inscriptions and coins that it is a separate entity quite distinct from the above territories. *EI*, XXVI, p. 15, ff. 9, 17; P. L. Paul, *Early Hist. Beng*, I, pp. III-IV, *H.B*, I, P. 18.

25. *EI*, XXVI, 313 ff.; *HB*, I, p. 145 ff.

26. The subject has been fully discussed by the writer in all possible details utilizing his own findings as well as all other known sources and materials. For details, see his Ph. D. Thesis, *The Early History of South-East Bengal.* Cambridge University, 1968, pp. 179-71, 333-58.

27. *H. B.* I, p. 128 ff.

28. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, (JASB), 1898, p. 23; *IHQ*, XVI, p. 228.

29. *IHQ*, XVI, p. 219 ff.; *HB*, 1, p. 182 ff.

30. Dr. Enamul Huque, *Purva Pakistane Islam*, 1948; *IHQ*-XVI, p. 229 ff. J. J. A. Campos *History of the Portu, guese in Bengal* (Campos, Portuguese in Beng.) pp 75-76.

31. *JASB*, 1898, p. 24; *Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report* (ASI. R), 1921-22, p. 81 ff.;

32 *A. K. Sahitya-Visarad Comm. Volume*, p. 172; *ASI R.*, 1921-22 pp. 81-83, 115.

33. Campos., *Portuguese in Bengal*, p. 75 ff.; *Bengal Past and Present* (Beng. PP,) XIII pp. 261-2; *JASB*, 1893, p. 233.

34. *Beng. PP.* XIII, pp. 261-2; *IHQ*, XVI, p. 231: fn, 37

35. Compos., *Portuguese in Bengal*, p. 75-6; S. M. Ali, *History of Chittagong*, pp. 73, 106.

36. *Ibid.* pp. 103, 104.

37. *ASI. R.*, 1927-28, p. 184, Pls. XLIX. c, LVII. ad; *ibid.*, 1928-29, p. 160; *ibid.*, p. 1929-30 pp. 194-5, Pls. XLII. b. c. XLIII.

38. Rashid, *South-East Bengal*, pp. 183-7, 282.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31, 334 ff.

40 *JASB*, 1898, p. 20 ff.

41. L. S. S. O' Malley, *East Bengal District Gazetteers, Chittagong.*

42. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, Oxford, 1921, p. 26, ff. 5; *IHQ*, XVI, p. 233

43. *Bengal pp.*, XII, pp. 229 ff., 268.

44. *IHQ.*, XVI, w. 233-4; S. H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, pp. 4-6.

45. *HB.*, 1, pp. 17, 134; *EI.*, XXVI, p. 313 ff., *Ibid*, XXVIII, p. 54; *IB*, III, p. 2 ff.

46. The area was recently investigated by Dr. M. A. Ghafur: *JAP. Bangladesh*, XVII, No. 1, April, 1972, pp. 24-26.

47. *Ibid*, p. 25; *Shahitya-Visarad Comm. Vol.* pp. 169, 173

48. *Ibid*, pp. 170, 172; S. M. Ali, *History of Chittagong*, p. 7

49. *ASI. R.*, 1921-22, pp. 85-87, Pls. XXIX, c. XXX, a-b.

GENEALOGY OF THE CHANDRA KINGS

Order of succession	Name of King & his Consort	Length of reign	Approx. date
1.	Purnachandra	—	—
2.	Suvarnachandra	—	—
3.	Trailokyachandra Sri-Kanchana (Rampal CP) or Sri-Kanchika (Sylhet CP)	—	c. 900—929
4.	Srichandra Sri-Varnna (Dacca CP)	46 years c. (Madanapur CP)	929—975

5.	Kalyanachandra	Kalyana-devi (Mainamati CPs)	24 years (Dacca CP)	c. 975—1000
6.	Ladahachandra	Saubhagya-devi (Mainamati CPs)	18 years (Bharella Image-inscription)	c. 1000-1020
7.	Govindachandra	—	23 years (Paikpara Image-inscription)	c. 1020-1050

LIST OF CHANDRA INSCRIPTIONS

1. Sylhet Plate of Srichandra, year 5.

   : *N, K. Bhattasali Comm, Volume*, p. 166 ff.; K. K. Gupta, *Copper-plates of Sylhet*, Sylhet, 1967.

2. Rampal Plate of Srichandra, undated

   : N. G. Majumdar, *Ins. of Beng.*, III, p. 1 ff; *Ep. Ind.*, XII, p. 136 ff.

3. Kedarpur Plate of Srichandra, undated

   : *IB.* III, p. 10 ff.; *EI*, XVII, p. 188 ff.

4. Edilpur Plate of Srichandra, undated

   : *EI.* XVII, p. 189 ff.; R. C. Majumdar (Ed.), *Hist. Beng.* 1, pp. 192, 195-6.

5. Dhulla Plate of Srichandra, year 35

   : *IB*, III, pp. 165-6; *EI*, XXXIII, p. 134 ff.

6. Madanapur Plate of Srichandra, year 46

   : *EI*, XXVIII, pp. 51-8, 337-9

7. Dacca Plate of Kalyanachandra, year—

   : Unpublished, only incidental references in *Pak. Arch.*, No. 3 (1966), p. 22 ff.; *Proc. Ind. Hist., Cong, Aligarh*, 1960, p. 36 ff.

8. Brahmanbaria Plate of Kalyanachandra, year—

: Unpublished, very recently acquired by the Dacca Museum.

9-10 Mainamati Plates of Ladahachandra, year 6, Jaistha and Asadha respectively.

: *Pak. Arch.* No 3 (1966), p. 22 ff.

11. Bharella Narttesvara-Image Inscription of Ladahachandra, year 18,

: N. K. Bhattasali, *Iconograhy of Budd. and Brah. Sculp.* p. 114 ff.; *EI*, XVII, p. 349 ff.

12. Mainamati Plate of Govindachandra, undated

: *Pak. Arch.* No. 3 (1966), p. 22 ff.

13. Kulkudi Surya-Image Inscription of Govindachandra, year 12

: *EI*, XXVII, p. 14 ff.; *ibid*, XXVII, p, 339 ff.; *ibid.* XXXIII, p. 103 ff.

14. Paikpara (Betka) Vasudeva-image Inscription of Govindachandra year 23

: *EI*, XXVII, p. 26 ff.; *Ind. Cult.* VII, p. 405 ff.

Geography of Ancient Bengal
—An approach to its Study

Abdul Momin Chowdhury

Historical geography has long been recognised as an important branch of historical studies. But it is unfortunate that such studies for Bengal has not been attempted as yet. This is all the more true when we go to the remote past. It is true that paucity of source materials, their limited and somewhat peculiar nature make the task of reconstructing the historical geography of pre-muslim Bengal very difficult ; and an apprehension is always there about the result one may achieve, which can hardly be expected to be complete. But the difficulties have not deterred scholars from making attempts, though fragmentary in nature. In this paper we would like to identify the problems, both of the sources and their handling and also review the attempts so far made in order to make some suggestions with regard to the approach of a historian of ancient Bengal.

While working on the various aspects of the early Bengal epigraphs I was attracted by the geographical data contained in those epigraphs. Since epigraphs form the

basis for reconstructing the early history of Bengal it is very natural to think that their scattered geographical data can offer us an understanding of the early history of Bengal in its 'spatial' aspect. But in trying to herness these data in order of build a picture—which though cannot be expected to be complete yet which may afford us a tangible understanding—it is necessary for the historian to evolve certain methods or certain premises in his approach to study the historical geography of ancient Bengal. In the following pages we would try to do this. But it must be made clear that the premises which we venture to suggest are neither very original nor do we claim any ingenuity for their evolution. They have been evolved as working hypotheses. We have tried to lay down certain premises which would lead us to building up the historical geography of ancient Bengal.

At the very outset it would be worthwhile to clarify some conceptual difficulties. This arises out of our awareness of the fact that 'historical geography' is one of the branches of the discipline of geography and we are not qualified to approach it from that angle of search. Without entering into a long discourse on the nature and scope of historical geography, it may be well to record and clarify the point of view from which it has to be approached by a historian. More than a century ago Macaulay reminded his readers that the England which he described in his *History* was a very different land from that with which they were familiar. If Macaulay had difficulty in reconstructing the landscape of the 17th century

England, the difficulties facing the historian who would describe the situation in Bengal before the coming of the Muslims, is incomparably greater. For the latter the documentation is scanty ; the evidence of geology and botany slight, and that of archaeology all too meagre and often inconclusive.

The term 'Historical Geography' has been applied by geographers to a variety of subjects—'to the study of geographical explorations and of geographical sciences, to the history of changing political frontiers and to the study of the influences of geographical factors upon historical events"[1], and it has been approached as a study of 'the activity of human society in relation to their habitats, which at the same time offer them opportunities and set them limitations'.[2] Or, as one geographer has put it, 'The claim of geography to be heard in the councils of history rests on the firm basis that it alone studies comprehensively and scientifically, by its own method and technique, the setting of human activity and further, that the particular characteristic of this setting serve not only to localise but also to influence part at least of the action.... In studying the inescapable physical setting to history, the geographer studies one of the elements which make up the compound, history : he examines one of the strands from which history is woven'.[3] Historical geography has been identified with another line of thought whose data are, of necessity, historical, but whose outlook is geographical. The study 'strictly speaking merely carries the geographer's studies into the past, his

subject matter remains the same."[4] A contrast has often been drawn between the reconstruction of past geographies and the study of geographical changes through time, between the so-called 'horizontal' and 'vertical' approaches."[5]

The complex nature of human activity both in relation to space and time has for long been recognised by both geographers and historians. Hence the geographer has postulated for the 'need for two complementary principles—that which studies variations essentially along the time scale is History; that which studies variations essentially along the space scale is Geography'[6], and the primary concern of historical geography has, thus, been recognised as an area within the discipline of geography as 'a study of the relationship of man and land' [7] in the scale of time or as 'the study of spatial variation of temporal change.'[8]

We can very well see that there is considerable overlapping in the conceptual approach to the subject by both historians and geographers. Historians are also primarily concerned with past human activity and that would not be sufficiently intelligible without a proper understanding of the 'setting' or the arena of activity. So far as the 'setting' is concerned both the historian and the geographer are eager to find it out. This need has long been recognised and we are familiar with sayings like, 'history without geography wandreth as a vagrant without a certaine habitation'[9] or History and Geography 'if joined together, crown our reading with delight and profit; if parted, threaten both with a certain ship wreck'.[10]

Though the inadequacy of 'geographical determinism', the master-key to historical causation, has been clearly shown,[11] the value of geography, as far as the search for the 'setting' of human activity is concerned, cannot be denied. For, 'human thought and action have their springs, not in a spatial vacuum, but in some definite geographical milieu, which define in varying degrees the character and orbit of human effort'.[12] Since history must concern itself with the location of the events and it is natural to ask questions like : where ? And why there ? These questions may not appear to be that embarassing to a historian concerned with relatively recent periods of human activity. But to one concerned with not too recent past, these questions can really be embarassing. This embarassment is due to many factors, the important being the difficulty in fixing the location of ancient place-names, which we come across in our meagre and scanty but the only available and reliable sources—the names, even of the larger units of human activity, are, in most cases, either not in use or they survive in almost unrecognisable form.

And, in seeking a way out of this 'embarassment' one is rather compelled to dwelve in other disciplines, to seek the help of geography. But the task is not very easy. With the limited nature of the sources at his hand, and no other contemporary aids such as maps or other definitive geographic materials, the historian of ancient Bengal is almost in a 'forest of tangled undergrowth' in which he explores and makes his way, only with much difficulty.

These qualifying remarks, we believe, will be considered sufficient for our venture into the realm of geography, and we take gratification from the fact that we are not the first intruders.

But in doing so the historian's tools and training will essentially result in a difference of approach from that of the geographer. New conceptual framework has to be evolved in this borderline area and new tools of analysis, new methods of finding have to be found out.

A geographer would possibly recommend an easy way, as Prof. Gordon East writes, "There are times···when the student of history should righteously forsake the library desk and, map in hand, stride forth into the world about him, the ins and outs of which may sometimes contain clearer clues to the past than do the musty manuscripts and the official records from which he draws the material, if not the inspiration, for his epic tale."[13] We wish we could do that, but who will provide us with a map for the period which interests us. He was aware of this predicament and he writes, "Of course, in his attempts at field investigation the historian is at the disadvantage that the countryside has changed in many respects since the period which he is studying. He is not permitted to use H. G. Well's time machine to enable him to see it as it actually was then. Inevitably he is concerned in the main, if not exclusively, with literary and other materials which have survived from the stretch of the past which interests him."[14]

In our case we are exclusively bound to the literary sources for the early history of Bengal. But it cannot be denied that field exploration can clarify lots of doubts, even about the remote period with which we are concerned. But this could be profitable only when a rough frame, however crude the picture of the 'setting' may be, has been drawn from the available sources.

This brings us to a discussion on the type of sources we may use for such a study of the geography of ancient Bengal. Before we take that up, the conception about the time and space of our investigation must be made clear. When we use the name 'Bengal', it is realised that in the period with which we are concerned, the name Bengal did not exist, nor does it exist today. But from the practical point it is much more convenient to use that name and it should be taken to denote present Bangladesh, plus the province of West Bengal of India —a territorial unit in the historical sense, and often recognised by the geographers as a region within the subcontinent.[15] The time space is between the 5th century A. D. and the 13th century A. D. The main reason for this selection is the availability of epigraphic sources for this period, which are unquestionably the most authentic records. But it must be said that any writer on the historical geography faces many problems of organisation, selection and definition, and the decisions that are made about these matters must frequently be arbitrary and sometimes controversial. In defining the territorial limit, or shall we say in limiting the territorial canvas, we are

aware of the fact that the adjacent territory of Bihar, which was more or less in the common orbit of historical process with Bengal in the period of our investigation, should be taken in as well. But its inclusion would change the scale of the whole work. Moreover, an excellent work has already been done on Bihar by M. S. Pandey. [16]

Coming back to sources, it must be emphasized that for the geography of ancient Bengal, epigraphic sources. especially the land-grant charters on copper plates, are the main-stay. This is even more so because other forms of literary sources do not contain enough, or shall we say adequate, data on which we can rely. For most of the period we do not have contemporary literature, and what we have, they are works of different nature and geography was hardly their primary concern. This lack of geographical data in ancient literature is characteristic of not only Bengal but of the whole subcontinent. Independent Indian treatises dealing with geography are by no means common. The *Puranas*, the Epics, the *Brhat Samhita* and similar literature apparently appears to contain much material of a decidedly geographical character. But the purpose and tenor of these literary works were altogether different and geographical information in them is only incidental and is inserted where-ever it is considered relevant to the theme under which it occurs. In fact we do not find a definite or precise synonym for the term 'geography' in the *Puranas* or even in contemporary literature. Various names appear to denote 'geography' in different works, for instance, *Bhuvanakosa*, *Bhuvana-*

sagara, Bhuvana-Khanda, Trilokya-darpana or *Ksetra-samasa.* The list of peoples and tribes in the Epics and the *Puranas* may be valuable for an all Indian canvas, but for a regional study they just supply us nothing more than names of Eastern peoples with little, and often confusing, indication about their location. Thc Puranic lists of *Janapadas* (or territorial units) and people (or communities) are identical for the simple reason that each *Janapada* is named after the community inhabiting it or vice versa. These information can help us in framing a broader ethnic settlement picture on the subcontinental basis in early times, but do not at all place us on a definite ground for reconstructing the geography of any particular region, such as Bengal.

As a result the epigraphs are the only resource left, on which we ean profitably lean on. Most of them being actual land-grants, they have a definite geographical bearing, As documents recording the transfer of property, the plates carry us into the heart of an action which has a definite bearing on the land. So their geographic data are uequestionably reliable, and in the absence of other forms of information, are the basis of any study relating to the period with which we are concerned. We have about 75 documents of this nature for the region of Bengal from the 5th century to the 13th century A. D. (precisely between 433 and 1283 A. D.) These documents are essentially aristocratic in nature and each deals with the *minutiae* of a small area, village by village or even in some cases field by field. In comparison,

surviving literary sources, mainly consisting of Buddhist religious poetry, Epic and Puranic texts, legal treatises, anthologies of court poetry and lexicons, lack specific reference, in particular, to matters relating to time and space. They are more concerned with transmitting a learned tradition and often they are accounts not of what happened and where it happened, but of what the author thought happened or more accurately, what the author wishes to make his audienee think happened. In poetical works, and within this catagory we include the *prasasti* which are part and parcel of the majority of the epigraphs, the geographical data are usually dictated by the 'phantasy' of the composer, often disfigured by reasons of ignorance, and quite frequently the choice of the name of a country or people or an area depended not on reality but on the metre of the verse. But the land-grant portion of the epigraphs, in all cases in prose, being official documents recording a 'transaction in reality' do not suffer from these defects. Usually they mention the administrative jurisdiction, within which the transaction is taking place, and record the area of land with specific reference to its boundary. These descriptions are of particular interest and the registrar, in many cases, did not even leave out a banian tree or a row of betelnut or coconut trees or a mango grove, and always refers to natural landmarks such as a river, a navigable channel or a tank or a monastery or a fort. In some cases we are even fortunate in having in record a short description of a town or an area.

Thus it seems obvious that for the geography of ancient Bengal the epigraphic sources, most important among them being the land grant charters, are unquestionably the mainstay. Other forms of epigraphs, most often small image inscriptions, do help in corroborating or elaborating some findings on the basis of the land-grant charters. In this respect the literary evidence may also be called in to help from time to time. But it must be said that it is not a job without apparent difficulties. When the evidence from literary accounts are in contradiction to the evidence of the inscriptions, the latter must be given credence in view of their very exact nature.

A brief survey of the works done in the field so far may not be out of place here. Two motives can easily be discerned behind earlier contributions to historical geography : (i) the urge on the part of the British to establish a stable administration in the country led them to encourage the study and analysis of the man-environment relationship in the preceeding periods, and (ii) studies were undertaken by Indian scholars to reach to the historical roots of contemporary phenomenon in order to develop a sense of national identity and pride. Without going into details of these motives it may be said that neither really helped the study. Of course, we should not be misunderstood from this remark and we have no intention of minimising their importance. Alexander Cunningham's study, which followed only the route traveresed by the Chinese pilgrim Huan Tsang, published in 1871 is the pioneer work in the field on a subcontinental

basis. This was followed by several scholars, but the majority of them wrote stray articles or reports. Next important contribution was made by B. C. Law (*Historical Geography of Ancient India*, Paris, 1954). The geographical studies of H. C. Raychaudhuri (*Studies in Indian Antiquities*, first published in 1932; revised and enlarged in 1958) and D. C. Sircar (*Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, 1960, and *Cosmography and Geography in Early Indian Literature*, 1967, though fragmentary in nature, are valuable contributions to the subject. But the all-India canvas seemed to be too large to handle. Prof. H. D. Sankalia initiated studies on the regional basis (*Studies in the Historical & Cultural Geography and Ethnography of Gujarat*, Poona, 1949). Following his lead M. S. Pandey's work on Bihar, S. Mulay's work on the Deccan (1954), S. Gokhale's work on Madhya Pradesh (1960) and M. M. Mathur's work on Uttar Pradesh (1963) are valuable contributions on regional basis. In recent years another trend is noticeable in India : Cultural History from the Puranas; and the major *Puranas* have been worked on, and most of them contain discussion on the geographical data. Of course, the forerunner in this respect was the work of Shashi Bhusan Chaudhuri, *Ethnic Settlements in Ancieut India*, 1955. Mention must also be made of two recent works on Ancient Geography based on the *Paranas* : S. M. Ali's *The Geography of the Puranas*, 1966 and M. R. Singh's *A Critical Study of the Geographical Data in the Early Puranas*,

1972. These works alomg with works like India as known to Panini or Patanjali or Kalidasa or Kautilya etc. have thrown very welcome light on ancient Indian geograhy. The recent study of Parmanand Gupta (*Geography in Ancient Indian Inscriptions*, upto 650 A. D., 1973) has clearly demonstrated the profitable use of epigraphic sources. But inspite of all these works, partly due to the vastness. of the canvas and partly due to the very nature of the sources, confusions loom large. This possibly augments justification for regional studies, where the limitation of area will possibly facilitate surer and specific studies. Moreover, it must be remembered that the regional pattern of the historical process in India in the ancient period cannot be denied and hence studies may not be considered unscientific from the historical point of view as well.

For the region of Bengal studies on its ancient geography leades lot to be desired. A look at the chapter on geography in the *History of Bengal, Vol. I*, (ed, by R. C. Majumdar, pub, by the University of Dacca, 1943), still considered as a standard work on the early history of Bengal, would clearly convince that lots of confusions remain to be cleared. B. C. Sen in his excellent work (*Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*, 1942) dealt with the geographical aspect of the then konwn epigraphs. Nihar Ranjan Ray, in his *Bangalir Itihas*, 1949, made innumerable valuable suggestions which need to be looked into and substantiated. Since then quite a few inscriptions have been

discovered and the very recent finds help, in a number of ways, in clarifying many of the unsolved problems. In D. C. Sircar's geographical essays there are important discourses on different aspects of ancient geography of Bengal. But the recent works by Barrie M. Morrison *Political Centers and Culture Regions in Early Bengal*, 1970, and, *Lalmai, a Cultural Center of Early Bengal*, 1974) may be said to have opened up new dimensions in to the approach of the subject. we feel, on the same line, i. e,, by analysing, tabulating and collating the data furnished by the epigraphic sources, the study of ancient geography of Bengal can be undertaken and a better result than so far achieved can be anticipated. The scientific study of the geogrphy and geology of the Bengal area by J. P. Morgan and W. G. McIntire ('Quarternary Geology of the Bengal Basin, East Pakistan and India', in the *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*, LXX, 1959, 319 42) has fulfilled a long-felt need and has immensely facilitated the work.

