

NALDANGA
AND
THE NALDANGA RAJ FAMILY,

Containing a topography of the village and a history
of the Raj Family residing therein.

BY

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1911

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OPINIONS.

S, Harrington Street, Calcutta, Oct. 18, 1909.

To

BABU AMVIKACHARAN MUKHURJI.

DEAR SIR,

I return you your Mss. which I have carefully read. I consider that such work is most useful: if the history of Bengal is to be satisfactorily written, it can be only after continued researches into the history of the great houses, possible only to people on the spot, and I trust that your pages will lead the way in this matter.

I am,

Yours very truly,

(Sd.) W. C. WORDSWORTH, (M. A.),

(Professor of History, Political Economy and Political Philosophy, Presidency College, Calcutta.)

*London Missionary Society's Institution,
Bhowanipur, Calcutta, October 23rd. 1909.*

To

BABU AMVIKACHARAN MUKHURJI,

Naldanga-Rajbati P.O., Dist. Jessore.

DEAR SIR,

I have read with a good deal of interest the Mss. of your book on Naldanga and the Naldanga Raj Family. Your arrangement of the materials and way of expressing yourself in English are alike very good.

OPINIONS.

The book, I should think, cannot fail to be of special interest to the people of Naldanga and especially to the present Raja and his family whose history is so clearly set forth in it. It would be an excellent thing if the local history of every such place were to be similarly collected and put together in book form for the sake of historians of the future. I wish your book all success.

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) ANDREW WARREN, (B. A.),
Principal, L.M.S. College, Calcutta.

Faridpur E. B. S. R., 1. 3. 10.

DEAR AMBIKA BABU,

I return your history of the Naldanga Raj which I have read and found very interesting. I shall be glad to procure a copy of the work when it is completed. I found the English in which it is written remarkably clear and idiomatic. I suggest that if the Raj have in their Muniment Room any really old accounts of daily expenditure and the like, you might reproduce some of them. Such details as to how our grandfathers and great grandfathers spent their money and what they got in return for it are always interesting, sometimes valuable and occasionally naive.

With kind regards

Yours very sincerely,
(Sd.) J. C. JACK, (M. A., I. C. S.),
(Settlement Officer, Faridpur.)

OPINIONS.

Jhenida,
District Jessore,
21st September, 1910.

To

BABU AMBIKACHARAN MUKHARJI.

DEAR SIR,

I return you the manuscript of your book on
"Naldanga and the Naldanga Raj."

To me it has been very interesting reading, dealing
as it does with a locality and a family that are closely
identified with my Sub-division.

Your example ought to induce other local histori-
ans to produce similar well written works for other
localities.

I wish the book every success.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) A. CASSELLS, (M.A., OXON, I. C. S.)

Subdivisional Officer, Jhenida.

P R E F A C E.

It is certainly interesting to study the history of a particular country or a particular nation, but it is more interesting to study the history of a particular place or a particular family, especially when it is very old and renowned, inasmuch as the incidents described in the former being of a vague and unfamiliar nature, cannot at once engross our thoughts so perfectly as those described in the latter, with which we are familiar from our earliest childhood. The village of Naldanga and the Raj family residing in it are old and renowned enough to form proper subjects for awakening delightful thoughts and creating a lively interest in the reader's mind. I have therefore attempted in this book to describe these subjects in a lucid though anecdotal manner. The book, as the title indicates, is divided into two

parts. At the beginning of the first part is placed a map of Naldanga, and at the beginning of the second a genealogical table of the Raj family. Pedigrées to illustrate special points are given in the body of the latter part.

Difficult as it is to collect materials for such a description, I have left no stone unturned to gather them from as many different and reliable sources as I have been able to find. The books which I have consulted for the purpose are Sir W. W. Hunter's "A statistical Account of Bengal," Mr. J. Westland's "A Report on the District of Jessore," and Babu Ramsankar Sen's "A Report on the Agricultural Statistics of Jhenidah, Magurah, Bagirhat, and Sunderbuns subdivisions, District Jessore," &c., &c. Any suggestion for the improvement of the work in future will be very thankfully received and carefully attended to. I now leave it to the judgment of the readers to determine how far I have succeeded in my attempt, and shall consider myself sufficiently rewarded, if they consider the book worth reading.

My thanks are due to the Rev. Mr. A. Warren, B.A., Principal, L.M.S. College, Calcutta, and Professor W.C. Wordsworth, M.A., of the Presidency College, Calcutta, for a careful revision of this work.

NALDANGA,
The 1st April, } AMVIKACHARAN MUKHURJI.
1911.

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NALDANGA

AND

THE NALDANGA RAJ FAMILY.

PART I.

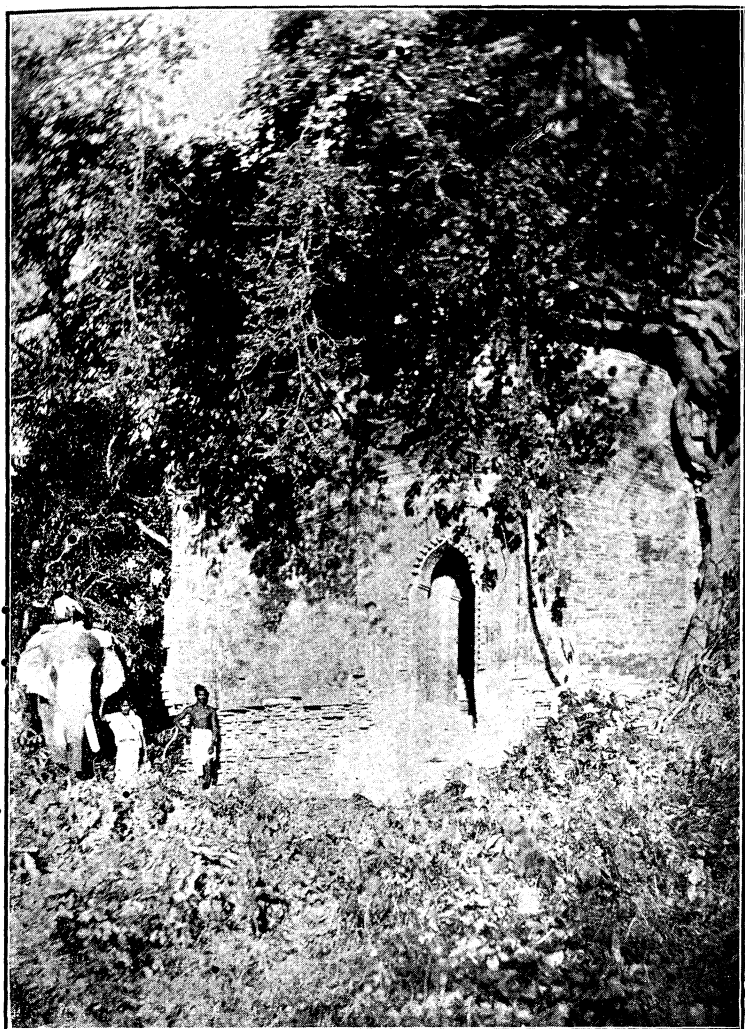
NALDANGA.

TOPOGRAPHY.

1. Naldanga, a renowned village in the district of Jessore in Lower Bengal, is situated at a distance of two miles from the Kaliganj Police Station, 9 miles from Jhenidah, the head-quarters of a Sub-Division of the same name in that district, and 20 miles from Jessore, the head-quarters of the district itself. The metalled road on which the village lies runs from Kaliganj towards the North-East and is a branch of the main road running from Jessore to Jheni-

dah. The village is bounded on the north by Kharasuni, on the east by Srimantapur, Durgapur, and the Begbati river (Benga), on the south by Kashima, and on the west by Paikpara (*i.e.*, Anandabag), Bhatpara and Khedapara. It includes in its area several smaller villages, *viz.*, Naldanga proper, Matbati, Kadipur and Goonjanagar, containing about 700 souls in all.

2. Matbati, or a cluster of temples, contains some 8 ancient grand temples of fine architecture, creating interest in the mind of the observer. They are dedicated to the several gods and goddesses of the Raj family of Naldanga. There is another isolated temple of similar description called the temple of Goonjanath, standing in the village of Tailkupi on the eastern bank of the river Begbati which flows from north to south below the small village of Goonjanagar which stands on its western bank. The residence of the Raja of Naldanga is situated in this village of Goonjanagar, and has within its premises a very grand edifice called the *Chandi-*



Temple of Goonjanath Siva.

mandap of the Rajbati and set apart for the annual worship of the goddess Durga. At a little distance from the Rajbati stands the admirably planned and beautifully constructed stable of the Raja Bahadur, to which is attached a big *pilkhana* for his elephants. A building, as beautiful and splendid as this, is really a new thing in a village and overpowers the attracted rural observer with a feeling of admiration. In Naldanga proper there were some fine buildings which had been constructed by the old members of the Raj family and their relations. The best of these were the *Rangmahal* and the *Jore-Bangla*. The former was an imposing two-storied house standing on the northern bank of the river. It was constructed by Raja Sasibhushan Deb Roy, an illustrious member of the Raj family, and was used by him as his parlour. On his death this fine building was much neglected during the minority of his son, Raja Indubhushan Deb Roy, and some of the idols of the Raj family, *viz.*, the Bara Gopal, the Galim Gopal and the

Jagannath, were placed in it and worshipped daily. Thus the parlour of a Raja was changed into a shrine of the family gods. The latter, an M-roofed exquisite building standing by the eastern side of the former, added to its beauty and grandeur. These two buildings, however, became gradually dilapidated on the removal of the residence of the Raja to Goonjanagar and were afterwards demolished, the idols having been removed to the new residence.

3. The history of Naldanga is identified with the history of the Raj family of the place, which will be described hereafter.

Interesting facts about the history of the place.

4. There is a striking legend connected with the place. During the middle of the 19th century, one Bhairabchandra Bhattacharyya, a *Tantrik* Brahmin and a fanatic devotee of the goddess Kali, lived at Maharajpur, some 4 miles to the north-west of

Legends connected with Bhairabchandra Bhattacharyya and the Kalikatata Doha.

Naldanga. He was a very religious man, but being a *Tantrik* worshipper of the goddess did not strictly conform to the rigid practices of an ordinary *Sakta* or *Baisnab* Brahmin. He used to indulge himself in drinking when he was engaged in worshipping the goddess, and would sometimes take his breakfast early in the morning without cleansing his teeth, or without taking his bath or changing the garment which he had used during the previous night. But he had many disciples who held him in great veneration and regarded him as their spiritual guide. One day he visited the house of one of these disciples and saw that he was going to celebrate his annual *pujah* of the aforesaid goddess during that night and that an image of the goddess had been placed in the *Chandimandap* for that purpose. He thought that, as he himself was present there in person, his disciple could not but invite him, instead of the family priest, to worship the goddess. But the disciple, taking notice of the seemingly irreligious practices of Bhairabchandra,

entertained a sort of hatred towards him and without even consulting him engaged the family priest to perform the worship. Bhairab felt insulted at this, and was much enraged, but said nothing ; nor did he leave the place. At last, when the priest, on finishing the *pujah* and sanctifying the sacrificial goat, made it over to the blacksmith whose duty it was to kill the animal before the image, the latter failed to complete his duty with *one* stroke of the weapon which he used for the purpose. This raised the suspicion in the mind of the disciple that, through the supernatural influence of Bhairabchandra, the *pujah* had probably not been accepted by the goddess. He therefore fell at his feet, asked for pardon, and earnestly requested him to worship the goddess again then and there, that her displeasure might be avoided. Bhairab consented and directed his disciple to make fresh arrangements for the *pujah* and give him a seat behind the image, and not in front of it where the priest had sat and worshipped the idol. The disciple at once



Panchamundi Bedi at Kakkatula.

obeying, the great *Tantrik* took his seat and requested the goddess to turn towards him and accept the *pujah*. The image at once complied with his request, whereon first finishing the *pujah* he addressed the assembled people and said,—“Behold! Ye disbelievers, the goddess herself is now present in the image. Do you want any more proof?” On saying this, he struck the right leg of the idol with the sharp end of his *kushi*, and blood gushed out vehemently to the amazement and consternation of the assembly present. Bhairab then stood up, cursed his disciple, and said,—“Thou, villain! thou shalt be undone and thine issue and thy whole family shall become extinct!” On this the great man suddenly left the place for good and all. This Bhairab Bhattacharyya frequently visited Matbati where there was in those days a temple dedicated to the goddess Kali, which stood on the eastern side of the Kalikatala Doha, a very big and deep pool on the west of the temple, and contained within it an altar called the *Panchamundi Bedi* which

had, buried under its surface, the heads of a man, a cat, a mouse, a frog and a snake,—four in the four corners of the altar and one in the middle. Now, there was a rumour afloat that several Brāhmins of the priestly order, who successively tried to worship the goddess on the altar, were at the dead of night hurled by evil spirits to the opposite side of the Kalikatala Doha. However, Bhairabchandra, through his supernatural powers, succeeded in worshipping her there throughout the whole night.