A short description of the physical aspect of Bengal's present geography may be helpful for a clear understanding of the present situation and it is quite interesting that the ancient administrative centres conformed to this pattern. Bengal's 80,000 sq. miles lie like an immense saucer of alluvial deposit between the Tippera hills on the east, the Shillong plateau and Nepal terai on the north and the highlands of the Rajmahal and Chota Nagpur on the west. The southern lip of the saucer is tilted downward where the alluvium is carried

out to the sea by ihe combined streams of the Ganges; Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers. Behind the jungly and swampy sea-coast lies a highly fertile plain composed of recent deltaic deposits formed of alluvium of the three rivers. This plain can be divided into three subregions—the Tippera plain, the Sylhet basin and the vast stretch of the delta of the Padma system, bounded on the west by the Rajmahal-Chota Nagpur hills, on the East by the Tippera plains leading to the hills and on the north by the northern border of the flood plain of the Ganga-Padma with the Pleistocene alluvium of Varendra on its north. The northern part of Bengal is formed by the Pleistocene alluvium of Varendra with red hard soil having a different drainage pattern. The Madhupur *garh*, lying north of Dacca, is also an old alluvium and is separated from the northern old alluvium of Varendra by the Brahmaputra. This is roughly the physical setting of present Bengal. The occupational pattern as reflected in the epigraphic evidence conforms to this general physical pattern. In the early period (5th,6th centuries A. D.) human habitation is evidenced quite densely in the northern old alluvium, the central deltaic plain, the Tippera plain and also in the Sylhet plateau. Evidence is also available of settlements on the region of the Bhagirathi, the older and probably more important course of the Ganges. The important administrative centres are also located in the areas of comparatively older formation : Pundravardhana in North Bengal, Dacca-Faridpur in the central delta, Karmanta and Devaparvata

in the Tippera plain and Karnasuvarna and Vardhamana in the western plain along the Bhagirathi. Access to river routes invariably dictated the location of these centres.[17]

As one would naturally think, the most imoportant problem is that of identifying place-names that are found in the inscriptions. The solution of problem correctly, or with nearest approach to correctness, would very much depend on the correct reading of the plates. While these plates were published the editors very often attempted the identification of the place names. These attempts are helpful, but in many cases they are rather arbitrary. But it seems to us that fresh attempts at identification is more then necessary. This necessity can be emphasized from two points of view. First, recent discoveries have led to clarification of old puzzles. Just to take an example, it was a long drawn controversy whether the Chandrapura visaya in which land was granted by Bhaskaravarmans Nidhanpur plates[18] was in the area adjacent to the place of issue, i. e., Karnasuvarna in Murshidabad district, or it lay in the Sylhet area[19]. But the recent discovery of the Pascimabhag plate of Sricandra clearly shows that Candrapura visaya was in the Srhatta mandala. Similar clarifications can be obtained from the recent finds of the Lalmai area as well. Secondly, the discovery of new plates have also, in many cases, led to correct reading of many names occurring in the earlier diseoveries. But one must confess that total accuracy in the reading of the place-names cannot

be vouschafed, but we are on safer grounds than the previous writers and with fresh evidence coming up in future, any future attempt would have surer grounds to stand on. Thus basing on fresh grounds a fair amount of certainty can be expected. It may not be possible to correctly identify all the place names of the inscriptions, but at least suggestions about their geographical provenance can be made.

But the task of attempting to identify is full of difficulties. In order to make a systematic attempt, as we have hinted earlier, one has to evolve certain premises regarding one's method of approach. The following premises may be formulated for consideration and guidance :

(1) The find place of the plates is of extreme importance. In many cases it has been proved that the land granted by the plate lay in the vicinity of the reported find spot. The copper plates being small and easily moveable, it is natural to expect that they must have been carried from place to place by their holders. But it is surprising that the case is quite to the contrary. Let us take two examples for illustration : (a) the plate of Kumaragupta I found at Baigram [20] in Bogra district (dtd. G. E.128/448 A. D.) grants land in two localities connected with Vayigrama (*Vayigramika*). It is obvious that Vayigrama of the plate is Baigram of the present. Provenance of other geographical data of the inscription seem to confirm this. (b) The plate of Vainyagupta (dtd. G. E. 188/507 A. D.) found at Gunaighar [21] in

Comilla district grants land bordering the village Gunika or Guneka-agrahara. It seems almost certain that this name has survived in the present form, Gunaighar. We have choosen these two examples at random and these examples would prompt a premise that search for location would naturally start with the findspot and its neighbourhood. When such a starting point can be found in the search for location. the rest of the job, in majority cases, would not be very difficult.

2) It is also curious to note that the old names of villages have survived, may be in slightly changed form. The earlier two examples may be taken as two of the many examples that can be put forward. But it must be recognised that the establishment of co-relation between ancient and modern place-names is essentially a linguistic or philological problem. But often the similarity of sound may ring certain note to ear familiar with these sounds and other evidence from co-relevent data, such as the names of rivers, well-known villages, or administrative centres (which can be identified) other landmarks may be found for establishing the initial guess based on the similarity of sound.

(3) In making suggestions about the location of inscriptional place-names the antiquity of the place and its environs to be taken into consideration. In many cases we have archaeological reports of recent past which show the presence of medieval or early medieval ruins. The recent survey of the archaeological remains of the Lalmai area by Barrie M. Morrison have helped the

location of many of the place names of the charters connected with this area or found in this area.

(4) Many of the place-names recorded in the inscriptions are yet to be identiified and in many cases fresh identification can be proposed. If the administrative provenance of the grant can be fixed i. e., the district and sub-district within which the land was granted, and happily this is possible in majority cases,, it may be possible to locate them by searching the large-scale district maps, survey of India maps, list of villages available in district gazetteers and Bengal Village Directory etc. In this search the first three premises, which we have proposed, may help in localising the search. This is no doubt a very painstaking job, but may prove to be rewarding. In this respeet another problem makes the task highly difficult. Those who are familiar with the 19th or early 20th century maps that are available or the gazetteer literature would konw that the names are spelt in all sorts of peculiar anglicised frms and often it is difficult to know the exact pronunciation. In this case, we would again emphasize, that personal knowledge and acquaintance with the region and the local sound may help.

(5) In cases where clues on the lines suggested above cannot be discovered or we have incomplete information, a fair hypothesis can be formulated about the probable location by making an assumption of their proximity to the administrative centres, which are usually known. It is possible to locate the main administrative

centres such as Pundravardhana, Vikramapura, Devaparvata, Karmanta, Carnasuvarna, Vardhamanapura with a fair amount of certainty.[22]

(6) This brings us to the question of locating these centres and fix their extent. By collecting and collating the data of the inscriptions regarding place-names, wich are identifiable, it is possible to construct a rough framework about the extent of these divisions, though it may not be possible to define their exact boundary. This seems to be a surer and safer method rather than generalising about their extent. But in attempting to determine the extent of these divisions it must be remembered that their boundary varied from time to time or, in other words, the same division with the same name may have different extent of jurisdiction in different periods of history. This co-relation between space and time on the basis of political variations is very important in the context of historical geography and a good deal of effort has to be made in order to form an idea of the extent of difterent administrative divisions in different periods of the history of Bengal. In this context it may be equally worth investigating the basis of such territorial divisions. How far the natural phenomena, such as rivers, forests ete. were taken into consideration, or were allowed to dictate in defining a unit like province, district or sub-district.

(6) The extant literary sources represent India as being inhabited by several tribes or peoples, who gave

their names to the particular regions where they settled down. But in this context a problem arises : the geography from the inscriptions may be found at variance from geography in the traditional sources. Ins uch cases it will be wise to remember that inscriptions represent political geography, they indicate the changes that occvr in boundary and extent of a political unit and in the habitat of a people owing to political changes. The inscriptions, when analysed in the context of the time they represent, reveal these changes and these changes should clearly be distinguished from the purely conventional import of the name, as manifest in the traditonal accounts.

(7) One may venture another generalisation by plotting the land grants on the map. An example may possibly ellucidate this point. From the 5th and 6th century Gupta grants it is found that the land granted by them lay in north Bengal and the area is roughly between two rivers, the Atrai on the west and the Karatoya on the east. Would it not be safe to conclude from this that the topographical aspect of the area has not been grossly altered, though the rivers may have changed their courses, but slightly, and changes in their volume and magnitude may have taken place in the intervening period. Of course, this sort of generalisation should be confined to the geologically well-formed and older areas rather than in the lower delta.

For long we have discussed a few of the problems that arise and we have ventured to suggest a few ways of

approaching those problems. We believe the study of the ancient geography of Bengal persued on these general premises may yeild fruitful results. When the study is complete and places mentioned in the inscriptions are plotted in a map, we are sure, a certain regional or geographic groups will stand out and these, when connected with other known knowledge, will lead perhaps to a better understanding of the early history of Bengal. The result, in view of the difficult nature of the sources, may not be anticipated to be absolutely accurate. But, at least, the spatial basis of the early history will be placed on a far more surer grounds rather than vague generalisations, which we come across in the present literature.

We are aware that the geography of ancient Bengal cannot be illuminated in all its corners, we believe, profession of ignorance or at least the identification of the areas of ignorance, is more helpful to find out the truth than adherence to a wrong notion as an established truth.

FOOT NOTES

1. H. C. Darby, *An Historical Geography of England before A. D. 1800*, Preface.
2. W. G. East, *An Historical Geograhpy of Europe*, Preface to 1935 edition.
3. W. G. East, *The Geography Behind History*, 1965, 2-3.
4. H. C. Darby, *op. cit.*, Preface to 1936 edition.
5. *Ibid.*, Preface to 1973 edition.
6. Moonis Raza, *A Survey of Research in Geography*, Indian Council of Social Science Research, xix.

7. W. G. East, *An Historical Geography of Europe.* 5th Edition, 1965, Preface.
8. Moonis Raza, *op. cit.*, xxii.
9. John Smith, *Generall Historie of Virginia,* Quoted by W. G. East, *An Historical Geography of Europe,* 1966 edn.
10. Heylyn, Quoted by W. G. East, *The Geography Behind History,*
11. A. J. Toynbee, *A Study of History,* Vol. I: 1934, 249-71.
12. W. G. East, *The Gorgraphy Behind History,* 1965, 4.
13. *The Geography Behind History,* 1965, 14.
14. *Ibid.,* 15.
15. O. H. . Spate, A. T. A. Learmonth & B. H. Farmer, *India, Pakistan and Ceylon, The Regions,* 1972, 571-599.
16- *Historical Geography and Topography of Bihar,* Delhi, 1963.
17. See Barrie M. Morrison, *Political Centers and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal, 6-13.*
18. *EI, XII,* 65-79 ; *XIX,* 115-25.
19. *EI,, XXXVII* 289-304.
20. *EI, XXI,* 78-83.
21. *IHQ, VI,* 45-60
22. See Barrie M. Mrrison, *Politieal Centers and Cultnral Rgions in Early Bengal,* Tucson, 1970.

Was Muhammad Ibn Tughlaq a Parricide ?

Muqaddesur Rahman

Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, the founder of the Tughlaq dynasty died in 1325 A. D. as a result of the collapse of a pavilion which his son, Prince Juna Khan, had caused to be erected for his reception at Afghanpur.[1] The cause of the collapse of the pavilion is not clear as contemporary and later historians assigned different causes for its collapse. Following the contemporaries modern historians have put forward opposite views regarding the incident and the responsibility of Prince Juna Khan for it. Dr. A. Karim[2] has very rightly pointed out that the difference of opinion among the contemporary historians on the point led to the difference of opinion among the modern historians. According to Ziauddin Barani[3] the pavilion collapsed as a result of a divine calamity and one modern historian,[4] following him, has stated that the pavilion collapsed due to lightning. On the other hand, according to Ibn Battutah,[5] the pavilion was so designed as to collapse at the touch of an elephant to secure the death of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq.

Ibn Battutah has been supported, among the later historians by Badaoni, Abul Fazl and Nizamuddin Ahmad

Bakhshi. The lone supporter of Barani among the later historians is Firishta though he appears not to have been quite convinced. Yahya Ibn Ahmad Sirhindi seems to maintain neutrality by not refering either to lightning or conspiracy, though he mentions the elepnant parade as the cause of the collapse of the pavilion.[6] Among the modern historians Barani's version has been accepted by only a few[7], while Ibn Battutah's version has been accpted by a host of modern histoaians[8].

In this article an attempt has been made at removing the mystery regarding the death of Ghiyasnddin Tughlaq by (a) an analysis of the facts supplied by the contemporary and later historians, (b) an examination of the circumstantial evidences and (c) an evaluatian of the arguments given by modern historians in favour of Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

Analysis of contemporary sources.

According to Barani[9], when Juna Khan received the information of his father's return march towards the capital, he ordered a pavilion to be erected at Afghanpur for his father's reception and over-night stay befor entering into the capital. The Sultan arrived in the afterno and was received by Juna Khan and other high officials and nobles in whose company the Sultan had his luncheon. The officisls and nobles came out to wash their hands when a calamity occurred, like a thunderbolt falling from heaven on the denizens of the earth, and the roof of the dais, on which Sultan Tughlaq Shah

was sitting, fell, and the emperor, with five or six persons, fell beneath the roof, and was united to the neighbourhood of God's mercy"[10]. As has been pointed out by Dr. S. Moinul Huq,[11] "an incorrect translation and wrong interpretation of his metaphorical expression···has been responsible for the widely accepted view that the structure collapsed on account of lightning", The same scholar has correctly expressed the significance of the passage when he writes : 'It is obvious that what Barani wants to emphasize in these word is the fact that the Sultan's death was a calamity for the peopel of the Earth, which descended upon them with all the sudde nness and horror of lightning. When writing these words Barani was thinking of how unfortunate it was for the people to lose a Sultan for whom he has nothing but praise. In his eyes Sultan Ghiyath-al-Din had come as the saviour of the Muslims and their faith from the persectuion of Khusraw Khan. Ghiyath is described by Barani as a brave soldier, a capable general, a wise statesman, a kind master and a just ruler. His virtues had made him an idedal Muslim king who did not persecute the non-Muslims because he was not bigot and who enforced the laws of *Shar* because his faith in Islam was frim and unassilable. It is no wonder, then, that Barani regarded his death as a calamity of great magnitude for the people in general"[12]. This interprtation of the passage finds support from Barani's another statement, a little further wa az murden-i-Sulten Tnghluq az ru-i-ma na jahan ra kharabi[13]. ru namud. Lt. Col. Haig[14]

also thinks that the word Saiqa is used by Barani merely as simile, "comparing the calamity in its suddenness, with a thunderbolt." He puts forward the strong argument that if Barani had really wanted to mean that the structure collapsed on account of lightning "he would have written Bala-i-saiqa-i-asmani (the calamity of a thunderbolt from the sky) instead of saiqa-i-bala-i asmani (a thunderbolt of a calamity from heaven)". Dr. S. Moinul Huq has rightly ruled out the theory of lightning as hinted by Barani as a cause of the collapse of the pavilion.

A few lines regarding the authenticity of Barani is necessary, for some modern historians regard him as authentic on the ground that he was resident contemporary historian. But we should not forget the defects or weaknesses of Barani as an historian.

The motives of Barani in writing the histories were two : firstly, he wanted to attain salvation by writing a life of the Prophet and hence composed the Sana-i-Muhmmadi or Nat-i Muhammadi[16]. Secondly, he also wanted to gain some material benefits to lift him out of his wants and miseries that he was passing through after the death of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. His grievances for his poverty and helplessness and his hope of royal patronage is scattered throughout his text[17]. So far as the hope of royal patronage is concerned, Dr. P. Hardy's[18] remark : "It would be more correct to say that he wrote in hope of official patronage" is nearer the truth than the remark of Dr. Ishwari Prasad[19] :

"Barani wrote under official patronage". "Had he died before Muhammad bin Tughluq, he would have been satisfied with what fortune had given him. His life till then had been happy and aristocratic"[20]. Amir Khurd's[21] statement that in his old age Barani "retired to a corner on receiving at his request the necessaries of life from the eternal government of Firoz Shah and devoted himself to the writing of his unrivalled books... "does not seem to be correct because Amir Khurd in another place also states that Barani, at the time of his death had no dang or dirham and had only two pieces of cloths in his possession[22]. An historian in the hope of royal patronage, is likely to exaggerate the qualities of his patron or conceal some of his vices. As Barani was hankering after royal patronage it was natural on his part to conceal some facts which were likely to displese his would be patron. Though in the preface[23] to his Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi he states that regarding the rulers of the past, he should write openly and truthfully, he did certainly conceal the actual cause of Ghiyasuddin's death for fear of offending Firuz whose great favourite was Muhammad bin Tughlaq and whom he greatly respected[24].

Barani became an historian quite late in life. "At the age of 69 years", writes Prof. Habib[25], "he became conscious of a profession as well as a mission. Very few authors in world history has begun their life's work so late". As an historian Barani had two defects. Firstly, he did not have any diary or did not collect

any documents, nor did he have access to the government archives. Hence he had to accord popularly known facts or what he had learnt from individuals. Secondly, Barani did not consult the available contemporary books written on the period and of the four authors mentioned by him[26] as authentic, only the last, as Prof. Habib[27] points out, appertains to the period covered by the Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi. He does not seem to have consulted any works of Amir Khusrau or Amir Hasan which could be of help to him. Prof. Habib[28] very rightly points out that "the author had nothing but his memory, and his pen, ink and paper". Unfortunately his memory was also failing[29].

We may close the discussion on the authenticity of Barani by quoting a passage from his Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi which runs as follows : "We were traitors who were prepared to call black white, though not devoid of that knowledge which ennobles a man. Avarice and the desire of worldly wealth led us into hypocrisy, and as we stood before the king and witnessed punishments forbidden by the law, fear of our fleeting lives and our equally fleeting wealth deterred us from speaking the truth before him"[30]. The above confession of the author in question renders further discussion on the point unnecessary.

Our second contemporary historian Ibn Battutah describes the Afghanpur incident in the following way : "When he (Ghiyasuddin Tughluq) came near to his capital, on his return from the expedition, he ordered

his son to build for him a palace, or as these people call it, a Kushk, near a river, which runs by a place called Afghanpur. Muhammad built it in the course of three days, making it chiefly of wood. It was elevated above the ground and rested on pillars of wood. Muhammad planned it scientifically, and Malik Zada was charged to see the plans carried out. This man was afterwards known by the title of Khwaja-i-Jahan. His real name was Ahmad, son of Ayas. He was then inspector of buildings; but he afterwards became chief wazir of Sultan Muhammad. The object which these two persons kept in view in building the Kushk was this,-that it should fall down with a crash when the elephants touched it in a certain part. The Sultan stopped at this building and feasted the people, who afterwards dispersed. His son asked permission to parade the elephants before him, fully accoutred. The Sultan consented".

"Shaikh Rukunuddin told me that he was then near the Sultan, and that the Sultan's favourite son, Mahmud was with them. Thereupon Muhammad came and said to the Shaikh, "Master, it is now the time for afternoon prayer, go down and pray". "I went down," said the Shaikh," "and they brought the elephants upon one side, as the prince and his confidant had arranged. When the animals passed along that side, the building fell down upon the Sultan and his son Mahmud. I heard the noise", continued the Shaikh, "and I returned without having said my prayer. I saw that the building

had fallen. The sultan's son, Muhammad, ordered pickaxes and shovels to be brought to dig and seek for his father, but he made signs for them not to hurry, and the tools were not brought till after sun set. Then they began to dig, and they found the Sultan, who had been bent over his son to save him from death. Some assert that Tughlik was taken out dead; others, on the contrary, maintain that he was alive, and that an end was made of him. He was carried away at night to the tomb which he had himself built near the city called after him Tughlikabad, and there he was interred....."[31]

The account of the incident given by Ibn Battutah is more detailed than the one given by Barani who finishes it in half a page, and while the latter ascribes the fall of the pavilion to a divine calamity, the former charges Juna Khan with the murder of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. The only weakness of the account of Ibn Battutah is that he came to India long eight years after the event and his account is based on hear-say. Much has been written on this point to show that Barani's account is more reliable than the account of Ibn Battutah as the former was an "eye-witness". But nowhere it is mentioned that Barani was present at the Afghanpur reception camp on that fateful afternoon. It is mentioned by Barani[32] that "all the great nobles and officers had gone forth to meet him and had conducted him thither with great ceremony", But it is extremely doubtful whether the author himself was

present there as he was neither a high official nor a noble and hence probably could not be a member of the reception party. Moreover, had he been present, he ought to have mentioned it clearly to strengthen his statement, which he has not done. So though a resident of Delhi at the time of occurrence of the incident, he can not be regarded as an eye-witness in the strict sense of the term and his account is also based on hear-say. We do not know who was his source of information but so far as Ibn Battutah is concerned, his source of information was Shaikh Rukn-uddin Multani, one of the most venerated holy men of the time and one who was present at Afghanpur. There is no reason to suspect that the Shaikh invented a false story. Muhammad Tughlaq treated him well and gave him one hundred villages as jagir. "It is hardly likely" writes Dr. Ishwari Prasad,[33] "that the recipient of such unstinted royal favour should deliberately indulge in falsehood and connect the name of his benefactor with the guilt of parricide". The same author has very rightly pointed out that "if the emperor's death had been caused by lightning, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to concoct an imaginary story to explain it".[34]

One modern historian has doubted the authenticity of the account of Ibn Battutah on very flimsy grounds. Thus, Dr. Agha Mahdi Husain charges Ibn Battutah with hostility towards the Sultan[35]. As arguments to prove his point he cited the instances of the traveller's

losing favour of the Sultan and his being put under guard in his own house[36], Ibn Battuths relationship and living with Zalaluddin Ahsan Shah of Mabar, an arch enemy of the Sultan[37], and the traveller's taking shelter in Mabar instead of returng to Dehli after his ship-wreck[38];

All these arguments are very weak and when analysed, do not stand the test of history. So far as the traveller's house-arrest is concerned one has to remember that he was subsequently released and sent to China on an official embassy. He did not bear any illfeeling towards the Sultan, for on numerous subsequent occasions he speaks eloquently of the Sultan[39]. Secondly, Ibn Battutah's marriage with the sister-in-law of Jalaluddin Ahsan Shah of Mabar should not necessarily mean his hostility to the Sultan. Any reader of the Rihla finds Ibn Battutah getting married in almost every place that he visited. The traveller's marriage with the sister-in-law of Jalaluddin Ahsan Shah was one of the many such marriages, and only because of Jalaluddin's revolt against the Sultan it should not be concluded that the traveller was also hostile to the Sultan.

Thirdly, the fact that Ibn Battutah, after the ship-wreck, instead of going to Dehli went to Mabar, should not be interpreted to express his ill-feeling towards the Sultan. The reason which prompte him to go to Mabar instead of Dehli has been explained by the traveller himself[40]. For a man of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's whimsical nature and habits it would not have been

unlikely that the traveller would have been punished for no fault of his own. Barani himself was amazed at the Sultan's conflicting habits[41].

There is no reason to suspect that Ibn Battutah was hostile to the Sultan or mis-stated facts. He related faithfully what he believed to be true[42]. We can not disbelieve Ibn Battutah because he did not keep a diary or wrote from memory which certainly failed him occasionally. Nor should we doubt the honesty of the traveller. Ibn Battutah, in the words of an historian[43], "could have had no interest in misrepresentation, as he wrote after his return to Africa. He confirms, to the full extent, the native accounts, of the king's talents and of his crimes, and gives exactly such a picture of mixed magnificence and desolation as one would expect under such a sovereign". The account of the death of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq which he gives is based on his conversation with Shaikh Ruknuddin Multani who seems to have no reason to give the traveller a concocted story. Having discused the comparative value of the two contemporary accounts, Ibn Battutah's account seems more acceptable than the one given by Barani, who seems to have concealed facts.

Our third contemporary historian is Isami who finished his work in 1350 A. D[55]. He describes the episode as follows : 'when the Sultan arrived near the Jumna, the prince hastened to wait upon him and crossing the river, appeared in full view of the imperial army. On seeing the Sultan, he immediately dismounted from his

horse, kissed the feeet of his father, offered prayers for his long life and apologized for his shortcomings. Isami, unlike Ibn Battutah, has ascribed the construction of the pavilion to the initiatve of Ulugh Khan, who entrusted the work to Ahmad Ayaz. He goes on to that the Sultan did not embrace the prince openheartedly, because of the adverse reports which had been conveyed to him about his behaviour during his absence. The Sultan entered the pavilion, which had been lavishly decorated. Having taken his seat in it, he ordered the huge elephants to race in the yard in front of him. This caused vibrations in the ground and brought down the newly constructed pavilion. The Sultan was crushed to death under it. The narrator concludes with the condemnation of the prince, who is alleged to have conspired with Ahmad Ayaz to bring about the death of his father by making tempting promises to him. The fact that Ahmad Ayaz was subsequently appointed wazir to Ulugh Khan is cited in support of the allegation"[45].

Modern scholars differ in their estimation of Isami as an historian. Some historians regard him as unreliable as he was a victim of the persecutions of the kings of the Tughlaq dynasty and hence prejudiced against them. There is no doubt that Isami had grievances against Muhammad bin Tughlaq as (a) his family was ordered to migrate to Daulatabad and (b) earlier his ancestral property had been confiscated by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. "He, therefore", writes Dr. S. Moinul huq "considered himself to be a victim of the perse-

cutions of the ruling family"[46]. Moreover, "the Futuhal Salatin, written for the Bahmani Sultan, is not unnaturally hostile to his former overlord, Muhammad ibn Tughluq..."[47] as "he had to justify the rebellion of the Bahmani Sultans whose patronage he enjoyed"[48].

But inspite of all his grievances against Muhammad ibn Tughlaq there is no doubt that Isami's Futuhus Salatin is important as historical evidence and all that he writes is not mere fiction. The Fntuhus Salatin "is also of interest because, although the Futuhal Salatin was written seven or eight years before Barani's Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, the two works are entirely independent of each other"[49]. Hence it cannot be said that since Barani as a court historian did not charge Muhammad ibn Tughaq with the murder of his father, Isami, as an aggrieved historian who had to leave Delhi and suffer a lot, did. Evn Dr. Agha Mahdi Husain, who does not accept Isami's version of the Afghanpur incident[50] censures Briggs for declaring that the Futuhus Salatin was an unimportant book of "historical romances"[51]. So it appears that the Futuhus Salatin should also be treated as an important contemporary source as it supplies important informations.

Accounts Of The Later Persian Historians.

Most of the later Persian historians writing during the Mughal period, charge Muhammad ibn Tughlaq with murder.

Abul Fazl, in his Ain-i-Akbari writes : "……After settling the affairs of Bengal, he returned to Delhi. His son Muhammad Khan erected a pavilion at the distance of 3 Kos from Delhi, in the space of three days and with much entreat (text damaged) the king to enter it. The roof of the building fell in and (text damaged) the ruins. Although (Ziauddin) Barni endeavours to substantiate the innocence of Muhammad Khan, the haste with which the pavilion was erected, and the eagerness to entertain the king therein, have all the appearance of guilty design."[52]

Abdul Qadir ibn-i-Muluk Shahi popularly known as Al-Badaoni also gives an identical version of the incident in his Muntakhabut—Tawarikh. According to him "The Sultan arrived there and Ulugh Khan having gone out to meet him with all the nobles and grandees, spread a banquet of welcome. The Sultan gave orders for the elephants which he had brought with him from Bengal to be raced, and as the foundation of the new palace was new and unsettle the palace began to shake and totter with the tramp of the elephants. When the people became aware that the Sultan was mounting with all haste, they hurriedly came out from the palace, without even washing their hands. The Sultan Tughlaq Shah was engaged in washing his hands and so did not come out. In consequence he washed his hands of life and the palace fell upon him"[53].

He further goes on to say "We should not lose sight of the fact that from having built a palace such

as this, which was quite unnecessary[54], there is a suspicion that Ulugh Khan may have built the palace without foundations as was currently rumoured, but the author of the Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi makes no mention of this may possibly be due to a desire to flattter Firoz Shah and out of regard for him[55].

Khwajah Nizamuddin Ahmad also writes that the Sultan was killed as a result of the collapse of a pavilion at Afghanpur[56]. But he also suggests that it was a prearranged affair as he goes on to write : "It has been stated in some histories, that as the pavilion had been newly erected, and had not set properly, and the elephants which Sultan Tughlak Shah had brought with him, from Bangalah, were driven round it, the ground subsided and the roof fell in. It can not however remain hidden from the minds of the intelligent, that the erection of the pavilion, for which there was no necessity whatever[57], creates a suspicion that Ulugh Khan encompassed his father's death. It is evident that the author of the Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi which was written in the reign of Sultan Firoz, who had great regard for Sultan Muhammad, was reticent about the matter, out of regard for the reigning monarch"[58].

Abul Qasim Firishta gives us the same version but differs from others in that he does not charge Muhammad ibn Tughlaq with murder[59]. He rejects the versions of Nizamuddin and Badaoni as unreasonable. He puts undue emphasis on the fact that Muhammad had sat on the pavilion with his father for a long time and it

collapsed immediately after he left it and hence he could not have been involved in the conspiracy. But he seems to overlook the fact that such arrangement might have been made long before he ascended the pavilion with his father. Having said all this Firishta appears to be uncertain about his statement when he expresses his doubt in a characteristic fashion : "God only knows the real truth"

Examination of the circumstantial evidences :

A critical examination of the circumstantial evidences will also show that (i) the collapse of the pavilion causing the death of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq was not the result of lightning and storm as suggested by Barani and (ii) that Muhammad ibn Tughlaq murdered his father.

If storm was normal in Delhi in July[60], and was the cause of the collapse of the pavilion, the crown-prince Juna Khan or his architect Ayaz, should have been more careful in building the pavilion keeping in mind the hazards of a monsoon afternoon. Evidently they did not take any note of the weather as is suggested by the construction of the wooden pavilion. The responsibility of this fatal accident hangs primarily on the shoulder of Ayaz, the architect or inspector of buildings. One should normally expect the death sentence of the architect for his failure which cost the Sultan his life. But one is surprised to find that Muhammad ibn Tughlaq after his accession to the throne made Ayaz his chief minister, a promotion, abnormal

in ordinary cirumstances, and all the more so after his failure as an inspector of buildings which caused the death of the Sultan's father. This promotion of Ayaz naturally arouses suspicion in the mind of a man and one is led to think that this promotion was a reward for Ayaz's help to Muhammad ibn Tughlaq in securing the throne. That Ayaz was a favourite and confidant of Muhammad ibn Tughlaq can be seen from a statement made to Barani by the latter in course of a private discussion[61].

After the collapse of the pavilion, Muhammad ibn Tughlaq ordered his men to bring pick axes and shovels for rescuing the Sultan, but the rescue operation did not start till after sun set. The question that naturally arises about the cause of this delay has been answered by Ibn Battutah. He, on the authority of Shaikh Ruknuddin, an eye-witness of the accident, says that while ordering the rescue operation Muhammad ibn Tughlaq also made signs to his men not to hurry[62] This clearly indicates that Muahmmad ibn Tughlaq wanted the death of his father and that this was the result of a planned conspiracy.

It appears from the account of Barani that a Ghiytsuddin Tughlaq returned from Lakhnauti before scheduled time[63]. The undue haste of the Sultan was due to the disquieting news that reached him in Lakhnauti of his son's behaviour at the capital. The relation between the Sultan and the crown-prince was not cordial, one of the reasons being Muhammad ibn Tughlaq's being a

desciple of Nizamuddin Auliya who, according to ibn Battutah, in one of his ecstatic trances, had prophesied the imminent accession of the crown prince to the throne[64]. The astrologers had also predicted that Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq could never enter the city of Delhi again on his return from the Lakhnauti expedition[65]. Morever, the prince had purchased vast numbers of slaves and had formed a party of his own by extravagant gifts and grants to those who he believed would become his supporters. This action of the prince may suggest that he had already planned the usurpation of his father's throne and was trying to win over as many nobles by grants and gifts as possible, who might other wise oppose his accession to the throne. It is quite probable that these activities of the prince angered the Sultan and roused his suspicion of a conspiracy against him formed by the Shaikh, the prince, some of the amirs and the astrologers. Hence he threatened all of them including the Shaikh with severe consequences. He also ordered the Shaikh to leave Delhi before his arrival there to which the Shaikh is reported to have prophetically replied : دلی ہنوز دور است (Delhi is yet far off). This threatetening of the Sultan might have led the prince to murder his father, if he had not as yet thoughtt of such a drastic step for securing the throne. In any case, the murder of his father was absolutely necessary for the prince now, after his father's repeated threatenings, not only for securing the throne, but also for an additional and more important reason, that of saving his neck from the sultan's wrath[66].

Muhammad ibn Tughlaq was born in 1290 A. D[67]. and at the time of his father's death in 1328 A. D. was 35 years old. If we consider certain facts of the princes early life it may not be unnatural to think that the murder of the Sultan by the prince could be probable. There is no doubt that Muhammad ibn Tughlaq the qualities of a king quite early in his life and had impressed some of the leading nobles by his kingly qualities and we have it on the testimony of Ibn Battutah[68] that on such noble was Bahram Aiba Kishlu Khan, the governor of Sind and commander of Ghazi Malik Tughlaq, who considered him fit to be a king while his father was still alive. Muhammad ibn Tughlaq became prominent first during the reign of Sultan Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah (accession 1316 A. D.), first as the superintendent of the royal stable (Akhur Bak) and later as postal superintendent (Barid-ul-Mulk). In the words of Barani[69], "Sultan Muhammad ibn Tighlaq Shah held a high position in the court of, and enjoyed close access to Sultan Qutbuddin". It appears from an earlier part of Baranis[70] text hat during the reign of Qutbuddin, Muhammad ibn Tughlaq was considered a man of importance and rubbed shoulders with the old and experienced nobles of Sultan Alauddin Khalji's court. Under the circumstances it is quite probable that, Muhammad ibn Tughlaq, a young man of 35, having impressed some of the leading nobles at least by his kingly qualities, became ambitious for the throne. This ambition might have been roused in his heart in

the days of his father's accession, if we accept the testimony of Ibn Battutah that after the victory of Ghazi Malik over Khusrau Khan, when pressed by the nobles to ascend the throne Ghazi Malik expressed his unwillingness and reluctance. He agreed only when Kishlu Khan proposed the name of an alternative candidate to be the Sultan, that of Muhammad ibn Tughlaq. After all, history does not lack similar examples of grown up princes, impatient for the throne, rising against their fathers.[72] There is no doubt that Muhammad ibn Tughlaq was a shrewd prince, and in spite of the difference of opinion among the contemporaries,[74] regarding the leadership against Khusrau, there can not be any doubt that Muhammad ibn Tughlaq took a leading part in ousting the usurper. A man who had tasted intrigues earlier in his life could very well do the same in his own interest.

After finishing the meal at the Afghanpur pavilion, Muhammad ibn Tughlaq sought the permission of the Sultan to parade the elephants which was given. Muhammad ibn Tughlaq then came to Shaikh Ruknuddin and said, "Master, it is now the time for afternoon prayer, go down and pray".[75] The saint went to say his prayers but had to return immediately leaving his prayers unsaid due to the noise caused by the collapse of the pavilion. This request or reminder of the prince to the Shaikh to say his prayers raises suspicion because Ghazi Malik "personally was a rigid Muslim, punctilious in the observance of all the ordinances of

his faith, and especially in avoiding intoxicants. He forbade the manufacture and sale of wine and enforced as far as possible, the observance of the Islamic law".[76] Barani also depicts Ghazi Malik as an orthodox Muslim.[77] Now when Muhammad ibn Tughlaq requested Shaikh Ruknudin, he ought to have requested his father as well, (In both cases the request seems unnecessary for one was an orthodox Muslim and the other was a saint) to say his prayer and no elephant parrade ought to have been permitted during the prayer time. One explanation of his differential behaviour of the prince may be that he had good relationship with the saint and did not want his death and the request for prayer was a pretext to remove him from the pavilion and save him. Another explanation may be that the prince did not want or dare to cause the death of the saint even by accident for fear of public anger. In those days the masses were indifferent to politics unless they were directly and adversely hit by the Sultan's policies and actions in the shape of taxes etc. It mattered little to them if a king died or was murdered and did not bother much about his successor. But a saint in those days was very popular with the masses and commanded great respect from and had great influence on them. Any damage to their person or property could be a potential cause of public dissatisfaction and revolt. That was why Muhammad ibn Tughlaq had to ensure the safety of the Shaikh.

The silence of Barani regarding the accident a A'ghapur should not be taken to imply Muhammad ibn

Tughlaq's innocence and may be explained in two ways. First, Barani,[78] says that Alauddin Khalji won over his subjects by gifts and honours and "people were so deluded by the gold which they received, that no one ever mentioned the horrible crime which the Sultan had committed and the hope of gain left them no care for anything else". Muhammad ibn Tughlaq after his accession did the same [79]and might have produced the same effect on the people in general, and Barani in particular. Moreover, Barani was the Nadim of Muhammad ibn Tughlaq for long 17 years and hence concealed the fact in the hope of regaining his position under Firuz Shah Tughlaq, for it is well-known that Firuz was a great admirer of Muhammad ibn Tughlaq and had Barani made the latter responsible for the murder, he would have lost all chances of any reward from Firuz.

Secondly, as has been explained by Dr. P. Hardy.[80] "Barani's interpretations of the reign of Ghiyath-al din Tughluq throws light upon the question whether he concealed a knowledge of Muhammad ibn Tughluq's complicity in causing his father's death under the pavilion at Afghanpur. He depicts the sultan in glowing terms as a true Muslim ruler. There are, therefore, on religious reasons which might explain his death. If Barani had believed that death to have been by foul play, on the analogy of his treatment of other reigns, signs and portents would have probably appeared in his account and some wicked acts recorded. But all was

sweetness and light. Therefore, it seems likely that the historian's genuine mystification and surprise at the death of a pious Muslim ruler found expression in his well-known phrase describing the events leading to Ghiyath-al-din Tughluq's death—'A thunderbolt of heavenly calamity fell upon the people of the earth".

These points which have not been given due importance and consideration by the historians trying to prove or disprove Muhammad ibn Tughlaq's guilt for the death of his father, should lead one convincingly to the conclusion that Muhammad ibn Tughlaq was a parricide.

Evaluation of the arguments of modern historians.

Some modern historians[81] have tried to disprove the charge of murder of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq by Muhammad ibn Tughlaq by putting forward the following arguments :—

(a) Juna Khan was the eldest and the best among the sons of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq.

(b) He was declared the heir-apparent by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq and often acted as his father's vice-regent during the Sultan's absence, as during the campaign of the Sultan in Lakhnauti.

(c) There was no rival claimant to the throne.

(d) "Muhammad bin Tughlaq brands Alauddin Khalji as usurper and the contempt he has for the latter on that ground is evident from his memoirs. It does not therefore follow that he courted the same indignity for which he despised Alauddin by murdering his own father of whom he speaks with great respect, and in glowing terms".[82]

(e) Dr, S, Moinul Huq suggests that since the elephant parade was ordered by the Sultan and not by the Prince, it could not be a part of a pre-arranged scheme.[83]

(f) There was no disturbance consequent upon the Sultan's death.

A critical examination of these arguments proves them weak and insufficient to prove Muhammad Ibn Tughlaq's innocence in the matter.

(a) Being the eldest and the best son does not ensure the throne for a prince. There are many instances in mediaval Indian history when the best or the eldest son was deprived of the throne by a younger or a less able prince or even by an ambitious and powerful noble.

(b) The fact that he was the declared heir-apparent also could not ensure the throne for him for since the establishment of monarchy by Amir Muwabiya the head of the state had the right to nominate his successor or series of successors, but the person nominated could only ascend the throne if he was acceptable to the high officers; who if dssatisfied, could select another person from among the sons and brothers of the late ruler.[84] Then again, the sword always played an important part in deciding the question of succession as is illustrated by the assertion of one of the Delhi Sultans. In reply to Bughra Khan's message, Muizzuddin Kaiqubad replied that kingdoms were obtained by the sword and by the decree of fate, not by inheritance.[85]

The history of medieval India is replete with examples of declared heir-apparents being set aside in favour of another prince. Ala'uddin Khalji had drawn up a will appointing his son Khizr Khan his successor and even secured the signatures of the nobles on it. But after his death Malik Kafur raised to the throne Malik Shahabuddin, a child of only 5 or 6 years and the nobles assented.[86] Then again Balban had nominated his grandson Kaikhusrau, son of Muhammad, as his heir-apparent. But after his death the nobles raised to the throne Kaiqubad, son of Bughra Khan in utter disregard of the late Sultan's wishes.

Throughout the medieval Indian period, no definite theory of succession was evolved or practised. The law of primogeniture was not always adhered to and in many cases court intrigue and the sword played the decislive part.

The fact that Muhammad ibn Tughlaq had acted as his father's viceregent during the Sultan's Lakhnauti expedition should not mean that he was in the cofidence of the Sultan. This may have been for the simple reason that the Sultan thought it wiser to leave him in charge of the capital city in the midst of his own men so that his activities could be watched and reported to the Sultan in Lakhnauti, as in fact, it had been done. Though there is difference of opinion among the scholars regarding Muhammad ibn Tughlaq's earlier rebellion in the Deccan, the probability can not be ruled out. So the Sultan might have thought that Delhi would

be a far better place than the Deccan to prevent the repetition of a similar disturbance during his absence in Lakhnauti.

(c) It is not correct to say that he had no rival claimant to the throne. He had four brothers, one of whom, Mahmud, was killed in Afghanpur, and another, Masud, was executed a few years later on a charge of conspiracy. In the absence of any definite law of succession, any prince or even a noble could become an aspirant for the throne.

(d) The fact that Muhammad ibn Tughalaq denounces Alauddin Khalji for murdering his uncle and father-in-law does not in any way prove that Muhammad ibn Tughlaq was not a parricide. Barani,[87] a contemporary historian confesses that he was amazed at the extremely conflicting habits of the Sultan. He preached one thing but practised another. Muhammad ibn Tughlaq might have denounced Alauddin Khalji as a matter of policy to conceal his own crime by trying to make his people believe by his denouncement that he was not a parricide. Again it is very natural on the part of a son to speak highly and in glowing terms of his dead father even if he had murdered him. Muhammad ibn Tughlaq in spite of his genuine respect and love for his father was possibly driven by political ambition to murder him. So he might have spoken highly of his father out of remorse as well. Jahangir, who had rebelled against his father and even caused the murder of Abul Fazl also spoke highly of his father. He regarded his

father as a guide, qibla and even his visible God.[88] He often visited,[89] the mausoleum of Akbar to pay homage to his father's departed soul and "rubbed the head of supplication on the threshold, the abode of angels..."[90] He enumerates in his memoirs the good qualities of his father which, according to him, "are beyond the limit of approval and the bounds of praise".[91] Even any Amir, irrespective of his status, had to visit Akbar's mausoleum first before gaining entry to Jahangir's court.[92] Having said so much of and done so much in honour of his father the fact remains that he was a rebel against his father for four years. Similarly the high words of praise for his father can not conceal the fact that Muhammad ibn Tughlaq was a parricide.

(e) The argument that the elephant parade was ordered by the Sultan and not by the prince and hence could not be a part of a pre-arranged scheme does not mean much. Ibn Battutah clearly states that Muhammad ibn Tughlaq requested his father to permit him to parade the elephants and the Sultan consented. This should not be interpreted to mean that the sultan had ordered the elephant parade. It may be noted that such is the custom even to-day regarding ceremonial parades where the commander seeks the permission of the chief guest taking the salute and inspecting the guard of honour and then orders the parade to begin.