There is another legend of a different nature, connected with the Doha. In the beginning of the 19th century, mingled sounds of religious musical instruments, such as the conch, the bell and the gong, were very feebly heard at mid-night in the Doha by fishermen fishing in the pool. The people of the locality believed that the goddess Kali was worshipped every night by the water deities residing in the pool. To offer, however, a reasonable explanation of the fact, it may be stated that probably some singing fish were in

existence in the deep pool in those days.

5. The Raj family of Naldanga have set apart a portion of their zemindari, called the *Iswarbritti* (i.e., *Debottar* property) for meeting the expenses of the daily worship of the idols of Matbati and of feeding uninvited guests who happen to be present there at breakfast time. There is a limited number of officers and peons appointed for the management of this property. A priest with the help of several menials conducts the daily worship of the idols. There are also additional idols at the Rajbati, and proper arrangements have also been made by the Raj family for their daily worship. Besides all this, the annual Durgapujah of the Rajbati is an affair of great pomp. Numerous Brahmins and people of other castes are sumptuously fed and entertained with music performed either by a *Jatra* party or by dancing girls during the three days of the *pujah*. The minor *pujahs* of the year are also

Matters of religious interest.

celebrated in a proper way. The feeding of Brahmins and other people at the annual celebrations of the *sradh* ceremonies of the ancestors of the Raj family is performed also on a large scale and adds to the glory of the family.

6. The beautiful old temples of Matbati and the ruins of the fine buildings belonging to the several branches of the Raj family indicate that the high minded ancestors of the family took much interest in promoting the science of architecture. Now and then, a suddenly discovered old brickbat or two, bearing Sanskrit inscriptions on them, curiously throw light on the antiquities of the place and the Raj family residing in it. A minute observation of the old tank and the disused ditch in the vicinity of the ancient temple of Goonjanath Siva, situated in Tailkupi and already referred to, at once takes us back to antiquity and gives rise to thoughts that fill the mind with great delight. Besides all these, the old system of teaching boys

**Facts of
archæological
interest.**

free of all cost by establishing one or two *chatuspathis* at the Rajbati, the granting of allowances and rent free lands to Brahmins and other qualified men, the ancient custom of feeding the hungry and helping the needy, the hereditary practice of supplying pure water to the people by excavating tanks in different parts of the Raj—all these time-honoured practices remind us of a glorious past and inspire us with a feeling of veneration towards the Raj family which consisted and still consists of members worthy of the position held by them.

7. The flower garden and the orchard of the Rajbati are things well worth notice. The sweet-scented flowers, the delicious mangoes, the luscious lichis, the tasty peaches, the tempting cherries, and other varieties of fruits give an imposing appearance to the gardens and supply the Raj family with fragrant bouquets and sweet luncheons.

8. At the southern end of the village

of Goonjanagar there may still be seen the ruins of an Indigo Factory. The old Indigo Factory belonging to the late Babu Purnachandra Ganguli, a near relation of the Raj family. The factory was made over to him by Raja Indubhushan Deb Roy to whom it originally belonged. It occupies a very pleasant site on the western bank of the river Begbati, opposite the temple of Goonjanath Siva, which stands on its eastern bank. The odoriferous golden *champak*¹ and the sweet-scented bushy *bakul*,² which spread their fragrance all around, the gorgeous *seemul*³ engaging with its crimson flowers the attention of the observer from a distance, the tall pillar-like cocoa nodding in the wind, the taller lovely Indian pine⁴ sending forth its lofty top high up in the air, the still taller charming *jhow*⁵ among whose thin leaves, the soft evening

¹ *Champak*=*Michelia champaca*.

² *Bakul*=*Mimusops elengi*.

³ *Seemul*=*Bombax heptaphyllum*.

⁴ *Indian pine*=*Uvaria longifolia*.

⁵ *Jhow*=*Tamarix Indica*.

breeze sings a melodious song, and the extensive green meadow lying near by, even now add to the charm and grandeur of the spot, while the rich fruit garden attached to the factory splendidly displays a peculiar kind of silent beauty that captivates the mind of the passer-by. All the above remind us of the following sweet stanzas of Miss Torubala Dutt, commonly known as Toru Dutt :

“ The champac, bok, and south-sea pine,
 The nagessur with pendant flowers
 Like ear-rings,—and the forest vine
 That clinging over all, embowers,
 The sirish famed in Sanskrit song
 Which rural maidens love to wear,
 The peepul giant-like and strong,
 The bramble with its matted hair ;—

All these, and thousands, thousands more,
 With helmet red, or golden crown,
 Or green tiara, rose before
 The youth in evening's shadows brown.
 He passed into the forest,—there
 New sights of wonder met his view,—

A waving Pampas green and fair
 All glistening with the evening dew."

9. Below the factory and below the temple, a little to the south, there are cremation grounds on both banks of the river. A black burnt spot with an earthen *kalsi* near it and a piece of bamboo raising its top out of the water in a slanting manner in the vicinity would indicate that some one of the neighbouring Hindus has passed away from this world of disappointments and woes. Sometimes it may be found that dogs, jackals and vultures are feeding on some corpse that has been thrown unburnt or half-burnt into some of the shallowest parts of the river. At times the tortoises in the deep parts of the river would, at the repeated shouts of *Haribol*, simultaneously raise their heads above the surface of the water, in expectation of the approach of a dead body which would satisfy their hunger and renew their spirits. There is another cremation ground on the northern bank of the Kalikatala Doha,

where the corpses from the villages lying to the north of the river Begbati are burnt. The very sight of these places gives rise to serious thoughts in the mind of the solitary wanderer who may happen to be there in the twilight of the evening, when the bright and broad light of the day begins to vanish before the deep darkness of the coming night. He pauses, he thinks, he returns home with a feeling of vague uncertainty. Thus, when the broad day-light of our life is chased away by the gloom of death, we shall grope in the dark to return to our original home.

Although there are many Mahomedans in the adjoining villages, yet in Naldanga there are only a few followers of Islam. Christianity is a thing which is known to the villagers by its name only. Consequently, there is no regular burial ground in the village.

10. The river Begbati (Benga) or the Byang-nadi, as it is commonly called, which

The River Begbati. rises from the Nabaganga and falls into the Fatki, flows through the village from west to

east, and then making a right angle with itself runs to the south, thus forming the eastern boundary of the village. It was once a large river, but is now no better than a rivulet and is generally filled with numerous aquatic plants. During the rains, however, it becomes full, and the Raja Bahadur's green boats and his steam launches even, ply through this and some other rivers between Naldanga and Nohata, where there is another Rajbati called the *Petreat*, this being the summer retreat of the Raja Bahadur. The fish of the river is very pleasant to the taste and supplies a delicious dish to the local public. There is a common saying in the neighbourhood that he who speaks ill of the river is sure to be attacked with goitre and elephantiasis. There are two ferry ghats in Naldanga, one below Naldanga proper and the other below Goonjanagar. At these two places there are also two bamboo bridges for crossing the river in the dry season.

11. Besides the river Begbati, the

Kalikatala Doha and the Natipara Dighi in Tailkupi, there is another fresh water resources. fresh water tank in Kadipur and three others in Goonjanagar, two of them being at the Rajbati and the other on the south of it. These 4 tanks also supply drinking water to the people of the locality.

12. There is another big^{er} tank of historical interest in Tailkupi. It is called **The Harua bhang** the *Haruabhang Dighi* (or **Dighi** the bone-breaking tank). It reminds the simple villagers of the fact that, in the beginning of the 17th century, some highway robbers harboured in the jungle on its banks, and broke the bones and smashed the brains of the passers-by as a preliminary to robbery of the valuables they might possess. Especially, when the zemindars of Eastern Bengal used to remit the Nabob's revenues to his capital, and their escorts passed by that tank, these ruffians would put them to death and loot the money in their charge. This practice was afterwards checked by some illustrious members of

the Raj family. What a contrast between the characters of those brutal outlaws and these sympathetic illustrious men! The former tried to injure humanity as far as they could, while the latter were eager to protect them with all their might. Two-legged creature, man! thou art a divinity here and a monster there!

13. In front of the splendid Rajbati in Goonjanagar there extends a vast tract of swampy ground, called the **The Lohar Beel.** *Lohar Beel*, the greater portion of which becomes arable during the hot season, when paddy is sown in it by the peasants of the locality. During the rains the middle part of the *Beel* becomes filled with water, and the beautiful green paddy waves all over it to the great delight of the sowers. Then, in the harvest season, how sweet it is to hear the rustic song sung by the rural reapers engaged in gathering the crop. In winter, when the water of the *Beel* becomes very shallow, the peasants of the neighbouring villages wade through the mud in a body and catch large quantities

of various sorts of small fish with their *pollos*, *hochas* and small triangular and conical nets. In a particular season of the year the *Beel* abounds in peculiar kinds of aquatic plants of luxurious growth, which occasionally supply food for the Raja Bahadur's elephants.

14. The menagerie of the Rajbati contains an excellent collection of animals.

The menagerie of the Rajbati. There are leopards, bears, monkeys, kangaroos, snakes, deer, crocodiles, otters, hares and guinea-pigs, which attract visitors from distant places. Australian and Indian bulls and cows, white and black buffaloes and pigs, excellent horses and camels, beautiful mules and asses, various kinds of goats and sheep and varieties of English and Irish dogs are real objects of great curiosity to the rural visitors. There is a herd of elephants of which the leader is a huge tusker that very often proudly marches at the head of all the others—a beautiful sight! You will find there nice birds of various descriptions, some of which will speak to you just like human beings.

15. In Goonjanagar there is an Indian fig tree (*Ficus Indica*)^c which, together with another tree of a similar nature (*Ficus religiosa*), was planted by an old Brahmin inhabitant of the village, who in accordance with the Hindu *Shastras* celebrated the consecration of these two plants with pomp and grandeur. They have now grown to be one tree with two kinds of leaves on the two sides of it. The spot occupied by this tree is called the Kalitala of the village (*i.e.*, a spot consecrated to the goddess *Kali*) and is held especially sacred by the people of the locality. The southern side of the trunk of the tree is painted with vermilion, and there is an earthen altar below it, on which the image of the goddess is placed and worshipped on the occasion of the annual *Raksha-Kali-pujah* of the village. Every evening some of the women or children of the village light a lamp there and blow their conch in honour of the goddess. Every Tuesday and Saturday at about 10 A.M. some of these women, begging from door to door

with small axes round their necks in token of humility to the goddess, attend the spot, pay their tributes of respect there, and do honour to her with offerings of money, rice, ripe bananas and sweets. As soon as the women retire, some one of the poor low-class villagers, who may happen to pass by, steps in and removes those articles of tribute for his own use. When no passer-by happens to be there, these articles satisfy the appetite of crows, dogs or jackals. Thus, Hindu charity directly or indirectly supports not only human beings but the inferior animals also.

16. In 1869 A. D., a Middle English School was established at Naldanga. It was maintained by the Naldanga Raj Estate. In 1880 it was raised to the status of a High English School teaching up to the Entrance standard and was named the Naldanga Bhushan High English School. It is highly complementary to the Raj Estate that it could boast of a High English School of its own at a time when the English alphabet was a curious

The Nal-
danga Bhushan H. E. School.

thing in the eyes of the simple villagers in many parts of the district. Since then the school has been doing much good to the people of the locality, the majority of whom can ill afford to pay the heavy expenses of the education of their boys at the head-quarters of the district or in any other town. The boys are now taught English, Mathematics, Sanskrit, Bengali, Geography and History, and are prepared for the Matriculation Examination of the Calcutta University. Some of the ex-students of this school now hold respectable positions in society, such as those of Deputy Magistrate, Private Secretary, Superintendent, Police Inspector, Physician, Surgeon, &c., &c.