(f) The absence of any kind of disturbance consequent upon the Sultan's death should not mean that Sultan die a natural death. It has rightly been expla-

ined by a learned author[93], "by the fact that men's memories are proverbially short, and in politics and diplomacy, particularly, the man who achieves success is welcomed in spite of his misdoings. This was exactly what had happened before in the case of Ala-al-Din Khilji".

The arguments put forward by some historians in defence of Muhammad ibn Tughlaq do not stand the test of scrutiny. "One would perhaps", writes Dr. R. C. Majumdar[94], "be inclined to agree with Dr. Ishwari Prasad[95], that 'the Sultan's death was the result of premeditation and conspiracy and not of accident". "Dr. Agha Mehdi Husain had made an attempt to exculpate Ulugh Khan", continues Dr. R. C. Majumdar[96], "but his discussion, though elaborate and painstaking, does not carry conviction, and appears more like a pleading than an impartial investigation of truth".

From the above discussion it may safely be concluded that Muhammad ibn Tughlaq was a parricide.

FOOT NOTES

1. There is no village of this now near Tughlaqabad and Lt. Col. Sir wolsely Haig suggests that the pavilion was built at Aghwanpur, a village about 5 miles from Tughlaqabad, and that the name of this village may be a corruption of Afghanpur, or Muslim historians may have corrupted a Hindi name. Lt. Col. Sir Wolseley Haig, Five Questions in the History of the Tughluq Dynasty of Dihli, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1922, part III, July.

2. Dr. A. Karim, *Pak-Bharate Muslim Sasana*, p 106.
3. Ziauddin Barani, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, edited by Saiyid Ahmad Khan, p 452. Elliot and Dowson. *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, vol. III, p 235.
4. Dr. Agha Mahdi Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*. p 68.
5, Elliont and Dowson, op. cit. p 610.
6. *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*. The text has :

فرمود تا پیلان کہ از نہب لکھنوتی آورده اند
پیارند یکجا بدوانند - زمین کشکی بلرزید -
بتقدیر الله تعالی درخیل پذیر رفت و با فتاد -
سلطان غیاث الدین تغلق شاه مرحوم با یک
نفر دیگر کشک آمده و شهادت یافت -

In the pavilion which was hastily erected to be treated as a place audience, "he ordered the elephants captured as a spoil from Lakhnauti to run a race. The earth trembled, and by the decree of God, the pavilion was damaged and fell down. Sultan Ghiyasuddin along with one other man being under the pavilion attained martyrdom,"

The Persian text has been quoted in Dr. Ishwari Prassad, *A History of the Qarunah Turks in India*, vol I, p 41. The english translation of the text is also his.

7. Dr. Agha Mahdi Husain, op. cit, Dr. A. Karim, op. cit, Dr. M. Kabir, *A Short History of Pakistan*, Book III, Dr. B. P. Saksena, *Comprehensive History of India, vol VI, The Delh'i Sultanate* (A. D. 1296-1526). Edited by Prof. M. Habib and Khaliq Ahmed Nizami.
8. Lt. Col. Sir wolseley Haig, op. cit, and *Cambridge History of India*, vol III ; V. A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India* ; Dr. Ishwari Prasad, op. cit. Dr. R. C. Majumdar, ed, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*,

vol VI, The Delhi Sultanate ; H. A. R. Gibb, *Ibn Battuta : Travels in Asia and Africa. and many others.*

9. *Traikh-i-Firuz Shahi,* p 452 ;
Elliot and Dowson, op. cit. p 235.

10 This is the correct translation of Barani's metaphorical صاعقۂ بالائی اسمانی بر زمینان نازل شد۔

passage "Saiqa-i-bala-asmani bar zaminan nazil shud" as rendered by Lt. Col. Haig in the *R. A. S.* July, 1922, p 330. The translation of the above passage in Elliot and Dowson, vol III, p 235 is incorrect. Dr. R. C. Majumdar in the *History and Culture of the Indian people, vol VI, Delhi Sultanate,* p 57 and Dr S. Moinul Huq in his *Barani's History of the Tughluqs,* p 44 follow Haig's translation as corrrect.

11. *Barani's History of the Tughluqs,* p 44.
12. *Ibid.* Dr. B. P. Saksena, op. cit. pp 478-80.
13. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi,* p 453. Translation : "The death of Sultan Tughluq brought in the real sense ruin to this world". The translation is from Dr. S. Moinul Hu'qs *Baranis History of the Tughluqs,* p 34.

وازمردن سلطان تغلق ازر ي معنی جہان راخرابی روی نمود۔

14. op. cit. p 331.
15. op. cit. p 45.
16. Prof. M. Habib and Dr. (Mrs) Afsar Umar Salim Khan, *ThePolitical Theory of the Delhi Sultate,* p 121.
17. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi,* pp 68, 114, 125. For some of these passages see Prof. Habib and Dr. (Mrs) Khan, op. cit. p 1[illegible], 119-20.
18. Dr. P. Hardy, *Historians of Medieval india,* p 16, F. N,
19. Dr. Ishwari Prasad, op. cit. p 345.

20. Prof. Habib and Dr. (Mrs) Khan, op. cit. p 120.
21. Quoted in Prof. Habib and Dr. (Mrs) Khan, op. cit. p 119.
22. *Ibid*
23. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, pp15-16.
24. That Firuz was very fond of Muhammad bin Tughlaq admits of on doubt and is apparent from the following statements of Firuz himself: "Praises without end, and infinite thanks to that merciful Creator who gave to me his poor abject creature Firuz, son of Rajab, the slave of Muhammad Shah, soon of Tughluq Shah....." (*Futuhat-i-Firuz Shahi*, Elliot and Dowson, op. cit, p 374). *Afif in his Traikh-i- Firuz Shahi* records the following statement of Firuz Shah. "Although in compliance with your counsels I have assumed the robes of sovereignty, still I can not throw off my garments of mourning, for Sultan Muhammad was my lord, my teacher and my guide in all things...". Elliot and Dowson. op. cit. p 277.
25. Prof. Habib and Dr. (Mrs) Khan, op. cit. p 121,
26. *Ibid.* p 125-126.
27. These were: Khwaja Sadr Nizami, *Tajul Masir*; Maulana Sadruddin Awfi, *Jamiul Hikayat*; Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*; and Kabiruddin Iraqui, *Fath-Namas of Aluaddin Khaliji. Tarikh*-i-*Firuz Shahi*, p 14.
28. Prof. Habib and Dr. (Mrs) Khan, op. cit. p 125.
29. *Ibid.* p 126.
30. *Ibid.* p 127.
31. Quoted in the *Cambridge History of India*, vol III, pp I38-139.
32. Elliot and Dowson. op. cit, pp. 610-11
33. *Tarikh-i-Firuz shahi* p. 452, Elliot and Dowson, op, cit, p. 235.
34. Dr. Ishwari Prasad, op. cit. p 47.

35. *Ibid*, pp 46-47.

36. Dr. Agha Mahdi Husain, op. cit p X.

37. *Ibid*. p 74 and p X.

persons Firoz Shah, Malik Kabir and Ahmad Ayaz". *Tarkhi-i-Firuz Shahi*, pp 521-522.

38. *Ibid*.

39. *Ibid*. p X.

40. For such statement see H. A.. Gibb op cit 251.

41. H. A. R. Gibb, op. cit, p 239.

42. T*arikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p 504.

43. H. A. R. Gibb, op. cit. p 13.

44. M. Elphinstone, *History India*, p 409.

45. P. Hardy, op. cit. p 94.

46. Dr. B. P. Saksena, op. cit. p 477,

47. Dr. S. Moinul Huq. op. cit. p 46.

48. Dr. P. Hardy, *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, Edited by C. H. Philips, p 125.

49. Dr. S. Moinul Huq, op. cit. p 46.

50. Dr. P. Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India*, p 94..

51. Dr. P. Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India*, p 14.

52. Dr. Agha Mahdi Husain, op cit. p 11.

53. *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol II, Translated by Jarrett, pp 306-7.

54. *Muntakhabut Tawarikh*, Translated and edited by George S. A. Ranking. vol. I, p 300.

55. Elphinstone in his History of India, p 403, also thinks that the erection of the pavilion was unnecessary. But Ibn Battutah says that such was the custom. According to him "When the sultan returns from a journey, the elephants are decorated and on sixteen of them are placed sixteen parasols, some brocaded and some set with jewels. Wooden pavilions are built several stories high and covered with silk clothes, and in each story there are singing girls wearing magnificent dresses and ornaments, with

dancing girls amongst them". H. A. R. Gibb op. cit, p 200.

56 *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, pp 300-301.

57. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Translated and edited by B. De, p 214.

58. In spite of Ibn Battutah's assertion that this was the custom, the pavilion appeared unnecessary to many because the Sultan was coming by forced marches and was sure not to stay outside his capital to rest for the night. But for Muhammad ibn Tughlaq the pavilion was not only necessary, it became a life and death question for him. He became afraid of his life and to save it he had to take his father's life and the pavilion was to serve as an excuse,

59. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, translation by B, De, pp 214-215.

60. John Briggs, *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan power in India :* Translated from the original Persian of Mahomed Kasim Ferishta, vol. I, pp 234-35.
Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindostan from the Earliest Account of the time to the Death of Akbar :* Translated from the Persian of Mahummud Kasim Ferishta of Delhi, vol. I, p 312.

61. There is considerable difference of opinion among the scholars regarding the date of the accident. Lt. Col. Haig (*Combridge History of India*, vol. III, p 135 *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1922, part III, July, p 338, 361) and Dr. Ishwari Prasad (*History of the Qaraunah Turk in India*, p 46) think that it occurred in February 1325. Dr. Agha Mahdi Husain (*Tughluq Dynasty*, p 79, F. N. I. and pp 595-6) on the other hand thinks that the correct date of the incident should be about 15 May, 1325. But in another earlier work (*Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughlaq* p 42, FN) he suggested that the date should be July 1325. As monsoon storms are most likely in

July, I have accepted it for argument's sake and tried to show that even then the crown-prince was responsible for his fathers death.

62. "If the affairs of the kingdom were settled according to my wishes, my desire was to go to the sacred Kaba and assign the affairs of the Delhi empire to these three.

63. Elliot and Dowson, op. cit. vol III, p 611.

64. Dr. S. Moinul Hq, op. cit. p 44.

65. Elliot and Dowson, op. cit p 610.

66. *Ibid* It may be so that the astrologers were bribed by the prince to make that forecast.

67. Much has been written about the Shaikh's complicity in the murder. It appears that, as a holy man, gifted with divine powers, he could prophesy the death of the Sultan but beyond that he does not seem to have any reason in plotting the murder of the Sultan. Considering the character of the saint it is impossible to cast such a suspicion on him.

68. Dr. Agha Mahdi Husaia, *Rise And Fall of Muhammad bin Iughlaq*, p 22.

69. *Ibid*, p 24.

70. Barani, *Tarikh-Firuz Shahi*, p 411. Agha Mahdi Husain. op. cit. p 27.

71. *Ibid*, p 309. Agha Mahdi Husain, op. cit p 27.

72. Quoted in Agha Mahdi Husain, *Rise & Fall of etc*, p 43.

73. Prince Selim rebelled against his father Akbar in 1600 A. D. His rebellion, with intervals of insincere reconciliation. had lasted for more than four years, from about the middle of 1600, until November, 1604. (V. A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p 231) Selim was 35 at the time of his accession, having been born on 30 August, 1569. (*Ibid*, p 73) He was the eldest and the only surviving son of Akbar. He even got About Fazl

murdered to ensure his succession to the throne. Khurram had rebelled against Jahangir and the sons of Shah Jahan took recourse to the sword for deciding the succession to the throne.

74. According to Ibn Battutah Ghazi Malik took the lead. (Elliot and Dowson, op. cit. p 606-607). But according to Barani Juna Khan took the lead. He says that Ghazi Malik was afraid to do anything because his son Juna was in Delhi. (*Ibid.* p 225).
75. *Ibid.* p 610.
76. Lt. Col. Sir Wolseley Haig, Ed. *The Cambridge History of India*, vol, III, p 129.
77. *Tarikh-i- Firuz Shahi*, pp 429, 440-41, 542.
78. *Traikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p 242-43. Elliot and Dowson, op. cit. p 161.
79. For a few important appointments and titles given see Agha Mahdi Husain, *Rise and Fall of etc.* p 88-89.
80. Dr. P. Hardy, *Historians of Medieval india*, p 35.
81. Agha Mahdi Husain, Dr. Abdul Karim, S. Moinul Huq, B. P. Saksena etc.
82. Agha Mahdi Husain, *Rise & Fall of ect.* p 73.
83. S. Moinul Huq, op. cit. p 46. B. P. Saksana also advances the same argument. op. cit. p 479.
84. Prof. M, Habib and Dr. (Mrs) Khan, op. cit. p 145.
85. Qiran-us-Sadain, p 90. Quoted in Dr. P. Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India*, pp 73-74.
86. Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p 372. Elliot and Dowson, op. cit. pp 207-209.
87. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, p 504.
88. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, translated by Rogers and edited by Beveridge, vol. I, p 65.
89. *Ibid* vol. 1, pp 151-52, vol. 11, p 101.
90, *Ibid.* vol. 11. p 101.
91. *Ibid.* vol. 1, pp 37-38,

92. *Samrat Jahanger Atmajivani*, Bengali translation by Burhanuddin Khan Jahangir, p 38.

93. Dr. Ishwari Prasad, pp, cit. p 48.

94. Majumdar, Pusalkar and Majumdar, ed. *The History and Culture of the Indian Peaple*, vol VI, *The Delhi Sultanate*, p 48.

95. Dr. Ishwari Prasad, op. cit. p 48,

96. Majumdar, Pusalkar and Majumdar, ed. op. cit. p 58.

The Brahmo Awakening in East Bengal and The Orthodox Hindu Reaction, 1866-1872.

David Kopf

This article deals with an episode in the diffusion of the so called Bengal renaissance, originally Calcutta-based, to other parts of the South Asian subcontinent.[1] The movement which more than any other in the 19th century facilitated the process was the Brahmo Samaj, a socio-religious reform association started by Rammohun Roy in 1829, revitalized and institutionalized by Debendranath Tagore in 1843, and made more progressive by Keshub Chandra Sen in 1866. In particular, the study is focused about little known events in the Brahmo penetration of East Bengal which prompted a conservative Hindu reaction.

The history of the Bengal renaissance to which historiographically this study belongs, is illustrative of the greater problem of a modernizing clan, consciousness, and ideology by an articulate segment of native, colonial elites known as intelligentsia. Thus the article has been designed largely to answer certain questions framed within central hypothesis that a modernizing spirit did

indeed manifest itself among the Bengali Hindu bhadraloks which alienated them from their own society and culture and that the Brahmo Samaj was the earliest and most effective missionary agent for the dissemination of the modernizing spirit.

Who were the Brahmo missionaries of modernity to East Bengal? Did the awakening take place largely through the efforts of the Western-educated in the medium of English or of the indigenous modernizers in the medium of Bengali? Who were the initial beneficiaries of the awakening or renaissance? Were they of the middle class or were they of the rural masses? What kind of opposition did Brahmo modernists encounter? Who were the defenders of Hindu orthodoxy? Did the new Hindu intelligentsia automatically embrace Brahmo reform or did they divide themselves factionally into Hindu refomers and Hindu apologists?

It may be argued that until the 1860's Brahmo reformers were virtually all members of the Western educated intelligentsia. Whether nationalist or universalist, conservative or radical, they shared a common exposure to an anglicized education, the English language, while most of them were extremely sophisticated about Unitarian efforts in the West at social reform.

The movement was elitist not so much because the participants belonged to the upper three castes of the regional Hindu society, but lecause they had done relatively well in the colonialist system imposed by the British. Wherever they came from, most of them ulti-

mately settled in Calcutta where they lived in affluent or comfortables circumstances, and drank deeply of the spirit of life from the Western as well as from their own civilization. They socialized with Europeans as well as with enlightened members of their own society.

But sooner or later, the Hindu reformation, if it were that, would have to reach down below the thin veneer of Western-educated persons to people in rural towns and villages, to the lower middle class, to the more peripheral types in the colonialist system, to those with little or no Englsih background. It would have to alter its ideological appeal since Unitarian inspired rationalism and the reinterpretation of the Upanishads and Vedanta were far too exotic and abstract for Bengalis outside the reach of Calcutta intellectual circles in the mid-nineteenth century.

It is precisely in this context that one must examine the Brahmo experience and influence of Bijoy Krishna Goswami as follower of Keshub Chandra Sen. Both men played and important role in updating Vaishnavism in Bengal at the same time they encouraged its influence on Brahmo ideology. Both men were instrumental in carrying a vaishnavism infused with modernistic values to East Bengal.

The circumstances of his birth and early development, his education both on lower and higher levels, certainly indicates that among all the major Brahmo figures up to his time, Bijoy Krishna Goswami was the least Westernized intellectual of all. Even Vidyas

agar though a product of Calcutta Sanskrit College, has left sufficient evidence in the files of the institution to prove a very deep understanding of the English language, European philosophy, and modern science.

But Bijoy Krishna, born in 1841 in Santipur, Nadia, in the vicinity of the sixteenth century Vaishnava reformation, was himself,[2] descended from the Advaita preceptor in Chaitanya's Vaishnava movement. Bijoy Krishna's father was a devout Vaishnava Goswami while his uncle was a Bhagavat scholar who went about North Bengal offering mantras and collecting donations for the local Goswami temple dedicated to Lord Krishna[3].

How did this traditional Brahmin become a Brahmo ? Supposedly he happened to be in Bogra when three Brahmo preachers lectured there and he was so impressed by their "regard of truth" that he made his way to Calcutta to meet their leader, Debendranath Tagore[4]. When he did arrive in Calcutta shortly after, from his own account, he was robbed by a gambler and dispossessed of the little he owned[5].

When he finally did meet Debendranath, Bijoy Krishna was a poverty-stricken youth who slept nights on the Sanskrit College veranda. With unusual honesty, Bijoy wrote in 1882 that he first came to the Brahmo leader as much for economic assistance as for spiritual guidance. Moreover the poor rustic boy was not originally impressed with the Brahmos of Calcutta. They "only filled their bellies with wine and tried to get him drunk too[7]."

When Debendranath honored his application for monetary assistance, the young man attended Maharshi's sermons which were so pure and so filled with the love of God, that Bijoy would "shed tears throughout[8]". Thus did Bijoy Krishna, a Goswami, come to sit at the feet of Devendranath who, sometime in the late 1850's most likely "became his preceptor[9]".

Ultimately, however, Bijoy Krishna, as with many of the younger Brahmo recruits, grew disillusioned with Debendranath and the older generation of Brahmos who paid only lip service to rationalism, humanism, and social reform. For example, Bijoy Krishna went to his preceptor one day and told him repetedly how the sacred thread was causing him "mental agony". The problem was that he no longer believed in caste distinction. Debendranath's answer seemed a violation of a basic Brahmo ideal :

The sacred thread is essential. It will harm society if you give it up. Have I not kept my sacred thread ? [10]

Bijoy was also disturbed about eating meat and fish. Debendranath told him that if you "kill bedbugs and mosquitoes, why not eat meat and fish ?" These replies and others seemed callous and conservative to him. He would discuss these matters with his closest friends who interestingly enough were mostly East Bengalis[11]. He also came under the influence of Keshub Sen who in the 1860's was emerging as leader of the younger progressives in opposition to the Brahmo conservatives. Bijoy's radicalism which began with his removal of the

sacred thread drove his mother to the point of suicide and led to excommunication from his own community[12]. He realized that from then on not only was he deposed to the ranks of the sudras but that "neither kayasthas nor vaidya could touch him or take water from his hands".[13] He has also related how "rocks were thrown at him by some irate Vaishnava neighbors" while most others were satisfied with "jeering and ridiculing him".[14]

On the other hand, the very qualities of Bijoy Krishna's style of Brahmoism which so infuriated traditionalists in his lifetime, were the same qualities which were so appealing to persons like himself dissatisfied with existing forms of Hinduism and in search of a new identity. He had a clear, analytical mind which however clothed in the garb of Vaishnavism, was still as emancipated as the most rational Brahmo. As for the reformation, Goswami was idelogically akin to the most progressive Indians of his generation. His sermons during later trips to East Bengal were intensely liberal in spirit. He was a consistent advocate of female emancipation. His universalism though too often proclaimed in the name of Chaitanya rather than in the name of Channing or Emerson, was nevertheless predicated on the familiar faith of the Brahmos in the "unity of God and the brotherhood of all men".

It was after 1866 when Keshub was on his own and groping for guidelines as a reformation leader that Bijoy Krishna's influence began to be apparent. At

that period Bijoy began to push Keshub in the direction of the Neo-Vaishnavism whereas Protap Chandra began pushing Keshub in the direction of the Unitarian Christ. It was Goswami who suggested that Keshub model himself after Chaitanya and to introduce in to Brahmoism Vaishnava music and processions. The idea was to compose Vaishnava type songs which contained the message of Brahomism. In this way, it was believed, Brahmo ideals and sentiments could be conveyed to a much larger mass of Bengalis. And it would be done not in the alien Christian way but in the native Bengli way[15].

In 1866, with the formation of the new Brahmo Samaj of India, Keshub Chandra and Bijoy Krishnan toured parts of East Bnngal as missionaries of their church. They went principally to Dacca, Faridpur, and Myminsingh. Their impact was instantaneous.

Brahmoism was not exactly novel in East Bengal's largest city of Dacca. At approximately the same time that Debendranath had revitalized the Brahmo Samaj in 1843, Braj Sundar Mitra had started a Brahmo Samaj in Dacca in 1846[16]. Braj Sundar from a Sakto Kayasthe family[17], had gone to Calcutta for education in 1835. He was one of the many religiously-inclined students whom David Hare barred from being admitted to his school. He ended up at Duff's General Assembly's Institution. Braj Sundar left Calcutta in 1838 a year before Debendranth started the *Tattvabodhini*

Sabha. According to Mitra, he never even met Tagore while in Calcutta.

The implication which I have no reason to dispute is that the Brahmo Samaj started independently in East Bengal as a kind of parallel but kindred religious phenomenon. The most interesting parallel is that Braj Sundar's generation responded to the issues of social reform in Dacca rather much as Debendranath and his generation did in Calcutta. Thus naturally, in the annals of the history of the East Bengal Brahmo Samaj, the period from 1846-62 is looked upon as the "conservative period[19]". By 1862 a younger generation had arisen in Dacca which challenged the older leadership rather much as Keshub and his followers did in Calcutta.

Thus when Keshub and Bijoy arrived in Dacca in 1866 it is understandable why their presence led to a veritable explosion. They were linking up with progressive elements their. Sivanath Sastri has described the sudden impact of the Keshubites in Dacca :

They set the district ablaze and young men were drawn to the movement dedicating themselves to reform The Dacca Keshubites abandoned idolatry, abolished caste, rescued young Hindu widows, and other young women from misery.[20]

In Dacca, among the English-speaking intelligentsia, Keshub was the hero, though in Myminsingh, the first moffusil town where Brahmos gained a foothold, it was Bijoy Krishna who won over the youth by effectively communicating with them. Evidently fear of Brahmos

by Hindus in a town like Myminsingh was greatly irrational. For fear of losing caste, for example, neither Keshub nor Bijoy was at first invited to anyone's house even though there had been a Brahmo Samaj of sorts in Myminsingh since 1853[21].

Two autobiographical accounts differ on which languages Keshub used on the mission tour. According to K. K. Mitra, Keshub lectured in Myminsingh purely in English,[22] although Girish Chandra Sen, also there at the time, claims that he lectured both in English and and Bengali.[23] But both agree that it was Bijoy Krishna who had the impact on the local people. He was invited to lecture at the Brahmo Hall on caste, social reform, and idolatry. At once, many high caste Brahmos including a newspaper editor, school teachers, and government servants discarded their sacred threads and promised in public to carry out their Brahmo ideals in practice.[24] One clue as the seriousness of the situation is the fact that very soon afterwards leaders of Hindu orthodoxy formed a branch of the Calcutta *Dharma Rakhini Sabha* (Society to Preserve Hinduism) with the main purpose of persecuting Brahmos and their famillies.[25]

In both Dacca and Myminsingh, mainly through Bijoy Krishna's efforts, the pro Keshubite East Bengali Brahmos prevailed in establishing effective communities. The center of their activities was the mandir and by 1869 the Dacca community had constructed the largest and most architectcurally impressive Brahmo temple

in all of South Asia up to that time. Meanwhile, Bijoy Krishna after his success in Myminsingh, was invited by East Bengalis again and again for speeches, guidance, and inspiration.[26] Bijoy was not intersted only in towns but travelled from village to village "creating everywhere he went an unprecedented agitation and stirring up deep feelings in favor of the movement."[27] According to Girish Chandra Sen, "the people respected him greatly as he carried his own simple belongings and with touching humility travelled on foot place to place."[28]

In the following years Bijoy Krishna returned again to East Bengal where Brahmo Samjes in the Keshubite image proliferated enormously. Through his endeavors chiefly the Bengla renaissance restricted for the most part to urbanized Calcutta now spread to the municipal settlements of East Bengal. Wherever a Brahmo Samaj was established, there followed an institutional complex dedicated to social and religious reform. Whether in Myminsingh, Barisal, Chittagong, Comilla, or Sylhet, there was invariably the mandir or community prayer hall and meeting place, a girls's school and boys's school on various levels, possibly a college, a Sangat Sabha or discussion society for youth, a charitable hospitale a printing press for newspapers and tracts, a night school for workers and/or peasants, a ladies's society, etc etc.

The problem, if indeed it was considered such at that early period, was that Bijoy's wedding of Vaishna-

vism and Brahmoism did not in fact awaken the masses—either Hindu or Muslim. There were exceptions of course and Bijoy himself worked among low caste villagers but by and large Brahmoism continued to appeal to the privileged few who had found elitist status under British colonial rule. Even in the lesser towns where Brahmoism established itself after in a fashion and under Bijoy's direction, this was equally true. The Brahmo Samaj in Kishorganj, for example, was led by a Sub-divsional officer ; the Bajittpur Brahmo Samaj was founded and led by a munsiff ; the Samaj in Perozepur was led by the famed K. G. Gupta, then a sub-diviional officer ; and the Samaj in Brahmanbaria was also under the leadership of a sub-divisional officer.[29]

What did happen, increasingly, was not so much the awakening of the masses as the bifurcation of the modernized East Bengal elite into progressive Brahmo and defensive Hindu, just as in Calcutta, defenders of Hinduism were most often themselves members of the Western educated grouping, so in East Bengal this was more and more the case. The case of the famous Chattopadhyay family of Vikrampur provides an excellent example of how families were split as a result of Brahmo intrusion. The Chattopadyays were Kulin Brahmins whose oppression of women was a primary target of East Bengali Brahmoism by Bijoy Krishna but converted personally by Keshub during a visit by the latter to Dacca in 1869.[30] The father, Kali Kanta, who was a pleader in the Dacca Court, immediateiy dispossessed

his son and started the local branch of the *Dharma Rakhini Sabha* against Brahmo reformers.[31]

The persecution of Brahmos seems to have been extreme in East Bengal. Buikunthanath Ghose, directly influenced by Bijoy in 1858 while studying at Myminsingh Government High School, has in his autobiography reported vividly on the persecution of himself and other young Brahmo recruits[32]. In December, 1869, Bijoy came to Myminsingh to open the new Brahmo mandir there and at the ceremony Ghose and other young men took the oath as Brahmos. At once, Ghose's mother threateaed suicide while his father imprisoned him at the family home in his native village.[33] Ghose managed to escape to Calcutta but when he returned he was continually harassed, beaten, his property Burned or otherwise destroyed[34]. Ghose also related an interesting experience in Tangail. After a Brahmo prayer hall was consecratd there by Bijoy, the villagers came secretly at night, desecrated the building and stole the benches. Before leaving, the villagers urinated and defecated in the prayer hall.[35] The sweeper who agreed to clean it up for the Brahmos was promptly excommunicated by the villagers and several nights afterwards his house was burned to the ground.[36]

Ghose has also related another type of common experience. East Bengal being a highly riverine country, the only way to visit some villages was by boat. boatmen were often instructed by villagers not to convey Brahmo missionaries.[37] If Brahmos managed somehow to reach

such a village the only place they could stay would be along the riverside. Many times, that living space became the village defecation ground in a effort to force the Brahmos to move on elsewhere[38].

Ananda Mohun Bose, himself from Myminsingh, in a letter to the British Brahmo patron and sympathizer, Sophia Dobson Collet, has enumerated the difficulties of becoming a Brahmo in East Bengal. His elder brother had paved the way in the family but at a cost of excommunication and for at time, poverty.[39] In Barisal, no sooner had Bijoy Krishna made an appearance there when an explosion occurred. Durga Mohun Das, a Brahmo youth fired up by the ideal of female emanciption married off his widowed step-mother to a local medical practioner. It was a love marriage.[40] What were the consequences? Sivanath Sastri, close friend of Das, has written that :

The doctor's clients deserted him and he had to give up his practice. About Durga Mohan, men threw dust at him and abused him on the streets. Dirty stories were told about his step mother. The Hindus would never hear the name of Durga Mohun uttered, but spit on the ground as a mark of their abhorence.[41]

In 1870 when Bijoy visited Myminsingh, a solemn ritual was conducted in the mandir by means of which six high caste young men removed their sacred threads and placed them on the pulpit as "a mark of public renunciation of caste.[42]" On hering about this, the Hindu forces went on a rampage and cut off all services

to Brahmo families. Not a single house servant came forward to offer himself to the Brahmo families for service.[43]

Nevertheless, the Brahmo Samaj did continue to expand and prosper in East Bengal always in the face of stern opposition by Hindu apologists. Though Calcutta continued to dominate Brahmo activities throughout the nineteenth century and beyond, Brahmo leaders themselves were increasingly from East Bengal. Besides Ananda Mohun Bose from Mymensirgh, and Durga Mohun Das from Barisal, there was Dwarkanath Ganguli from Vikrampur, Prafulla Chandra Ray from Jessore, Bipin Chandra Pal and Sitanath Tattvabhusan from Sylhet.

Being ostracized, it may be said by way of conclusion, accentuated the modernizing process among Brahmos lecause they had to become more self-sufficient. As outcastes, they were more and more compelled to settle in neighlorhoods of their own and to maintain services by themselves without servants. The *Brahmo Basha* or Brahmo neighborhood, as it was called, originally in Myminsingh, became the prototype for other such ghettos in East Bengal. In 1872, Sarat Chandra Ray pioneered a joint stock company for Myminsingh Brahmos which provided the community with commodities, profit and pride.[44] Another famous ghetto of East Bengal, Wari, in the old town of Dacca, also developed a rich institutional life which characterized the pioneering spirit of Brahmo modernism.

FOOT NOTES

1. For a monogrph on the genesis of the movement, see D. Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance.* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1969,
2. "Life of Bijoy Krishna Goswami," *Tattva-Kaumudi*, n. v. (July, 1899), 76.
3. B. C. Pal, *Saint Bijoykrishna Goswami* (Calcutta : Bipin Chandra Pal Institute, 1964), p, 15.
4. *Ibid* ; pp, 21-22.
5. Life of Bijoy Krishna Goswami," p. 76,
6. B. K. Goswami, *Brahmo Samajer Bartaman Abastha Ebong Amar Jibane Brahmo Samajer Parikkhito Bisay,* (Calcutta : Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, 1882), p. 4.
7. *Ibid* ; p, 5.
8. *Ibid* ; p. 6.
9. *Ibid :* p. 7.
10. *Ibid* ; p, 10.
11. *Ibid* ; p, 11.
12. B, C, Pal, p. 26.
13. *Ibid* ; p. 25.
14. B. K. Goswami, p. 13.
15. For a discussiou of Vaishnava influences on the Brahmo Samaj, see P. C. Mazoomdar, *The Life and Teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen* Calcutta : Baptist Mission Press, 1887), pp 132, 189-190. 224.
16. H. Sarkar, *Sargiy Braj-sundar Mitra* (Dacca : n. p. 1915) ,n. p.
17. *Ibid* ; p. 86.
18. *Ibid* ; p. 61.
19. "History of the Brahmo Samaj in Dacca," in *Yearly Theistic Records* (Dacca : New Press, 1881), p. 42.
20. S. Sastri, *History of the Brahmo Samaj* (Calcutta : R. Chatterjee. 1912). II, pp. 320-321.
21. *The Annual from the East Bengal Brahmo Mission Society, December, 1878* (Dacca : New Press, 1878), p. 8.

22. *Krishna Kumar Mitrer Atto Carit* (Calcutta: Basanti Chakrabarti, 1937), p. 52.
23. G. C. Sen. *Atto Jiban* (Calcutta: Gupta, Mukherji and Co; 1904), p. 27.
24. *Ibid;* p. 28.
25. *Ibid;* p. 29.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid;* p. 35.
28. *Ibid;* p. 28,
29. For additional information, see *Annual from East Bengal Brahmo Mission Society December 1878,* pp. 8-10.
30. S. Sastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri o Tatkalin Banga Samaj,* (2nd ed; Calcutta: New Age Publishers, Ltd; 1957), p. 278.
31. *Nabakanta Cattopadhyay,* author unknown (Calcutta: Nalinikanto Cattopadhyay, 1922), pp. 1, 3.
32. B. N. Ghose, *Amar Jiban Katha* (Calcutta: Narendranath Mukherji; 1925), pp. 2, 5.
33. *Ibid;* pp. 11. 12.
34. *Ibid;* p. 13.
35. *Ibid;* p, 22.
36. *Ibid;*
37. *Ibid;* p. 9.
38, *Ibid.*
39. H. Sarkar, *Life of Ananda Mohan Bose* (Calcutta; A. C. Sarkrr, 1910). p. 23.
40. Sastri, *History,* II, p. 367.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid;* p. 350.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid;* p. 352.

Economic History of Modern South Asia : Some Notes on Methodology

M. Mufakharul Islam.

This paper stems from my dissatisfaction with the existing state of research in the economic history of the rural areas of modern South Asia. One may legitimately argue that there are grounds for more or less similar dissatisfaction against the trends of research in other branches of economic history. But despite this, in this paper propose to concentrate on certain specific issues in the economic history of rural Bengal and this is mainly for two reasons. Firstly, I am a little more acquainted with this branch of Indian economic history. Secondly, in one short paper it will not be possible to attempt even a brief discussion of the state of research in the other branches. From a re-examination of certain problems this paper will try to argue that the method of our investigation is, in many cases, defective and our analysis is less rigorous than desirable.

For a variety of reasons there is an increasing awareness among the historians that economic history should receive greater attention. Such an awareness is not confined only to the historians. It is encouraging to

see that even the economists are beginning to take greater interest in this discipline. The interest of the economists in economic history is mainly due to the need to understand the problems of the underdeveloped countries, because it is now being increasingly realised that history provides or should provide information for processing into generalisations about growth. This interest is, in turn, stimulating a more theoretical school in economic history. As a result the last two decades has witnessed the rise of what may be called a new discipline—The New Economic History, or Cliometrics or Econometric History. As summarised by Lance Davis the characteritics of new Economic History are as follows : "First to state precisely the questions subject to examination and to define operationally the relevant variables. Second to build explicit models that are relevant to the question in hand. Third to produce evidence (frequently quantitative, but at times qualitative) of the world as it actually existed. And finally to test the model (a logical statement of assumptions and conclusions) against the evidence and the counter-factual deduction (the world that did not exist)".[1]

The New Economic History has been criticised on a number of grounds[2]. However, the most obvious limitation is that it cannot be applied in the study of the economic history of a period for which very little or no quantitative evidence are available. Even in the modern period the non-availability of sufficient statistical information may make it extremely difficult to attempt

the kind of quantification which is being suggested by the practitioners of New Economic History. For the same reason it may not be possible to raise questions of the counterfactual conditional type. However, it seems that a proper methodology for study of economic history must be based as far as possible, on a rigorous application of economic theory and a systematic and careful use of the available quantitative materials.

Now we examine two specifie problems from the economic history of rural Bengal. To begin with, let us take up a broad question : is it possible to make some idea (in quantitative terms) about the economic condition of the Bengal peasantry of a particular period ? So far as the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries are concerned, it is clear that our investigation of the problem has to be mainly on the basis of qualitative evidence. It is true that quantitative data on such issues the extent of land of the tenants, rates of rent payable to the landlords and in some cases extent of land under cultivation or even the volume of agricultural production in a particular area will be available. But these materials may be too fragmentory to enable us to draw a quantitative picture of the economic condition of the Bengal peasantry. It has been said that "thanks to the emphasis placed by the Government of India on the collection of quantitative information for policymaking, one is not at least faced with the paucity of data".[3] But so far as the 19th century is concerned it would seem that this view refers

to such areas of British India in which land revenue was not permanently settled.

However, we are or should be in a much better position when we come to the second half of the 19th century. The historians of this period can collect a huge mass of statistical materials on such topics as agricultural porduction in eveay district, distributihn of agricultural land among the different classes of families, prices of agricultural commodities, interdistrict movement of goods, rates of rent. number of agricultural and bullock-power, number of occupied houses and, of course, the volume and the occupational distribution on population. There are even many estimates on per capita income and expenditure in the rural areas. The following are the most important sources of these data : (a) agricultural statistics compiled and published by the government from the 1880's : Survey and Settlement operations in the districts and (b) Thakbust reports. The published Settlement Reports contain only a fraction of the information originally collected on the basis of field enumeration. The original materials are still maintained in the district headquarters and these run into several hundred volumes for every individual districts. The information available from the Thakbust reports refers to an earlier period i. e. 1850's.

The quantity of the available data is indeed very impressive. One can spend years working on the materials preserved in the Record Room of only one district. However, the nature of the data is such that it creates

certain problems for the historians. In some cases these problems are so serious that we need to be extremely careful in making use of these data the quality has to be checked and adjustments have to be made to make them comparable over time and space. Proper care has to be taken even in the use of the population statistics which are generally supposed to be more reliable.[5]

But before I proceed to discuss some of these problems let me raise another question : is it possible, on the basis of available data, to attempt a comparative study of the economic condition of the two major communities living in the rural areas ? So far I know in the published reports there is no community-wise break down the quantitative information except in the case of the population statistics and, in some cases, its occupational distribution. Despite this basic problem. Dr. (Mrs.) Sufia Ahmed has made an attempt at a comparative study of the economic condition of the Muslims living in both the rural and urban areas.[6] On the basis of certain quantitative and qualitative evidence Mrs. Ahmed has come to the conclusion that "the Muslims were not really so very prosperous yet it is evident that though they were generally in debt their position was fairly comfortable".[7] One may legitimately argue that such a statement does not really give us any clear idea about nature of the problem under investigation. But here we are concerned with a different aspect of the problem. As already mentioned, in the published reports there is no community-wise break down of the

data. But Mrs. Ahmed thinks that quantitative evidence cited by her reflect the economic condition of the Muslim peasantry. Thus, it seems that while trying to describe the economic conditions of the Muslims the author is, in fact, describing the condition of both the Hindu and Muslim peasantry. The author often mentions that in the eastern Bengal districts the Muslims constituted the majority of the agricultural population. Here the implicit assumption is that since the Muslims were in the majority, her evidence speaks more about the Muslims and less about the Hindus, in thn peasant community. The validity of such an assumption is very doubtful.

There still remains one problem even if it is conceded that the author's assumption is valid. This is beeause the author uses an evidence which contradicts her own conclusion that the econmic condition of Muslim peasantry was "fairly comfortable". As a "typical example" the author considers the material condition of the people in Faridpur district as revealed in Jack's study. This study shows that families living in "comfort" formed about 49 p. c. of the agricultural population. Among the rest, 28 p. c. lived in a condition "below comfort", $18\frac{1}{2}$ p. c. lived in "straightened circumstances" and another $4\frac{1}{2}$ p. c. lived in grim poverty. In other words, if the whole population is divided into two broad groups it may be said that 49 p. c. lived in comfort and 51 p. c. did not live in comfort. Thus, if it is shown that in a "typical" district the majority were not living in a comfortable condition we should not perhaps con-

clude that the condition of the Muslim peasantry was "fairly comfortable".

Now we come back to the original question. It is indeed possible to write a history of the Bengal peasantry on the basis of the data mentioned earlier. However, the historians must be quite careful in using the available materials. As I see it, the first question the historians should ask themselves is whether the available quantitative (as also qualitative) materials are reliable. It is readily admitted that population figures and the data on cropped area are fairly reliable. But one has serious doubt about the quality of the figures on agricultural production published in the Settlement Reports and other departmental reports[8]). Since agricultural production is the most important source of income the reliabilty of the estimated volume of crop-output is of the greatest significance, we should consider whether the figures are comparable over time and space. Our failure to take into account any of these points may be a serious obstacle in the way of arriving at a reliable conclusion.

We have already referred to Mrs. Ahmed's exercise on the economic conditions of Bengal peasantry. Let us take one example from this work to show how our failure in taking proper care in the use of quantitative evidence can produce a misleading conclusion. The author cites quantitative evidence from the royal Commission on Industrialisation according to which the average income of the cultivating families in the Dacca

Division was Tk. 269/—or just under Tk. 34/—per capita . The avarage size of the agricultural holding was 9 acres, it produced 9400 Ibs of rice or 1050 Ibs per acre. 0·76 acres was under the cultivation of jute and this yielded an income of Tk. 72/—. A number of questions may be raised about . the quality of the statistics used in this evidence and the method of estimating the average income. However, since a historian is never expected to scrutinise every element in an evidence let us touch upon only three aspects. Data available from different sources show that per acre yield of rice was much lower than mentioned in this evidence. On the other hand, the area under jute cultivation was much higher[10]. Secondly, in this evidence the average income is estimated after deducting 4400 Ibs of rice which is retained for domestic consumption,, but this is a defective procedure. Thirdly, no estimate is made of the income from secondary crops raised by the cultivators. Apparently, the author is not at all concerned about these questions. She takes the evidence at its face value.

Unlike other social scientists historian is concerned with both the analysis and collection of primary information. Thus, proper scrutiny of the accuracy and quality of the available data forms a large part of the historians' training. Indeed an accurate reconstruction of the historical events and their causal explanation depend on the thoroughness with which this part of the research programme is carried out. But there is

no indication that the author scrutinised the nature of the data used by her.

There is another aspect of the problem and this relates to the question of the comparability of the data over a space. The author estimates the average income of a cultivating family in the Dacca Division on the basis of only one evidence of doubtful quality. But she does not stop here; she claims that this figure on average income was representative of the economic condition of the cultivators in the Eastern Bengal districts[11]. The author makes this assumption in spite of the fact that conditions in other districts of Eastern Beugal are so dissimilar[12]. But the author proceeds still further. She thinks that the material condition of only the Faridpur district is also representative of the material condition of the peasantry in Eastern Bengal. It is admitted that from her own point of view this wi. be a valid assumption if it is shown that the per capita income in this district is more or less the same as in Dacca Division. But the author creates her own problem, because on the basis of Jack's study she shows that per capita income in Faridpur district was Tk. 51/—or Tk. 980/—per cultivating family. We have already shown that per capita income in Dacca Division is estimated at Tk. 34/—. Thus, clearly there is a significant difference between these two estimates and, therefore, both of them cannot be representative of the whole of Eastern Bengal. The difference between the per capita income in Dacca Division and Faridpur dis-

trict could be due to a numbar of causes. Three of these can be readily pointed out. Firstly, there can be difference in the quality of the two sets of the figures. Secondly, the method of estimation of per capita income is different. Thirdly, whereas the evidence cited by the Industrial Commission refers to 1916/18, Jack's study refers to the years from 1905 to 1911. These show that the two estimates are not comparable over space or time. Mrs. Ahmed safely ignores these problems and arrives at a conclusion which is not only of doubtful quality but also self-contradictory.