17. There is at Naldanga a Sanskrit *Chatushpathi* (or *tol*, as it is commonly called) belonging to and solely maintained by the Raj Estate. In this *Chatushpathi* several pupils are taught Sanskrit Grammar, Kabya, Smriti, &c., &c., by a learned Sanskrit scholar who is also the *Dwar Pundit* or the *Sabha Pundit* (*i.e.*, the Court

The Nal-
danga Bhu-
shan Cha-
tushpathi.

Scholar) of the Raj. The pupils are taught free of all cost. They and their Pundit receive a monthly allowance for their maintenance from the Raj Estate and are supplied with free quarters also. This Pundit is not only regarded as a Sanskrit teacher, but is also looked upon by the people of the locality as an authority in all religious matters.

18. There is also a *pathsala* or primary Bengali school in the village, which acts as a feeder to the Naldanga Bhushan High English School. The *gurumahasay* of the *pathsala* teaches his pupils Bengali and Arithmetic (both European and Indian). The school is self-supporting, though the teacher receives a small monthly grant from the District Board Fund.

19. The Indubhushan Charitable Dispensary is a purely charitable institution and fulfils a very laudable object. All its costs are borne solely by the Raj Estate. Patients are treated here free of all cost.

**The Indubhu-
shan Charitable Dispen-
sary.**

20. There is a Post Office at Naldanga which is a sub-office. Its business is conducted by a sub-post-master who transacts, besides his ordinary duties, money-order and savings bank business also.

21. At Kaliganj which is situated at a distance of two miles from Naldanga there are a Police Station, a sub-Registry office, and another Post Office which is a combined office, *i. e.*, a post, as well as a telegraph, office.

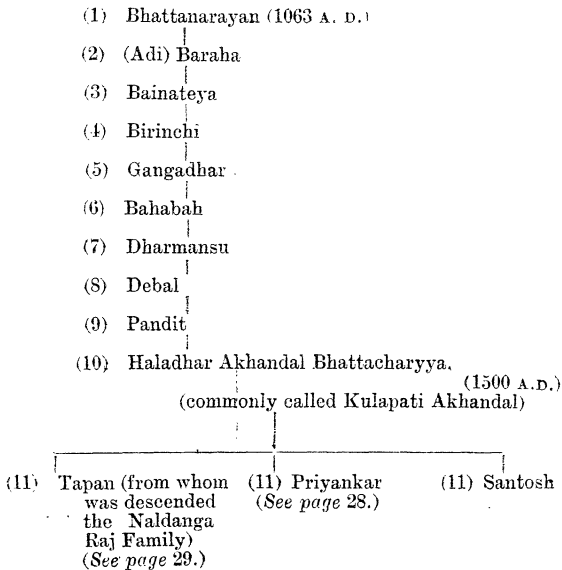
22. In Naldanga some of the villagers carry on trade on a small scale. There are two small bazars in the village—one in Naldanga proper and the other in Goonjanagar—where *hats* are regularly held twice in a week and people generally deal in different articles of food and cloth. Concerning the manufactures of the village, it may be stated that Naldanga itself produces fine cloth for ordinary garments, and date-palm-sugar, while some of the adjoining

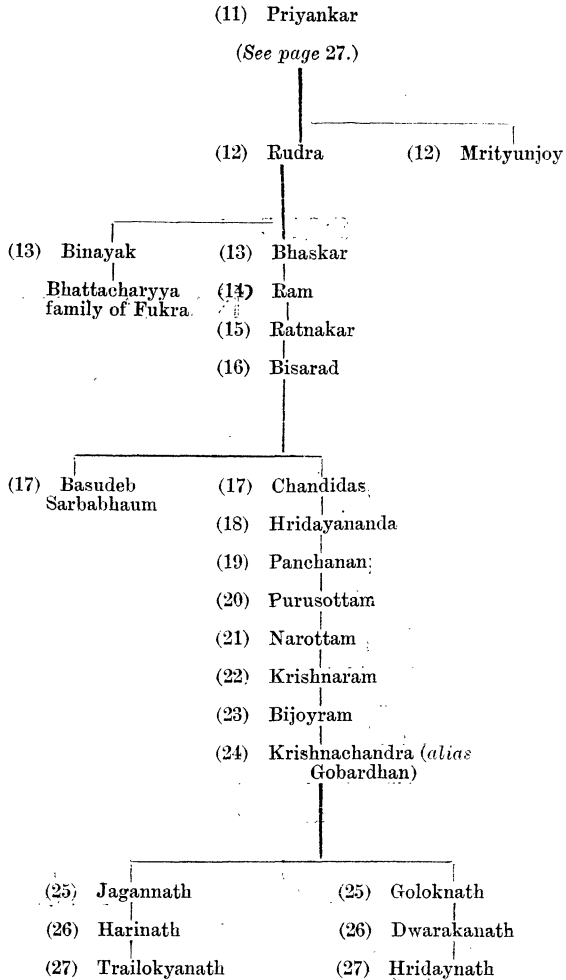
villages produce *goor*, *patali* (molasses cakes) and excellent *dahi* or curded milk. Naldanga and the neighbouring villages are celebrated for abundance of bamboos, sweet mangoes, jack-fruit, and good bananas, especially of the *Martaban* kind. If the Railway line, which is in contemplation, be opened from Jessore to Magura *via* Jhenidah, a branch running from Kaliganj to Kote-Chandpur, a very profitable traffic in mangoes, jack-fruit, fresh vegetables, *goor*, sugar, &c, may be carried on between these localities and Calcutta to the great benefit of the local traders and merchants.