It is not being argued here that Mrs. Ahmed is the only historian who has made such an half-hearted use of quantitative evidence-one can cite similar instances from the works of many other historians. As a matter of fact the approach of all the traditional historians is more or less the same[13]. In their view qualitative analysis is the primary and distinctive feature of economic history. Therefore, we need not attempt systematic quantitative analysis—it is sufficient to cite one or two quantitative evidence only for the purpose of illustration. But as our discussion has shown, such a methodology is utterly defective.

The second problem examined in this paper is with regard to the problem of rural indebtedness. On the basis of certain estimates of the volume of indebtedness in India at different points of time it has been argued that indebtedness was increasing so much that it may

be said that it was assuming "monstrous proportions" and causing impoverisation in the agricultural sector[14]. One could make a similar generalisation about rural indebtedness in Bengal on the basis of three estimates made in 1929, 1933 and, 1945. The argument may be like this : whereas according to the Banking Enquiry Committee of 1929 total indebtedness amounted to Tk. 100 crores[15], in 1933 Prof. Mahalonobis estimated that it amounted to Tk. 97 crores[16]. However, since the latter estimate did not include the volume of accumulated interest, the actual volume of indebtedness must have been higher than Tk. 100 crores. Then again, aceording to the Ishaque Report of 1945 total indebtedness amounted to Tk. 150 crores[17].

These three estimates on the volume of indebtedness are not strictly comparable with regard to the method of estimation and the classes of families included in the Surveys. However, since strict comparability can be expected, let us proceed with our investigation on the basis of these three estimates. The defect arising out of the lack of strict comparability may affect the estimated increase (in money terms) in the volume of indebtedness, but not the underlying trend.

But can we really argue that increase in the volume of indebtedness necessarily meant that the problem of indebtedness was getting more acute over time ? I would suggest that these three estimates do not by themselves throw any light on this question. We can argue that the problem of indebtedness was (in money-terms) more

acute, say, in 1945 than in 1929 only if and when we can show that per capita indebtedness as a proportion of per capita income of the rural people increased. Thus, to be able to arrive at a meaningful conclusion on the problem we need to estimate the volume or values of three variables at two points of time: (a) total volume of indebtedness (b) population for which indebtedness is estimated and (c) the total income of the people.

If we take all these three aspects into consideration it becomes difficult to believe that the problem of indebtedness became really more acute. On the other hand, it would seem that the burden was lower in 1945 than in 1929. Thus, though the volume of indebtedness may be said to have increased by 50 p.c from 1929 to 1945 as against a 15 to 20 p.c growth of population, the total agricultural income was at least 100 p.c higher in 1945 than in 1929. The increase in agricultural income was made possible by the fact that though the volume of crop-output remained more or less constant, there was a sharp increase in the price level. It has, however, to be pointed out that problem of indebtedness was more acute in 1933 than in 1929. This was due to the fact that though the volume of agricultural production in 1933 remained at about the same level, there was a sharp fall in the price level during the Depression years.

The problem will be a little more complicated if we are to make some idea about the acuteness of in-

debtedness in real terms. This is because in such a case we need to take into consideration, along with the variables already mentioned above, the trends in the cost of living of the indebted cultivators. In other words, estimated per capita income in 1945 needs to be deflated or corrected by an index of the cost of the cost of living.

From the foregoing discussion it should be clear that the problem of the acuteness of indebtedness is more complex than usually appreciated by the traditional historians. Since acuteness of the problem is a function not only of the volume of indebtedness but also of the trends in per capita income and cost of living it would follow that sometimes the problem of indebtedness may became more acute even though there is a reduction in its volume or vice versa. I am not in a position to make a guess about the underlying trend in Bengal. All that I am trying to suggest is that if we are to arrive at a meaningful conclusion about the relative acuteness of rural indebtedness at different points of time we must attempt a more rigorous analysis of the problem.

As pointed out earlier quantitative analysis of the type suggested by the New Economic Historians may not always be possible either for the lack of sufficient data or proper training of the researcher. But at least we should attempt a systematic, not random, use of the available quintitative data on a particuler problem. Secondly the data should be carefully used so that the concl-

usion which is drawn is coherrent and meaningful. The second issue examined in this paper has shown that proper care should be taken to identify the variables with which the phenomenon under investigation has functional relationship. Our failure in taking into account all the relevant variables may produce a wrong judgement on a particular problem. I have examined only two aspects of the traditional economic history. But these clearly focus the need for change in the traditional approach. Treatment of the problems of economic history should cease to be literary in character-the investigation should be more rigorous and analytical, and based on a more careful and systematic use of the available materials, both quantitative or qualitative.

FOOT NOTES

1. Lance Davis.; Professor "Fogel and the New Economic History". *The Economic History Review* 2nd Series. X1X.
2. *Ibid.* See also M. Desai, "Some Issues in Econometric History". *The Economic History Review-* 2nd Series, XXI.
3. Dr. K.N. Chaudhury. "Quantitative Methods and the Use of Computer Techniques in Historical Analysis", *Bulletin of Quantitative and Computer Methods in south Asian Studies.* Vol. 1. No. 1.
4. Some idea about the data available from the Settlement and Thakbust Reports may be made from Shapan Adnan. *A Tentative Approach to the Study of Village History in Bangladesh* (*Abstract*). working paper No. 5 of the Instituue of Development Studies (Dacca). See also, J.

R. Hagen & A. A. Yang. "Local Sources for the Study of Rural India : The Village Notes of Bihar." *Indian Economic and Social History Review.* Vol. XII (No 1).

5. On the basis of the data available from the Census Reports of 1921 and 1931 it has been shown (See, A. R. Desai. *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (Bombay, 1965), p. 64, *Report of the Land Revenue Commission* (Calcutta, 1940 p. 37) that while the number of receivers and agricultural labourers in Bengal increased by respectively 62 and 50 p. c from 1931 the number of cultivating owners declined by 35 p. c. But even a casual look at the Census Report *Census of India. 1931. Vol. V. Bengal and Sikkim. part 1.* (Calcutta, 1933), pp. 260-261 will make it clear that a substantial part of these changes was due to the changes in the method of classification.
6. Sufia Ahmed. *Muslim Community in Bengal. 1884-1912* (Dacca, 1974) chapter 11.
7. *Ibid*, P. 114.
8. The quality of crop Statistics of Bengal is examined by M. M. Islam, *Agricultral Development of Bengal. 1920-* (unpublished Ph. D. Thesis,, University of London. 1972) chapter 1.
9. Sufia Ahmed, *op. cit.*, P. 114. As argued earlier, though Mrs. Ahmed uses these data to describe the economic conditions of the Muslim peasntry, she is really describing the economic conditions of both Hindu and Muslim peasantry.
10 see M. M. Islam, *op cit*, chapter one.
11. *Ibid.* p. 115.
12. According to the estimates made in the Reports on Survey and Settlement Operations per capita income of the agricultural population was TK. 53/—in Mymensingh, TK. 53/—in Dacca and TK. 39/—in Barisal.

13. In defense of Mrs. Ahmed it should also be mentioned that the lack of the proper scrutiny of the available mateials becomes unavoidable in a work the subject matter of which is very wide. For examples traditional approach to economie history, see, N. K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal* Vol. II (Calcutta, 1962); R. C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India in The Victoairn Age* (London, I903)
14. Desai. *op. cit.* p. 60 and P. 71.
15. *Bengal provincial Banking Enquiry Committee* (Calcutta, 1930), Vol. I.
16. Prof. P. C. Mohalonobis, "Preliminary Report of the Board of Economic Enquiry on Rural Indebtedness" *Supplement to the Calcutta Gazette.* 24th January 1935.
17. Govt. of Bengal, *Agricultural Statistics by Plot to Plot Enumeral in Bengal* (Calcutta. 1946) Part I, P, 55.

Economic Considerations behind W. W. Hunter's Literary Works.

Md. Delwar Hussain

The Indian civilians were often described as 'alien free-booters longing to return home shouldering their bags of riches',[1] and such aspirations also worked in W.W. Hunter's case, particularly in the undertaking of his literary works. On an inquiry it is found almost all of his publications had been conceived, planned and executed always keeping in view the prospect of financial gains, and to that effect he employed his time and talents. His too much care to open new financial opportunities for himself made him thoroughly unpopular among many of his colleagues who regarded him 'as a very self-seeking and untrustworthy kind of gentleman[2]'. Even Lord Dufferin opined, 'Hunter has many faults and is positively hated, principally, I believe, on account of his unblushing meanness in monetary matters'.[3]

Hunter's craving for money had its origin in his ambition and the pecuniary circumstances of his family. His father Andrew Hunter was an unsuccessful chemist, and the necessity for supplementing the family income

required Hunter to start to earn a living. In his quest for a profession he prefered, like so many other bright boys of the time, an Indian career, and entered into the Indian Civil service in 1862 as the first man of his year through a competitive examination[4]. But his initial salary was hardly sufficient for his family's needs, and he was eager to supplement his income. Besides, he was a 'born ambitious'. He determined to enter the 'circle of power' in India by hard work and patient frugality[5].

Accordingly, before starting for India, Hunter planned to stay with James Gibb, his uncle by marriage, and to save most of his pay. But the plan was upset by Gibb's return to England through ill health. This unforeseen contingency, however, did not dishearten Hunter. He rather resolved 'to work the harder in order to make more money' and make a great figure in India'.[6] Anglo-Indian journalism and the existence of untapped district records gave him the opportunity to attain these objectives.

Hunter first turned to journalism to augment his meagre income. In 1865 he secured a membership of the literary staff of *the Englishman* and was able to add Rs. 250 to his monthly income. 'I agree to your terms,' wrote the proprietor of *the Englishman*, 'and will pay you Rs. 250 a month for three articles a week'[7]. He also made contacts with other Indian journals and regularly contributed articles on commerce, legislation, currency, military and social events. Later

on he purchased a quarter share of the *Englishman* and gained a substantial increase to his income.

Hunter, simultaneously with hise fforts in journalism, also concentrated his energy on other publications. Here his primary aim was to write a book in a attractive style in order to make it a monetary success. 'I am not one of those who are careful only about the matter of history'-he wrote[8]. 'Such may be great *chroniclers* or searching logicians, but they are seldom standard writers. For I shall be anxious to make my books pay something into our little domestic exchequer, and if a book is to be remunerative it must be written in an attractive style[9]', he continued. This motive is everywhere apparent in his literary works.

Therefore, Hunter's first publication, *the Annals*, brought for him, apart from literary fame, great economic success. This work, in its contents and style, differred largely from the earlier publications on Indian subjects in which political and dynastic changes were followed in minute detail but their effect upon the people of India was seldom noticed. *The Annals*, he claimed. 'taps unexplored material, and gives a new interpretation to Indian history[11]'. *The Westminster Review* considered 'it as one of the most important, as well as most interesting works which the records of Indian literature can show. It abounds in information which has never before been presented to the public, and its merits, from a purely literary point of view are not less striking than its other qualities[12]'. Hunter's next publication (Nov. 1869), *A Comparative Dict-*

ionary of the Languages of India and High Asia with a Dissertation which he termed as 'an imperial present from England to the scholars of the whole world[13]', was also heartilly accepted by the reading public. These publications also placed him at once in a prominent rank among the giants of Victorian literature and earned for him a honorary Doctorate Degree from his home University (Glasgow). A membership of the Royal Ethnological Society of Great Britain and Ireland also came by the way.

Of the financial gains, we observe, Hunter received, in addition to the sale proceeds of his works, the liberal patronage of the government. *The Annals* and the *Comparative Dictionary*, according to his own estimation, had involved him 'an outlay of between one and two thousand pounds[14]' whereas he was given even more than that in the shape of patronage. Bengal government contributed about hundred pounds 'for certain specified expenses' relating to this publication[15]. Sir John Lawrence, the Viceroy appreciated the works and recommended Hunter to the secretary of State for a grant of two thousand pounds for his distinguished services to cause of the empire[16]. In addition, government purchased 190 copies out of the total of the 675 copies of the first edition of the *Annals*[17].

Besides, Hunter's successful publications also opened before him future opportunities for financial gains. He now became an well-established author. His name became known to all and sundry, and his progress towards the

'Circle of Power' became rapid. From Bengal Secretariat he was passed over to that of the government of India and was appointed as officiating under-secretary in the home department. Very soon Lord Mayo, the Viceroy, deputed him to devise and superintendent a scheme for collecting and publishing on a uniform plan the statistical accounts of the several provinces of British India, to be afterwards condensed into an Imperial Gazetteer.

This plan of compiling an Imperial Gazetteer was perhaps the most gigantic literary enterprise that had been ever taken by the Indian government. It occupied twelve years (1969-81) of Hunter's life. In his capacity as the Director General of Statistics his first duty was to travel over the whole of India, so as to put himself into communication with the local officials, and to see things with his own eyes. These tours, often repeated, gave him an acquaintance with every corner of the peninsula such as few others could boast. Not only that, these wanderings also provided Hunter with the golden opportunity of amassing materials by exploring all the probable sources of Indian history. Materials thus collected were profitably used by him throughout his career.

While thus engaged in the compilation of the Gazettere, Hunter published on government account *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, 20 Volumes (1875-77); *A Statistical Account of Assam*, 2 volumes (1879); and *the Imperial Gazetteer*, 9 volumes (1881). The Gazetteer was expanded later into fourteen volumes in 1887. For these volumes, it has already been mentioned, he

was on deputation, used to draw special allowances, and was privileged to spend long period in England for greater convenience of his undertaking. But he was not satisfied with these only. He wanted more and could find time for other literary work 'for his own honour and profit' by utilising the apparatus which he evolved for the Gazetteer.

Of Hunter's publications during this period (1869-82) mention may be made of the following: *The Indian Musalmans*; *Are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen?* (1871); *Orissa, being the second and third volume of the Annals of Rural Bengal* (1873); *Wyllie's Essays on the External Policy of India* (edited, 1874); A *Life of the Earl of Mayo. Fourth Viceroy of India* (1875); *England's work in India* (1881); and *the Indian Empire: its people, history and products* (1882).

These works, no doubt, brought for their author enough financial gains. But they also 'excited comment and not a little jealousy among Mr. Hunter's colleagues[18]'. They were of the opinion 'that no money has been so uselessly spent as that already thrown away on Hunter and his Gazetter' and regarded him as doing private business at government's cost[19]. Such a sentiment had been amply demonstrated in the controversy that arose over the copy-right of Hunter's *Indian Empire: its people, history and products.* In this work he took steps to have the Imperial Gazetteer condensed into one volume and to incorporate into it the

results of 1881 census. He also advertised the work to be sold for his own profit, and a London publisher agreed to take it for £ 1,000. But the Secretary of State for India objected to such a publication and maintained that 'Government copyright in the Gazetteer cannot be infringed by such publications as the Indian Empire, or by unauthorised abridgments. The work of making an abridgment was one of the duties proposed by this Government for Mr Hunter'[20]. The Viceroy also regretted 'very much that Mr. Hunter should have acted in this manner' and entirely concurred with the Secretary of State 'that the preparation of such a work ought to form a part of Mr. Hunter's official duty'[21].

Hunter, however, contended that the proposed work was but a reprint of the article 'India' in the Imperal Gazetteer. Again, 'India' was merely a reproduction of his other articles, published before in other shapes. Therefore he now urged to have a right to reproduce it in a new shape, He further maintained that the article 'India' for the Gazetteer was entirely a late after thought, and he had no time to write an original article for it[22]. To this view government retorted very severely. 'This is, I must say, a startling statement. That a Gazetteer of India should appear without an article on India, which by the way only the Editor-in-chief could write, never occurred to any one but Mr. Hunter: and if he had no time for this otherwise, he should have made time in the years he was engaged on the Gazetteer by foregoing the other liter-

Governor General in Council may deem suitable' with a view to recouping him for the cost he had already incurred in preparing the work[28]. Government dealt liberally with him and 'under all the circumstances, however, His Excellency in Council' sanctioned the payment to him of a sum of Rs. 3,000 on account of the work already done, and requested him to complete the work at an early date as a part of his official duty[29]. Hunter completed it and the work was published in London in 1882.

Hunter, undeterred, continued to write to the last day of his career (he died on 7 February 1900) 'in an attractive style' to make his books 'remunerative' so that they could 'pay' something to his 'exchequer'. Government also recognised 'the natural bent of his genius' that fitted him most for literary pursuits and liberally patronised him[30]. His subsequent publications *the old Missionary* (1890), *the Marquess of Dalhousie* (1890), *Earl of Mayo* (1891), *Bombay*, 1885 *to* 1890, A *Study in Indin* Administration (1892), *Bengal Ms, Records with an Historical Dissertation on Land Tenure in Bengal* (1894), *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson, British Resident at the Court of Nepal* (1896), *Thackarays in India and some Calcutta Graves* (1897), *The History of British India*, 2 volumes (1899) and 1900), together with those mentioned earlier constitute a permanent monument of his inexhaustible energy and innate genius on the one hand, on the other, they brought affluence to his family and enabled him

to leave an asset worthy of thirty four thousand two hundred and ninety eight pounds[31].

Therefore, Hunter, who produced 'genuine works of philosophic history which have stood the test of time[32]', whose *Annals of Rural Bengal* are still an 'evidence of careful research, clear intelligence, reflective power, and artisticskill[33], and whose 'Domesday Book of Bengal' (Statistical Account of Bengal) that made 'the dry bones of Statistics live[34]', is inseparable from Hunter the needy (and greedy too) man to whom these publications provided an opportunity of making fortune.

FOOT NOTES

1. Kopf. D. : *British Orientalism and Bengal Renaissance*, California, 1969, P. 15.
2. India office Library : Mss. Eur. F. 130/5.
3. India office Library : Mss. Eur. F. 130/8 (a)
4. India office Library : Mss. Eur. E. 243/21.
5. Hunter's Letter to Miss. Murray, dated, 20 March, 1862, Quoted by F. H. Skrine in his *Life of W. W. Hunter*, London. I901, P. 44.
6. Hunter's Leetter to Miss Murray, : 9 November 1865, Quoted by Skrine, P. 57.
7. Letter of Mr. J. O. B, Saunders, proprietor of *the Englishman* to Hunter, dated, 27 January 1865. Quoted by Skrine, P. 104.
8. Hunter's Letter to Miss Murray, dated 6 July I863. Quoted by Skrine, P. 89.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Hunter, W. W. *Annals of Rural Bengal*, vol. 1, London. 1868.

11. Hunter's letter to the publisher, March 1868. Quoted by Skrine, p. 130.
12. 'The Character of British Rule in India, *Westminiser Review*. 1 July 1863, vol. 90, P. 21 (Foot-note).
13. Letter to Sir E. Perry from Hunter, dated 5 July 1868, Quoted by Skrine, p. 147.
14. *Ibid*
15. *Ibid*
16. Hunter's letter to his mother. 19 January 1869, Quoted by Skrine, PP. 158-59 (the grant had been sanctioned by the Duke of Argyll, the Secretary of state for India, Letter to the Viceroy, 4 March 1869).
17. Hunter's letter to the publisher, March 1868, Quoted by Skrine, P. 130.
18. Obituary notice. 'Sir William Wilson Hunter, *JRAS* (1900). p. 395.
19. India Office Library, Mss. Eur. 218/2/3, Letter no. 1514.
20. Ripon papers, Add. Mss. 43577. f. 8 (British Museum)
21. Indian Office Records, L/P&J/3/80, f. 5.
22. Ripon Papers, Add. Mss. 43577, f. 8 (B.M.)
23. *Ibid.*
24. India Office, L/P & J/3/80, f. 456.
25. *Ibid.* f. 463.
26. *Ibid* f. 461.
27. *Ibid* f. 465.
28. *Ibid* f. 456.
29. *Ibid* f. 465.
30. India office Library, Mss. F. 130/5. No. 115.
31. Will of Willim Willson Hunter (His Will Was proved on 24 April 1900, Somerset House. London).
32. Philips, C. H. (ed.) : *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*. London, 1961, P. 392.
33. *Westminister Review*, vol. 90, 1868, P. 242.
34. *The Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 6, 1879.

Chakma Resistance to Early British Rule

Ratan lal Chakraborty

The battle of plassey and the battle of Boxar were the imperial wars befween the East India Company and the Mughal authority, which in turn gave the Company a legal status in Bengal. But, to Consolidate their power in rural Bengal, the Company had to face resistance from the local Chiefs, *Rajas* and people. Although, many of these resistance movements sprung up owing to the opressions of the Company's locoal agents, yet the Company's revenue policy and their support to the local agents were also responsible for them. Like Fakir-Sannyasi movement (1760—1800)[1], and Shamsher Gazi's revolt (1767—68)[2], the Chakma rising may also be Considered as an early resistance to the Company's rule in Chittagong region. The topography of the Chittagong Hill Tracts had helped the Chakmas to launch guerrilla warfare against the well—armed Company's army. Attempts have been made in this paper to analyse the causes and nature of the Chakma resistance. In order to form a comprehensive idea about the causes, it may be worthwhile to briefly discuss the pattern of the livelihood of the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Without entering into an anthropological discourse about the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts, it can safely be said that they were Chakmas in tribe and were the early Arakanese settlers in that area. These people employed quasi Muhammadon nomenclatures. They fancied to keep their names after the ruling Mughals.[3] The principal leaders of the Chakmas, who fought against the Company, were Sher Daulat Khan, Jan Baksh Khan and Ranu Khan. Sher Daulat Khan was the son of Sher Daulat Khan.[4] But the identiy of Ranu Khan[5] and his connection with the hill Chiefs raises some coufusion. It is found in the Chittagong District Record, available at the Bangladesh Secretariat Record Room, that Ranu Khan was the *naib* of Sukdeo Roy of *pargona* Rajenagar of *chakla* Rangunia in the province of Islamabad.[6] Captain T. H. Lewin and Satish Chandra Ghosh, the two authoritative writers on Hill Chittagong, are at one on the point that Ranu Khan was a relation of Sher Daulat Khan.[7] Peirre Bassaignet has described Ranu Khan as the brother—in—law (Sister's husband) of Jan Baksh Khan.[8] But he did not mention the sources where from he got this information. Most probably Ranu Khan was a relation of Sher Daulat Khna who served as his principal Diwan and general. After the death of Sher Daulat Khan in 1782 A. D. Jan Baksh Khan succeeeded him and Ranu became his Chief *naib*.