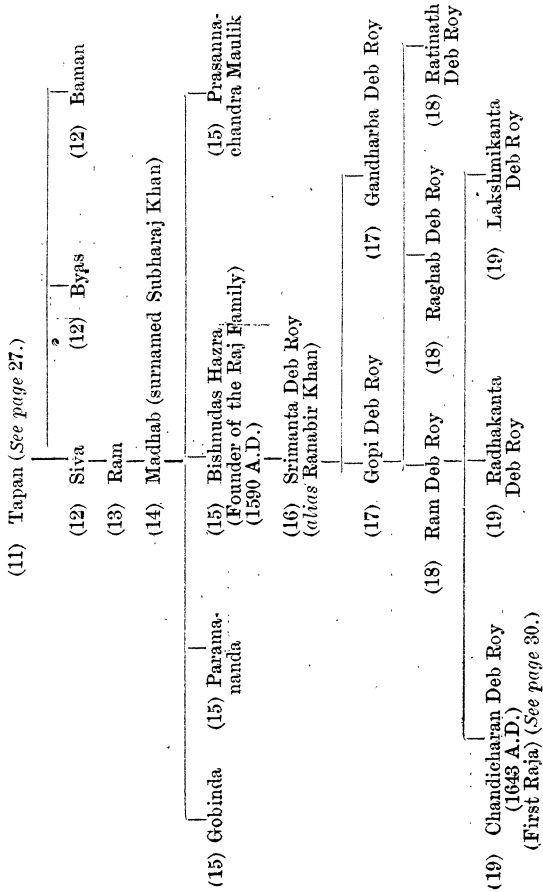
PART II.

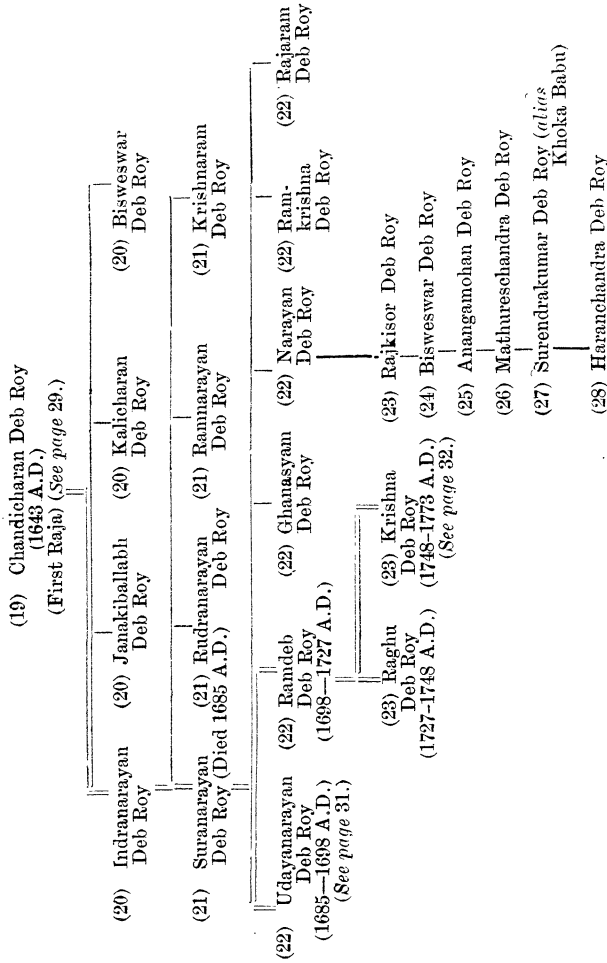
THE NALDANGA RAJ FAMILY.

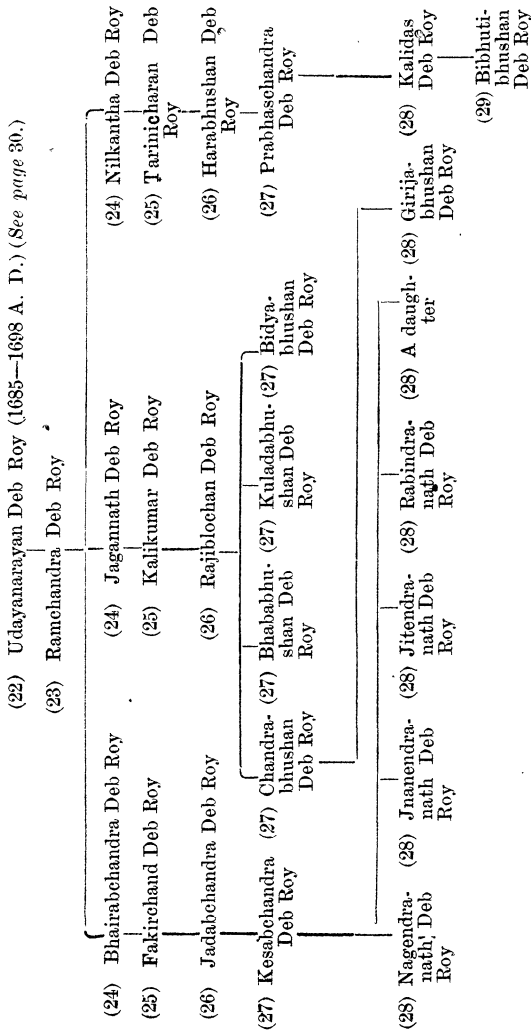
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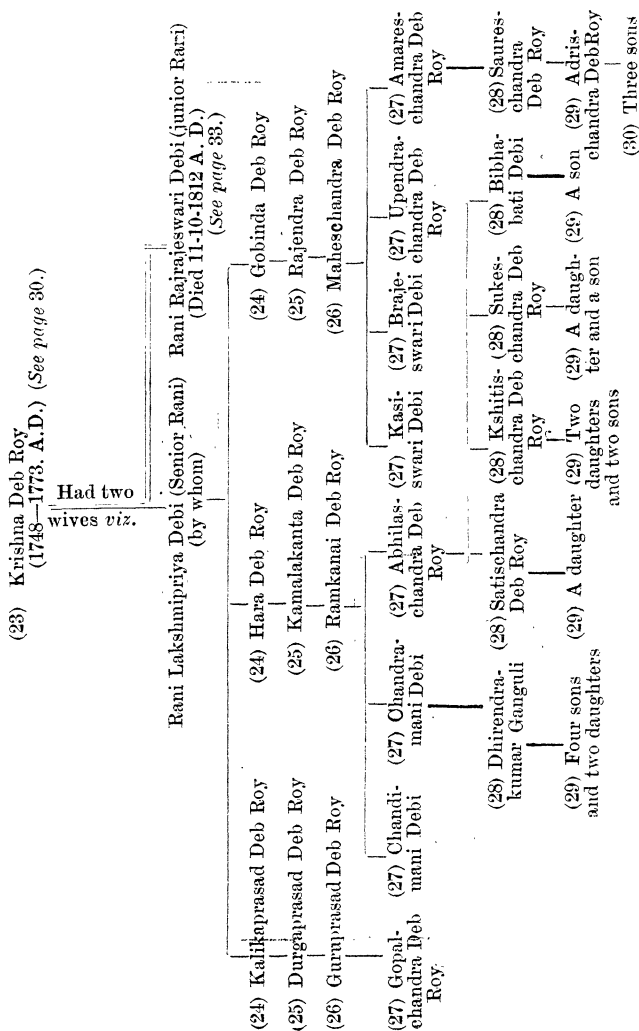