As regards to their early connection with the Mughals, it appears that Jalal Khan, the Chief of the indepe-

ndent Chakma tribe, obtained a permission from the Emperor Farrukhsiyar in 1713 A. D. to trade with the people of the plains in articles like dried fish, hens, salt, molasses, tobacoo, black cloth etc, which would not be produced in the hills, on voluntary payment of a tribute in cotton.[9] But this tribute was very irregularly paid and ultimately Jalal Khan violated his agreement and in Consequence of an inevitable attack By the Mughals Jalal khan fled to Arakan. This agreement was again renewed by Shermast Khan, another Chief from Arakan, who agreed to pay the tribute and in return he received a grant of waste land in Chittagong for which separate revenue was to be paid.[10] From that time onward the hill people, through local stewards, paid only a nominal tribute in cotton to the Mughal authority out of their total production in the sterile and hilly lands. Like the primitive system of cultivation as the *Coomry* of south India, the *Chena* of Ceylon, the *Tong—gyan* of Burma and the *Gainges* of Philippine Islands, the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts cultivated their lands under the system of *Joom*. About *joom* cultivation Alexander Mackenzie describes : "A village settlers down in formidable site, and yearly, in the month of April, each family proceeds to fell the jungle and clear enough ground for purpose of tillage. The timber and bamboos so cut down are fired in May, and thereafter on the first token of the approaching rains, holes are dibbled in the ground, into which five or six kinds of seeds are thrown togather—cotton,

rice, maize, pumpkin or what not, calculated the nature in regular ripening, the whole village bivoucks on the *jooms* to protect them from bast and bird. Two years later such cultivation exhausts the soil, and when all the good land round a village has ben worked out, the people move in masse to another site".[11] So, under this system of cultivation neither the *joomeas*, who would cultivate lands under the system of *joom*, had permanent right on the soil, nor could they find any practical means to pay any fixed rate of revenue to the authority. Before the Company's rule in Chittagong, tribute paid by the tribal Chiefs to the Mughal authority was originally realised in kind through *roajas* or headmen and the amount of tribute was uncertain and irregularly paid.[12]

In I772 A. D. the *kapas mehal* of Chittagong Hill Tracts become an item of the Company's revenue. Attempts at collecting revenue from *Kapasmehal* had been made by the Company in the shape of a tax revied "on Cotton brought down from the hills, which was farmed out to some second party"[13]. These farmers of the Companys would contract with the tribal Chiefs for the delivery of definite amount of Cotton annually. Ranu Khan, who later revolted against these farmers, was the contractor of the Company's farmer who had agreed to pay 50I maunds of Cotton to the Coumpny annually.[14]

But strained relations developed lhrough the Company's attempt of making settlemen twih some individuals

other than the tribal people for collecting cotton revenue ; and especially the Company's attempt to lease-out lands in hilly areas to men not connected with the tribal rulers. Alexander Mackenzie pointed out that the *Kapas mehal* "was farmed out yearly to some speculators. who contracted to realize the tribute, and enjoyed a monopoly of the stapple in which it was paid".[15] These lease—holders, through several techniques of their own, collected cotton from the hill people. In this collecteoin the amount of cotton was several times greater than the tribute they usually paid to the Company. The farmers deposited the fixed amount of cotton and they themselves appropriated the remainder. They earned huge profit by selling the cotton, thus appropriated, which indirectly helped the speculator to the plains. Again, the Company's authority made contract with another party with a view to converting the cotton—revenue into money and in this contract the amount of money was fixed. These contractors used to sell that amount of cotton which was enough to pay the stipulated amount fixed by the Company, and from the residual of cotton they made huge profit through speculation.[16] Thus hill people had to face bi-fold exploitation—one in the from of revenue collection, and the other in the form of speculation. The introduction of a intermediary class, the lease--holders, in the Company's arrangement with the hill chiefs meant the exclusion of the hill people. This arrangement gave way for direct and indirect exploitation. In consequence

of this, the economic life of the hill people was jeapardised and they lost incentive for cotton cultivation from which most of the hill people monaed to eke out there livelihood. The inequalities and weakness in the mode of taxation was earlier recognised by the Mughal authority. But as a result of the oppression of the new intermediary class and the speculators, the traditonal system of paying by the hill people become obsolate. On the the other hand, the tribute as cotton, which was produced by *Joom* cultivtion was not proporationtely fixed, and the lease holders could, in the name of revenue, snatch away almost the entire amount of cotton from the hill people. the cotton, which remained with the hill people even after such exploiation, came to be sold in the markets of the plains of Chittagong. But by the sale process of cotton, the hill people could hardly afford to collect the bare necessities of their life. Because, here also the speculators had extended their clutches of exploitation through monopoly business. As monopolists, they could control the price and kept it at the lowest possible level. They, throngh market mechanisms, compelled the hillmen to sell their cotton at a nominal price. Moreover, the hill people used to barter their cotton for other products. They were habituated in exchanging cotton for an equal amount of other commodities. But it was found that the merchants, who dealt in cotton, also avialed themselves of this opportunity to exploit the hill people. They managed to exchange a maund of salt, worth Taka 2, for a maund of cotton, worth

Taka 6.[18] The hill pedople were left with a small amount of cotton after the exploitation of the company's agents, and they could hardly procure their necessities by selling or bartering that amount .

Diverse exploition and the resultant extreme hardship ultimately generated discontent among the tribal people . Though, this system of revenue collection from the hill track continued to operate for nearly four years, but it seemed that the tribal people were not ready to carry on this system any more.

The oppressions and extortions of the company's people produced intense dissatisfaction among the tribal people. Under the leadraship of Sher Daulat Khan, Jan Baksh Khan and Ranu Khan resisted the Company's rule in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Their resistance began when 1776 A. D. Sher Daulat Khan denied the Company's authortiy and withheld payment of revenues of his Zamindari at Rangunia.[19] His Lieutenant Ranu Khan had organised resistance adopting guerrilla tactics. We get information about the nature of Ranu Khan's resistance from the report Mr. Law, the Collector of Chittagong. He reported that Ranu Khan and his people made constant attacks on the landholders and farmers of the plains and in consequnece the Company's revenue collection was delayed and sometimes the Company incurred a loss.[20] But Mr. Law recorded that fact that the Company's farmer were complaining against the hill people finding their interest from revenue collection declining. Mr. Law also reported that Ranu Khan did not

recognise the authority of the company. It was, indeed, too much for the company. To safegurd the company's honour and prestige, it was felt to be politic to resist the attempts of the hill leaders.[21]

The resistance activities of the chakmas were both offensive and defensive. Through guerilla tactics they had, for some time, resisted the company's rule and by launching sporadic raids in the plains they tried to fade out the former's influence and to estabish the supremacy of their own tribe. It was reported by the sundry zamindars that Ranu Khan made it a practice of sending his *palwans* or armed men who seized and confined their people and extorted money from them.[22] Ranu Khan's people used to come down from the hills with different kinds of arms on the plains with a view to collect their daily necessities of life in the manner of raids. Sometimes they forcibiy carried away the cattles. The party of Ranu Khan did not allow the people of the plain land to bring their cattle for pasture into their areas. If anybody dared to disobey his restrictive orders, a fine was wrested from him on that account. In a complaint to the collector of Chittagong, the sundry zamindars informed that "they (the chakmas) have erected *Neeshauns* on the former *Jummabundy* land whose situation is adjacent to the side of the mountains and will not permit the *Reiotts* to bring the same into cultivation requiring of the *Reiotts* to take *Pottahs* from them and to pay revenue to them."[23] The hill people demanded grain from the *Taluqdars* of Islamabad

and if their demand was not fulfilled, they would try to ransack their godowns. They would not allow anybody to collect bamboos, grass, rattans, firewood or any other article from the hill and if they would ever give permission, a duty would be exacted there on. [24] The zamindars complained that Ranu Khan had instructed the Chakmas to seize and layhold of their *taluqdars* and *Chaudhuries* and exact *nazar* and *sheedhas* from them. Furthermore, the hill people took away the people of the plains forcing them to repair their Khamar or field and houses. At the instance of Ranu Khan, "each *pulwaun* so despatched extorts a diurnal allowance as *Rozeenah* from each *Assamie* of one Rupee".[25] It was alleged by the zamindars that the hill people had established a jurisdiction of their own court of justice and inflict punishment in the cases of the company's jurisdiction. Even sometimes it was complained that *ryots* of the Company's territory got shelter in the hills of Jan Baksh Khan if they committed crime. [26] It seemed that the hill people, in their resistance to the British rule, had adopted more offensive method than defensive. Probably, it would serve their twofold purpose—one in preventing the Company's farmers from the evil practices and the other in getting the hillmen their daily necessities.

With a view to take Ranu Khan into custody, collector Law sent a party of *sepoys* on April 1777 A. D., but the expedition failed.[27] It was because Ranu Khan had no fixed place of residence, adopting

guerrila method he used to hide himself in safe place, whenever necessary, and attacked when he got chance. Fifty *sepoys* were again sent against Ranu Khan, who burnt two or three hillocks and villages. In response to this challange. Ranu Khan had "assembled men of large bodies, who though ill armed, harrssed the few *sepoys* in the expedition".[28] It seemed that in the early phase of the Chakma rising, their power of resistance was so strong that the Company's authority was hardly felt there. To arrest Ranu Khan's growing strength, Captain Ellerker, the Commanding officer at Chittegong, sent a reinforcement of one hundred and fifteen newly employed *sepoys* against him. But they were eventually opposed by the large body of Kukies, who were assembled by Ranu Khan and "who live far in the (.. w. e.) parts of the hills, who have not the use of fire Arms, and whose bodies go uncloathed".[29] The Collector of Chittagong, finding their attempts at subduing the hill people fruitless, anticipated that a new method, if steadfastly persued, might bring the hill people to a due obedience to the Company's Govrnment. The method was to raise a blockade against the supply of salt and other Commodities into the hills. To make this effort a success the Collector proposed, "to enforce, by every Act of vigour on the offenders, by punishing those familys (sic) which furnish the supply and depriving the *Chaudhuries* or zamindars of their lands who Conceive at such practices'.[30] In the following year Collector Law submitted a detailed plan

against the hill people for excluding them from all sorts of communication with the plains. But it seemed that this plan was revised by the calcutta authority, who in 1784 A. D, ordered Mr. James Irwin the collector of Chittagong, to express his opinion "whether by lenient measures, the inhabitants of the hills might not be induced to become peaceable subjects and cultivators of the lands".[31]

The Company's attitude of conciliating the hill people was based on their commercial consideration, first, cotton was abundantly sown by the hill people, and to help the weaving production of Dacca factory the *Kapas mahal* had received special consideration from the Company's government. [32] Second, the company had the necessity of collecting fire wood from the hills for boiling salt. But owing to the unrest in the hill tracts the people of *walangies* could not collect any fire wood.[33] Third, the Company's *Coolies* werer eluctant to cut timbers from Rangunia for the preparation of the Company's barracks, due to the opposition of the Kukies[34]. Finally, the Company's elephant trade was impeded because of the opposition of the Kukies.[35] It seemed that some of the important commercial interest of the Company was wrapped round with the question of place in the hills. So the Company thought that any conciliaion with the hill people might bring peace in this locality and safety to their revenue and commerce. But the Company, in fact, did not try to find out the actual causes of the unrest amrong the

hill people and that is why their attempt at conciliation got no favour from the hill people and they continued their endless violent attacks.

In 1711 A. D. it was reported that Ranu Khan and his associates were crossing the Fenny river up the hills. Mr. Sumner, the collector of Chittagong, immediately communicated with the *Raja* of Tippera with a view to arrest him, if he took shelter in Tippera.[36] A considerable detachment had already been sent against them, but the Company's government was not sure that they would be able to arrest him without the active help from the *Raja* of Tippera. Ralph Leeke, the Resident of Tippera was asked to procure the support of the Raja of Tippera to suppress Ranu Khan.[37] Records indicate that the Company's purpose was not served. The Chakmas continued their operations almost unabatedly. The Company once again explored their ability in apprehending Ranu Khan and his people by sending detachment from Islamabad. But this time Ranu Khan took hold of a Company's *Shickdar* and ran-off with him.[38] Being perplexed, the Company's authority made attempt to correspond with the objeet of getting the release of their *Shickdar* on the one hand compelling him to pay revenue to the Company's government on the other. This time the Company's army created much trouble in the hills. In consequence of this, a spy of Ranu Khan came from the hills who informed the Commanding officer that Ranu Khan would release the Company's *shickdar* and would pay revenue to the

Company usually.[39] The spy also informed that Ranu Khan repented his activities and he would beg pardon to the Company. Most probably Ranu Khan, under the pretence of submitting to the Company, wanted to save himself from being arrested. Ultimately. the assurance given by Ranu Khan through his informer to the effect of releasing the Company's Shickdar and paying revenue to the Company was not complied with. The Company, in their turn, tried to cramp Ranu Khan's movement within certain route limit by stationing the force. In spite of repeated orders from the authority for withdrawing the army, the collector of Chittagong thought that the recall of the army would not be wise, because Ranu Khan "would not swerve from his former course of outrageous and insolent behaviour".[40] Practically, the Company was alarmed at Ranu Khan's offensive measures and they could not recall their army. Moreover, they had to supply Khoshal Chand with a proper guard to escort 23 chests of treasure to the Presidency.[41] In spite of the barricade organised by Ranu Khan and his people against the Company's revenue collection from the *Kapas mehal*, the Company's *Wadahdar* decided to send *sezawal* or native revenue collection officer into the *Chakla* Rangunia for the realisation of the revenues. The *wadahdar's* effort at collecting revenues from *Kapas mehal* was materially supported by the Company who had given instructions to the troops to protect the *sezawal* from the people of Ranu Khan.[45] But the Company's measure of protecting the *sezawal*

was futile and the *wadahdar* complained that Ranu Khan's resistance was the main cause for which the revenues of that area fell into arrears.[43] So the Company's authority considered that guards, which were stationed at the different *Cutcherries* and *Chaukies* would be absolutely necessary to carry on the public business smoothly. Accordingly in 1782, the compan'ys authority decided to keep constant guards at the different places of the plains, because they had anxiety that on the return of the troops, Ranu Khan might start operations to that part.[44]

In 1782 A.D. Sher Daulat died, but his son Jan Baksh and his general Ranu Khan with their associates like Doolub, Choree, Kannoo and Toothang Shuckdas carried on operations.[45] As records show, in consequence of Sher Daulat Khan's demise their movement, for some time, dwindled but soon regained its strength. Being embittered by the repulsive activities of Jan Baksh Khan and Ranu Khan and consequently by the repeated complaints of the Zamindars, the Company issued a *Parwannah* ordering the *Chaudhuries, taluqdars,* farmers and *ryote* to apprehend all the persons belonging to Jan Baksh Khan and Ranu Khan. By the *Parwannah* it was also proclaimed that, "any person acting contrary to these orders will be severely punished."[46] But this measure was not operative, because the hill peoples were more rock-ribbed than that of the Company's local agents.

During the period between 1784 and 1785 A. D. the Company seriously fought against the Chakmas. This

time, the Company applied their every possible strength to subdue them. By the middle of June 1784 A.D., a party under Major Ellerker was sent against Jan Baksh Khan and his associates. But the hill Chief went into the interior of the hills and the army had to retire.[47] Again in December 1784 A. D., a party was sent against the Chakmas, but they were restricted by the authority to advance into the interior of the hills.[48] It was probably because in the interior of the hills the Chakmas could frequently use their guerrilla tactics of warfare which the company's army were not accustomed to. On the New year's Day 1785 A. D. Major Ellerker wrote to Captain Anderson, commanding the 22nd Battalion of the Independent Regiment of Light Infantry, for dislodging the adherents of Jan Baksh Khan. Captain Aderson was empowered to adopt every means to arrest Ranu Khan.[49] He was also given direction to move against a Chieftain who, in favour of Jan Baksh Khan, had formed an entrenchment near the Kalapania hills. He was further advised not to slacken his operation until they surrender.[50] In order to capture the posts in the hills, James Irwin felt "the necessity of furnishing mase'ss of boats for the use of the detachment going up the river to act against the posts occupied By the Chakmas, and also *Cloolies*, *beldars* (spademen) etc, for the purpose of clearing the jungles."[51] On 16 January, 1785 A.D., the Company made a violent attack on the hills. Richard Anderson with his lieuteants Farmingham and Feeking advanced towards the interior

of the hills and continued theier operation for nearly a week. This time they destroyed the residence of Ranu Khan's son and some villages of the hills using powerful weapons and baettries and took possession of paunch Morrang, Ranu Khan's residence and some fortresses. But neither the army could capture any Chakma nor could they subde them at all. Moreover, the hill people adopting guerrilla tactics, had killed one *beldar* or spademan and wounded one *lascar* and four *dandies* or boatmen of the Company.[52] Captain Anderson retired, but he considered the necessity of keeping guards on the bank of Karnafuli fearing the blockade raised earlier by the Chakmas to commence again. But there were positive and repeated orders from the authority to withdraw army altogather. Nevertheless, Collector James Irwin suggested to station army at some places which would 'serve as a guard to the avenues into the hill's.[53] In consequence the Company found it essential to keep twelve posts to prevent the operations of the Chakmas.[54] But this preventive measure could not stop the hill people from undertaking their operations. And later official records indicate that the hill people, under the leadership of Jan Baksh Khan and Ranu Khan, continued their operations as usual. At their frequent operations; the Company's local agents were terrified and they sought help from the Company. Narahari Mitra, who was appointed the Company's *Wadahdar* at Rangunia, requested Major Ellerker for keeping constant guards to protect him from guerrilla attacks.[55]

In consequence of the Chakma resistance, the Company had to sustain enormous economic loss and it was necessary for them to keep a separate account for the expenditure incurred in their war with the hill people.[56] From 1783 to 1785 A.D. the Company's leaseholdners could not enter the hill tracts : and as a result the revenues of this area fell into arrear. In consequence of this, the Company had to exempt the leaseholders from paying the government reveneues for these years.[57]

It seemed that the task of subduing the hill people was not so easy as the Company thought to be. Moreover the Company was buffled by their guerrilla operations. Having failed to subdue them through sending detachment the Company adopted new strategy to confine their movement into the hills. This new stratagey was, in effect, an economic blockade of the hill people, who were to come to the markets of the plains in order to procure salt, tobacco, dried fish and other commodities through barter trade.[58] Besides, the Company's government tried to incite the Kukies through allurement to seize the adherents of Jan Baksh Khan.[59] But the Company's plan of provocating the Kukies against Jan Baksh Khan and his associates proved abortive. The Kukies continued their resistance as usual against the Company's local agent and when in 1787 A.D. Jan Baksh Khan came to terms with the Company, the Company's authority had to seek his help to halt the Kukies.[60] On the other hand, the hill people were getting supplies of salt, tobacco and dried fish from the plains in spite of the

Company's prohibitive orders.[61] The economic blockade enforced by the Company was successful when the Company posted guards at different strategic points of the hills.[62] Ultimately, the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts were obliged to cease their resistance.

In sum, the rising of the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts. under the leadership of Sher Daulat Khan, Jan Baksh Khan and Ranu Khan originated from the Company's revenue policy in the one hand and the maltifarious exploitation of the Company's farmers and speculators on the other. Their resistance started in 1776 A.D. and continued roughly to 1786 A.D. In 1787 Jan Baksh Khan came to terms with the company and agreed to pay regular revenue to the Company. There is an interesting legand[63] about the sudden surrender of Jan Baksh Khan. But it appears clear that the economic blockade put up by the Company uitmately obliged him to cease resistance and come to terms with the Company.

It appears that the Chakmas, in their resistance, had the help of some Bengalis at the plains. In his letter to the committee of Revenue on 7 January 1785 A.D. James Irwin wrote that Jan Baksh Khan mantained "in his service a Bengali of the name Mun ghawzee, a notroious dacoit, who was sentenced by the *Fouzdar* of Islamabad to be impaled"[64] It was also reported that Mun Gazi had trained about sixty Bengalis who were always with him. We can trace another Mun Gazi, officially known as a dacoit, who was sentenced in 1774 A.D. by the *Fouzdary Adowlut* conformable to Muhammadan law to

"let his right hand left foot to be cut off."[65] It seemed that all these sentences against Mun Gazi were passed in absentia. Again we find another Mun Gazi, sometimes known as Mun Sarkar, in the '*Shamsher Gazi Namah*'[66] written by Sheikh Monohar. According to '*Shamsher Gazi Namah*', Mun Gazi, a Bengali, was an employee of Shamsher of Shamsher Gazi of Tippera in 1760's. He was the chief of *Nimak mehal* of Panuya Ghat near the big Feny river, where Shamsher Gazi had served earlier. There is a *hat*, after his name, *Mun Gazir hat*, which is adjacent to Panuya ghat under the Chhagalnaiya police station. During Shamsher Gazi's revolt Mun Gazi played an active role. It seems that Mun Gazi and his adherents may have associated themselves with Jan Baksh Khan and keep up this resistance against the Company. To clear the official remark on Mun Gazi as a dacoit, it should be noted that any activity contrary to the interest of the established government is always considered by that government an as act of dacoit or miscreants. However, the indentification of Mun Gazi and his association with Jan Baksh Khan still remains a question for further research.