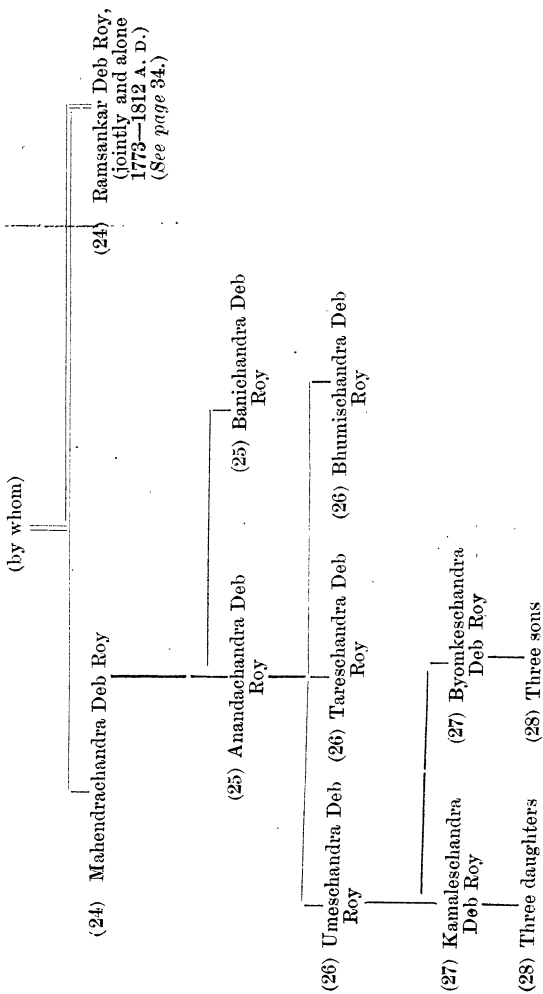


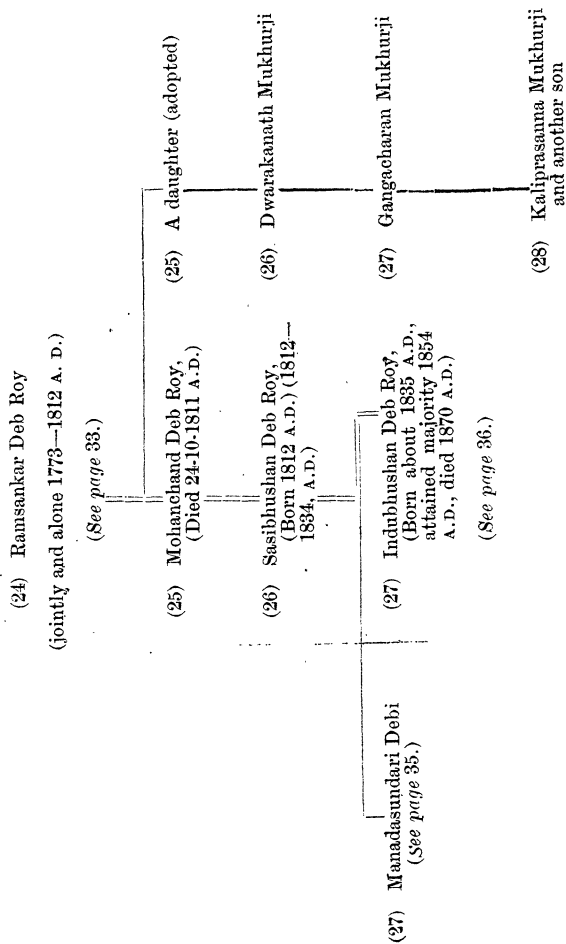






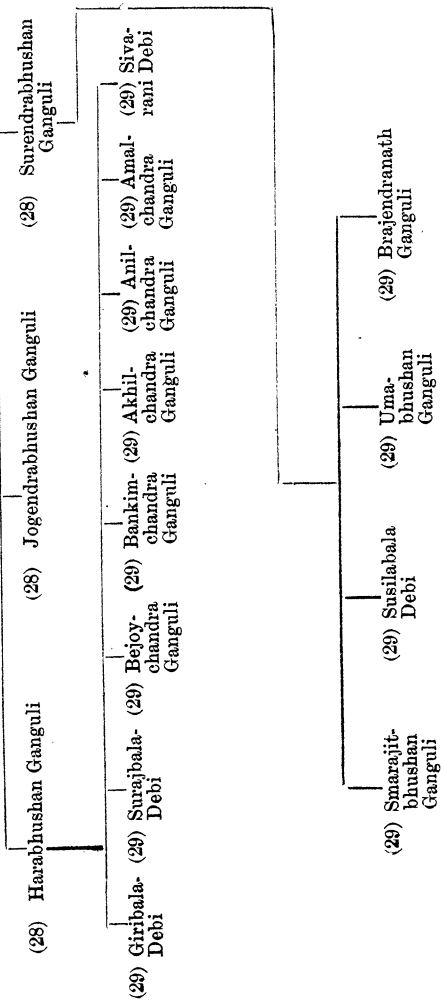
Rani Rajrajeswari Debi (junior Rani)
(Died 11-10-1812, A.D.) (See page 32.)





(27) Manadasundari Debi.

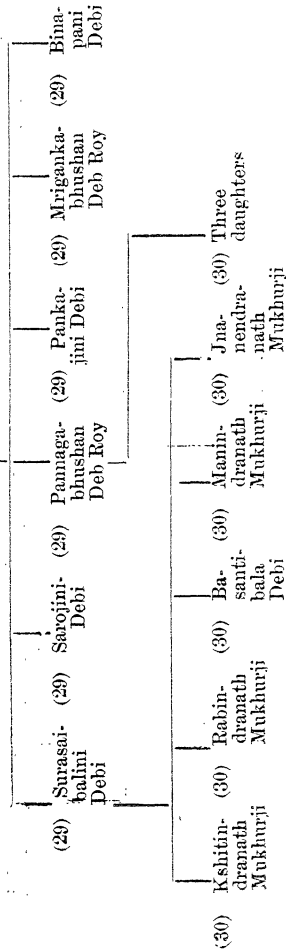
(See page 34.)