FOOT NOTES

1. For details, see Ratan Lal Chakrborty, 'Some Aspects of the Fakir—Sannyasi Mavement' *Journal of the Bangladesh Itihas Samiti* (in Bengali), vol. 3 and4 (1974—75), pp, 43—52.
2. See J. E. Webster, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers*, Noakhali, (Allahabad, 1911), pp. 22—23.

4. J. B. Harrison 'Arakan' *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (Leiden, I960), vol. I, p. 606.
4. For detaits, see T. H. Lewin. *The Hill Tracts of Chittaong and the dwellers therein*, Calcutta, 1861, pp. 21—21.
5. For Ranu Khan's geneology see Satish Chandra Ghosh, *The Chakma Nation* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1316 C. S. p. 74.
6. Darkhaste of Khoshal Chand Wadahdhar, 12 Augnst, 1781, *Bangladesh Secretariat Records*. (here after abbriviated as *BSR*), Chittagong, vol. 462, pp. 125—26.
7. See T. H. Lewin, *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong*. p. 22; Satish Chandra Ghosh, *The Chakma Nation*, p. 74.
8. Pierre Bessaignet, *Tribesmen of the Chittagong Hill Tracts*, Thc Asiatic Society of Pakistan, I958, p. 93.
9. For details, see Alamgir Muhammad Serajuddin, *The Revenue Administration of the East India Company in Chittagong*, University of Chittagong, 1971, pp. 168 69.
10. See R. H. Sneyd Hutchinson, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers*, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Allahabad, 1909, p. 22.
11. Alexander Mackenzie, *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribe of North Frontier of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1884, pp. 131-32
12. *Ibid.*
13. T. H. Lewin. *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong, p*, 21.
14. J. H. S. Cotton, *Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong*, (Calcutta, 1880), p. 20.
15. Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-West Frontier of Bengal*, p. 33I.
16. *Halheed Commission Report on Hill Chittagong*, 1829, p. 59, quoted in T. H. Lewin, *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong*, p, 22.

17. R. H. Sneyd Hutchinson, *District Gazetteers*, Chittagong Hill Tracts, p. 94.
18. Satish Chandra Ghosh, *The Chakma Nation*, p. 70.
19. R. H. Sneyd Hutchinson, *District Gazetteers*, Chittagong Hill Tracts, p. 24.
20. Collector of Chittagong to the Governor General in Council of the General Department, 10 April 1777, *BSR, Chittagong*, vol. 462, pp. 125-26.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Complaint of Sundry Zamindars, 26 June 1783, *BSR*, Chittagong. vol. 506, pp. 42-44.
23 *Ibid*
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26, Alamgir Muhammad Serajuddin. *The Revenue Administration of Chittagong*, p. 199.
27. Collector of Chittagong to the Governor General 10 April 1777 *BSR, Chittagong*, vol. 462, pp. 125-26.
28, *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid ;*
30. *Ibid ;*
31. R. H. Sneyd Hutchinson, *District Gazetteers*, Chittagong Hill Tracts, p 8.
32, See Abdul Karim Sahitya Visharad, *Islamabad* (in Bengali), S. M. Ali ed. Bangla Academy, 1964, pp, 106-107 ; S. N. H. Rizvi (ed.) *East Pakistan District Gazetteers*, Chittagong, (Dacca, 1970), p. 89,
33. Salt Agent of Chittagong to the Collector of Chittagong, 23 February 1781, *BSR, Chittagong*, vol. 467, p. 87.
34. Chief of Chittagong to the Commander of the 22nd Battalion at Chittagong, 24 April 1776, *BSR*, Chittagong vol. 461. p. 39,
35. T, H. Lewin, *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong* pp. 21-22.

36. Collector of Chittagong to the Resident at Tippera, 1 March 178I, *BSR, Chittagong,* vol 467, p. 88.
37. *Ibid.*
38. From the Darkhaste of Khosal Chand Wodadhar, 12 August 1781, *BSR, Chittagong,* vol. 468, p. 18.
39, *Ibid.*
43. Collector of Chittagong to the Committee of Revenue at Fort william, 12 August 1781, *BSR, Chittagong,* vol. 470. p. 19,
41, Assistant Collector to the Commanding officer at Chittagong, 13 August 1781, *BSR, Chittagong,* vol. 470, p. 20.
42. Acting Collector of Chittagong to the Commanding officer at Chittagang, II October 1781, *BSR, Chittagong* vol. 468, p. 39.
43 Acting Collector of Chittagong to the Committee of Revenue, 6 May, 1782, *BSR, Chittagong,* vol. 469, pp, 10-11.
44. Collector of Chittagong to the Commanding officer at Chittagong, 8 April 1782. *BSR, Chittagong,* vol. 469, p. 1.
45. Complaint of Sundry Zamindars, 26 June 1783, *BSR, Chittagong,* vol. 506, pp. 42-44.
46. Hookumnamah, 1783, *BSR, Chittagong,* vol 506, p. 74.
47. Alamgir Muhammad Serajuddin, *The Revenue Administration of Chittagong,* P. 199,
48. Collector of Chittagong to the Committee of Revenue, December 1784, quoted in R. B. Ramsbotham, 'Chittagong in 1784,' *Bengal Past and Present,* (hereafter cited as *BPP*), vol. 39, pt. III, (April-June), 1940, p. 83.
49. Collector of Chittagong to the Captain Commanding the 22nd Battalion. 1 January 1785, quoted in R. B. Ramsbotham, 'Chittagong in 1784' *BPP,* vol. 39, pt. III, 1930 p. 84.
50. *Ibid.*

51. Collector of Chittagong to the Committee of Revenue, 7 January 1785. quoted in R. B. Ramsbotham, 'Chittagong in 1784" *BPP*, vol. 39, pt. III, 1930, p. 86.
52. For details of Richard Anderson's expedition, See R.B, Ramsbotham, 'Chittagong in 1784" *BPP*. vol. 39, 1930, pt. III, pp. 86-87.
53. Collector of Chittagong to the Commander of the 22nd Battalion at Chittagong, 24 March 1785, quoted in R.B. Ramsbotham, 'Chittagong in 1785,' *BPP* vol. 39, pt. III I930, p. 89.
54. These posts entaled a combined garrison of 1 British officer 2 Subahdars, 2 Jemadars, 26 N. C. O' S and 150 rank and file. See R. B. Ramsbotham, 'Chittagong in 1784' *BPP*, vol. 39, pt. III, 1930, p. 90.
55 Collector of Chittagong to the Commanding officer at Chittagong, 4 August 1785, *BSR, Chittagong*, vol. 507, pp. 52-53.
56. Extract of a letter from Governor General in Council. 4 September 1786, *BSR, Chittagong*, vol. 487, pp. 139-40.
57. Satish Chandra Ghosh, *The Chakma Nation*, p. 78.
58. *Ibid. p.* 75.
59. Alamgir Muhammad Serajuddin, *The Revenue Administration of Chittagong*, p. 199-200.
60. Petition of Sheeb Durga Charan Chowdhury, 11 August 1788, *BSR, Chittagong*, vol. 491, p. 213.
61. Collector of Chittagong to the Committee of Revenue, 7 January 1735, quoted in R. B. Ramsbotham, Chittagong in 1784', *BPP*, vol. 39, 1930, pt. III, p, 85,
62. L. S. S. O' Malley. *History of Bengal, Bihar & Orissa under British Rule*, (Calcutta, 1925), 664 ; Satish Chandra Ghosh, *The Chakma Nation*, p. 77.
63. Once Jan Baksh Khan was betaking himself into the mountains at Mahaphroongh. At that time, a pregnant woman while fleeing, being unable to bear the hard-

ship of flight, damned him. Jan Baksh Khan by chance overheard her. This made him repentant; he went to Calcutta in 1787 A. D, and asked pardon of the Governor and made peace with the British Government. See Satish Chandra Ghosh, *The Chakma Nation*, p. 78; Pierr Bessaignet, *Tribesmen of the Chittagong Hill Tracts*, p. 93.

64. Collector of Chittagong to the Committee of Revenue, 7 January I785, quoted in R. B. Ramsbotham, 'Chittagong in 1784', *BPP*, vol, 39, 1930, pt. III, p. 85.

65. Governor General in Council to the Chief of Chittagong quoted in R. B. Ramsbotham, 'Letters received by the Chief of Chittagong during 1774 from the Committee of Revenue at Fort William, *BPP*, vol. XL, pt. I. I, (Oct—Dec), 1930, p. 10.

66. The auother is personally grateful to Sheikh A. T. M. Ruhul Amin, planning and Development Officer, Dacca University, who kindly, supplied *Shamsher Gazi Namah* and also to Dr. Ahmed Sharif for his valuable advices.

Strategies and Changes in Land Reform in Colonial and Post-Colonial Bangladesh.

B. K. Jahangir

Land reform in both pre-liberation and post-liberation Bangladesh reinforced economic stratification, leaning to a polarisation of classes. The object of this paper is to focus on the strategies adopted in land reform and to analyse the changes that occurred. These changes resulted from a conflict between the constraints of the existing agrarian structure and national economic objectives ; and from the inconsistancey which existed between the idealogy of land reform and the actual programme that was implemented. Underlying these inconsistencies was the political intersts of the ruling elite. Their main aim was to destory the dominant position of the established landed classes and to improve the position of the rich and middle peasants. The slogan 'land to the tiller' suited their strategy and helped to organise the peasants under one banner. After evicting the 'feudal' class from the power structure, they attempted to strike a balance between popular and class-based support. This was effected at the expense of the zaminder class and resulted in the improvement in the position of the rich

and middle peasants, the ruling elite was prepared to compromise with the rich and middle peasants, who were against a radical reform in land distribution which would benefit the rural poor (Joshi, 1974).

In pre-partition days in Bangladesh, land was concentrated in the hands of a minority of landlords. The real tillers of the land, the mass of the peasants, had limited proprietary rights (Thorner, 1956 ; United States Department of Agriculture, I965). After partition, there were three problems facing the ruling elite : 1. The removal of the discrepancy between propietorship and the defacto ownership of land ; 2. the chronic stagnation of agriculture, and 3. the need to accelerate industrial development. There were apparently two alternatives to emulate Communist China and Japan under American occupation after the Second world war, or to follow the English enclosures of the eighteenth century or Prussian Junkerism of the nineteenth century. Following the first course meant the redistribution of land among small peasants and landless labourers, and the trnsformation of actual tillers into owner-cultivators. The second policy entailed inducing the landlords to undertake cultivation by hired labour instead of leasing out lands to tenants. In Bangladesh after partition in 1947, the ruling elite followed neither path and adopted a middle-road policy. This policy curtailed landlordism, upgraded the upper strata of the peasants and gave relief to other tenants (Joshi, 1967). This middle road policy reflected the character of the power-elite (Tai, 1968). There

was, as suggested by Tai, a close correspondence between the elite and the landed classes, and a deep polarisation between the landed and the landless classes. In fact, however, in East Pakistan, there also existed an intermediate class of tenants poised between the landlords and the poor tenants and the labourers. This intermediate class was exploited by the old land system but at the same time was relatively better-off than the poor tenants and others.

In the specific case of East Pakistan, land reform was rapidly introduced in the 1950's : 'It was possible to obtain land reform so quickly in East Bengal after partition, as it provided the opportunity for the Muslim majority to free itself, from the economic control of the Hindu minority (Bracdo, 1961, p 263). Political consciousness of the peasants was an added factor (Myrdal, 1968, vol I). Implementation of land reform was assigned to the normal administrative agencies of the government. The peasants were not associated with the process of reform implementation as was the case in Japan and Taiwan (Ladejinsky, 1964). Nor were the administrative agencies bound by a time-limit, the undertone of this approach was that the government behaved leniently with landlords over violation of landlaws, gradually forgetting about the implementation of the laws, yet acted ruthlesly against the peasants whenever they stood up for their rights. The suppression of the Nachol and Hajong peasant movements during pre liberation period and of Atrai

peasant movement during the post-liberation period are cases in point.*

Partition and subsequent land reform changed the rural structure. After the mass exodus of Hindu landlords and money lenders to India, a peasant economy dominated by rich and mindle peasants emerged in East Bengal producing jute as the main cash crop for the market. But almost immediately, state policy reversed the situation, making East Bengal agriculture subservient to industries, mainly situated in West Pakistan and diverting agricultural surplus to provide raw materials for industry and to feed the growing urban population, All this happened within the formal state structure through a pattern of internal colonial exploitation :

> 'The prices the peasant received for his product, whether sold abroad or in the home market, were driven well below their opportunity cost to the economy. This fact had a secondary benifit for the industrialist : since food was the major wage good, capital had a propertionately lower price to pay for the subsistance of its workers. Even when market fluctuation threatned to bring agricultural prices up, the state intervened directly to insulate capitalists from the ramifying effect of such price movements on wages. Compulsory procurement of agricualtural products in

* In the political mobilisation of the Bengal peasanry, see ; Dhanagare, 1973 ; Umar, 1974, 1975 ; overstreet and Windmiller, 1959 ; Chattopadhya, 1970 ; Sen, 1972 ; Chaudhury , 1972.

the country and their sale beneath market prices in the city passed a further subsidy from the peasant surpuls to urban incomes, Where government procurement was awkard, there was always a plethora of PL 480 food commodities from the USA to flood the market and bring rising agricultural prices down again, these three mechanisms : adverse terms of trade, forced procurement and pressure from Nebraskan handout, were orchestrated by the Centre to hold agricultural prices to a bare minimum' (Nations, 1971, p. 8).

As a result, the peasants' margin of surplus was cut back to finance West Pakistani industry. This made East Pakistan a colony within the state structure. The extraction of agricultural surplus crippled productivity. The long depression of agricultural prices and the lack of viable public credit institutions forced many of the peasants into a subsistance-based, survival economy. They were in continuous debt. However, low prices, government agricultural and trade policies and chronic indebtedness undermined the relatively egalitarian peasant society and affected some groups more than others. Land, cattle and implements began to accumulate in the hands of the richer peasants. Because of the pressure of a colonial economy and class structure, the poor and the middle peasants were forced to liquidate their capital : land. On the other hand, the rich peasants prospered : and West Pakistan grew economically at the expence of East Pakistan. This double setting of class and colonial

exploitation destermined the growth of capitalism in in Pakistan (Rahman, 1963 : Report of Panel of Economists, 1971 ; Bose, 1968).

In this way, Pakistan embarked upon industrialization and mobilised the surplus from agriculture. The governments strategy was to raise agriculture's marketed surplus and its taxable capacity. All this took place within the complex structres of both class and colonial exploitation but under the umbrella of a single nation state. During the 1950's, the introduction of land reform gave East Pakistan peasants some relief, but the central government's agricultural and industrial policies deepened the rural stratification and increased polarisation. Such policies forced the small peasant to liquidate more and more of his capital, which began to be concentrated in the hands of the rich peasant. Productivity dwindled as a result. So, during the 1960's, the government introduced a technology biased approach to agricultural development. The new strategy emphasised the profitability of large-scale forming enterprises and provided credit, fertilizers, improved seeds, power pumps and machinery. Infra-structural facilities were placed in the hands of the rich peasant, who were wealthy enough to buy these new inputs. Hence, colonial agricultural and industrial policies strengthened the rich peasants. The burdens of development fell mostly on the rich peasants : they marketed their surplus, were the major consumers of industrial goods and paid the developmental taxes. The rural works programme, in fact, attempted to improve

the terms of trade for agriculture, and thus countract the devolopmental squeese (Abdullah, I973 ; Islam 1972).

In 1960, the total industrial employment was as follows : East Pakistan, 30. 9 percent ; West Pakistan (including Karachi) 69. 1 percent (Lewis, I970). Within East Pakistan :

> 'Bengali Muslims control less than 2. 9 percent of private industrial assetts ; the rest is owned by West Pakistanis or local Hundus Because of 'foriegn control little of the wealth created in East Bengali industry remains in the province most of it finds its way back to West Pakistan in the form of salaries, dividends, interest, and profits remitted home. Thus much of the most valuable source of capital accumalation in East Bengal is lost and with it the secondary multiplier effects of the initial investment. The financial and social links which tie East Bengal industry to the west have made eastern enterprises more enclave extensions of the metropolitan economy of Karachi and the Punjab. Thus the East Bengal relation to the West is characterised by the classical contradictions of colonial development where islands of technology rest in swamps of agricultural stagnation' (Nations, ibid, p, 16).

This suggests why the rich peasant failed to become a 'capitalist farmer.' In the Pakistan colonial context, he exploited the poor and the middle peasants, but at the same time was also exploited by the imperial bourgeoisie and by the stucture of two separate

economics politically unified within a single national state. During this colonial period, the government's agricultural, trade and industrial policies re-aligned the class forces in the rural arcas. The government's policies strengthned a rich peasant class within an existing stratified society. In addition, the technology oriented development conferred upon this rich peasant class a new political role in the rural areas. Thus we find that the rich peasant operated within the framework of a capitalist economy; but failed to become a fully-fledged 'capitalist farmer.' The main reason for his failure was due to the conditions of colonial imporition. The East Pakistani agrarian economy was assimilated and subordinated to Pakistani's capitalist system. In spite of an increase in commodity production (see table 1.), the formation of a large free labour force * and capital circulation in the country side the relations of agricultural production were not transformed. Hence the specific nature of the 'colonial mode of production (Alavi, 1975).

* During 1951-61, the agricultaral labour force in East Pakistan incrased by 33. 8 percent and landless ladoures by 63. 6 percent (Taufiq and Bose, 1965).

Table I : *Proportion of Cercal and Commercial Crops in Cultivated Land*

Year	Cultivated Land lakh Bigha	Creal Lakh Rice	Total	Commercial Crop (Lakh) Jute	Sugarcane	Pulses	Seeds	Total
1947-48	239.0	190.0	194.4	20.6	2.1	9.9	6.9	44.6
1950-51	245.9	200.0	204.1	17.1	2.3	10.1	7,2	41.8
1953-54	240.5	200.0	209.3	9.6	2.6	10.4	7.9	36.2
1956-57	241.1	200.0	204.5	12.3	2.5	8.3	7.6	37.0
1959-60	255.5	211.5	214.9	13.8	2.8	7.9	8.8	40.6
1962-63	263.5	214.8	219.1	17.2	3.2	6.3	8.5	43.9
1965-66	283.5	231.3	234.6	21.0	3.8	8.5	9.4	48.9
1968-69	299.7	240.7	246.6	21.7	4.1	9.1	8.7	53.1
1969-70	316.5	254.9	260.6	24.6	4.1	9.0	8.6	55.9
1970-71	301.1	244.9	248.0	22.0	4.0	9.2	8.6	53.1
1971-72	279.9	229.7	232.8	16.8	3.5	8.9	8.6	47.5

Source : Government of Bangladesh, Statistical Digest of Bangladesh, 1970-71, Tables 4. 1-4. 10 ; Planning Commission ; Annual Plan 1973-74, pp 30 and 33.

This is the crux of the problem. In the firstplace, there exists a large agricultural labour force which is both free and not-free because of the minimum scope for alternative employment. This is a situation where the rural wage labourer becomes in some respects a 'free wage labourer' and the rich peasant increasingly turns to 'capitalist' methods of farming. It is true that the rural wage labourer continues to depend upon the rich peasant but this dependence is a contingent one. Change in the agrarian structure has produced the wage laboures. This change has altered the structure of dependence ; it has on the one hand, broken the previous relationship between the wage labourer, the sharecroppers and the rich peasant, and, on the other hand, has made the poorer and some middle peasants politically more militant, However, it must be emphasised that the development of capitalist relations in agriculture in East Pakistan was deformed' because of its colonial status.

The main dimension to be grasped is the developing class situation in rural Bangladesh within a specifie historical social formation. Pakistani colonial importion expanded the capitalist mode of production. This importion was expresed through the systematic flow of surplus from the Bangladesh peasantry to the expanding commercial and industrial community based in West Pakistan, mediated primarily by the state apparatus. The increasing extrction of surplus produced increasing inequalities in the rural areas. This extraction of surplus was assisted by the continual growth of the rural population and back

of alternative sources of employment, combined with the mounting indebtedness to the rich peasant and the traders and the rise in commodity prices. The role of small peasants was central to this proces. They lived at subsistance level, marketed an insignificant amount of their produce and existed side by side with the rich peasant economy (surplus economy) which was directly tied to the production of cash crops. The small peasants were integrated into the colonial mode of production because they supplied cheap labour and necessarily affected the overall level of wages in the colonial eonomy.

The structural features of the colonial mode of production have shaped the post-colonial situation. In the latter case we do not find any conflict between the 'feudal landowner' and the 'capitalist farmer' ; rather the conflict is between the rich peasant and the small peasant. The rich peasant strategy has also increased the marketable surplus of agricultural commodities. The application of new technology, inspite of the war of libration, has carried forward the colonial mode of production within the framework of industrial production. Again, the deformed structure of capitalism has displaced though in a limited way, labour as more capital intensive methods have been used and has increased its seasonal labour demand. The rich peasants have inercased expenditure on consumption and their income has multiplied. This has had an inflationary impact and has eroded the real incomes of the subordinate classes : the small peasants, the urban lower middle classes and the urban

workers. This pattern of development, together with poor harvests and periodic shortages, has forced many small peasants into destitution. Their militancy has increased, not only because of rapid impoverishment but also because of their increased barganing power. The latter is furthered by the breakdown of economic dependency, the increase in the crop area and yields and consequent increase in the seasonal demand for labour at harvest time. This conflict has aligned the rural classes structurally and has emphasized their roles within the system of dependent capitalism. Thus limited land reform and the effects of technology on agriculture, closer economic ties between rich peasants and urban investors, and the political incorporation of them into various political parties have made the intersts of rich peasants more clearly opposed to those of the small and poor peasants. This structural position shapes the confrontation that takes place.

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১৯৭২ চিরস্থায়ী বন্দোবস্তে বাংলাদেশের কৃষক, ঢাকা মওলা ব্রাদার্স

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