(27) Indubhushan Deb Roy (Born about 1835 A.D.)
attained majority 1854 A.D., died 1870 A.D.)

(See page 34.)

(28) Pramathbhushan Deb Roy
(Born 22-12-1858 A.D., succeeded
1870 A.D., attained majority
22-12-1879 A.D.)



PART II.

THE NALDANGA RAJ FAMILY.

HISTORY.

1. In the 7th decade of the 11th century, when in the West the beautiful chalk cliffs of Dover captivated the imagination of the great Duke, William of Normandy, commonly called in England William the Conqueror, who, having conceived the idea of making himself King of England, was trying his best to blow his war-trumpet against King Harold on the field of Senlac, in the East social reforms engaged the attention of the King of Lower Bengal, the renowned Adisur, the founder of the Sen dynasty of that province, who, in the midst of peace and prosperity, was sorry to notice that the Bengali Brahmins were very degraded

The Advent
of Bhatta-
narayan and
others from
Kanouj. (1063
A.D.)

and could not perform the religious rites of the high caste Hindus of the province strictly in accordance with the *shastras*. Consequently he sent one of his courtiers to the King of Kanouj and asked that he would send to his court five Brahmins well versed in those scriptures. The latter complied and sent five such Brahmins. These were (1) Bhattanarayan of the *Sandilya gotra*, (2) Daksha of the *Kasyap gotra*, (3) Bedgarbha of the *Sabarna gotra*, (4) Chhandora of the *Batsya gotra*, and (5) Sriharsha of the *Bharadwaj gotra*. With them also came their five servants: (1) Makaranda Ghosh of the *Saukalin gotra*, (2) Dasarath Basu of the *Gaitam gotra*, (3) Kalidas Mitra of the *Biswamitra gotra*, (4) Purusottam Datta of the *Maudgalya gotra*, and (5) Birat Guha of the *Kasyap gotra*. These servants were all Kayasthas by caste. Maharaja Adisur settled these Brahmins and Kayasthas in the province. From these Brahmins are descended the high caste Brahmins and from their servants the Kayasthas of Bengal. The Maharaja

reigned in 1063 A.D. So, it is clear that Bhattanarayan also flourished at that time.

2. Now, Bhattanarayan had a son whose name was Baraha or Adi-Baraha.

Baraha's son was Bainateya.
Pedigree.

Bainateya's son Birinchi ;
Birinchi's son Gangadhar ; Gangadhar's
son Bahabah ; Bahabah's son Dharmansu ;
Dharmansu's son was Debal, who was a
courtier of King Ballal Sen, the founder of
the order of *Kulins* in Bengal. Now, those
who hold that Ballal Sen was the son of
Adisur must bear in mind that, in this case
some six or seven generations could not
have passed from Bhattanarayan, who was
contemporary with Adisur, before Debal
lived or Ballal flourished. So, it is evident
that Adisur was not the father of Ballal Sen.
Now, at this time King Ballal, through his
son, Lakshman Sen, convened a meeting
of the respectable Brahmins of the
province, founded the order of *Kulins*,
and admitted the following 19 Brahmins
to that order : Bahurup, Sucha, Arabinda,
Halayudha, Bangal, (these five were
Chatterjis), Gobardhanacharyya (belonging

to *Putidanda Gain*), Siro (Ghosal), Siso (Ganguli), Roshakar (belonging to *Kundagrami Gain*), Jalhan, Maheswar, Debal, Baman, Isan, Makaranda, (these six were Banerjis), Utsaha, Garur, (these two were Mukhurjis), Kanu, Kutuhal, (these two were Kanjilals). From the above it is evident that Debal was admitted to the order of *Kulins* for some time at least. So, the Naldanga Raj Family did not *originally* belong to the *Bansaj* class. Debal's son was Pandit, and Pandit had for his son, Haladhar Akhandal Bhattacharyya, commonly known as *Kulapati* Akhandal, as he was the head of his clan. He lived in 1500 A. D. at Bhabrasur in Pergunnah Telihati in the district of Faridpur. Akhandal had three sons: Tapan, Priyankar and Santosh. From Tapan was descended the Naldanga Raj Family which will be described hereafter. Santosh went away to Malagdia in Pergunnah Bikrampur in the district of Dacca and settled there. Priyankar continued to live at Bhabrasur. He had two sons: Rudra and Mrityunjoy.

Mrityunjoy left Bhabrasur and settled at Ratandia in Bikrampur, but Rudra remained in his native village and had two sons : Binayak and Bhaskar. From Binayak was descended the Bhattacharyya family of Fukra. Bhaskar's only son was Ram, and Ram's son was Ratnakar who married the daughter of Durgaram Chakrabarti of Fulara and settled there. Ratnakar had a son whose name was Bisarad. This Bisarad was a contemporary of Jagannath Misra, father of the renowned religious reformer, Sri Chaitanya of Nabadwip. Bisarad went to that holy place and opened a famous *Chatushpathi* or Sanskrit College there. He and three generations after him are known to have lived at this celebrated place of pilgrimage. Bisarad left two sons : Basudeb Sarbabhaum and Chandidas. Basudeb was the Sabha-Pundit or court-scholar of the Raja of Orissa. His defeat in a religious controversy with Chaitanya led him to become one of the disciples of the great reformer. His brother Chandidas had a son, Hridayananda by name. Hridayananda's son was

Panchanan. Panchanan's son, Purushottam, received a *jaigeer* from the Nabob of Bengal, left Nabadwip, settled at the village, Khagrakuri, in the district of Dacca, and became known as the Baishnab of Khagrakuri. Purushottam's son was Narottam, whose son, Krishnaram, was the Treasurer of the Nabob and received from him the title of *Majumdar*. Henceforth his descendants have been called the Majumdars of Tara. Krishnaram's son was Bijoyram, whose son was Krishnachandra *alias* Gobardhan. Krishnachandra had two sons: Jagannath and Goloknath. Jagannath had a son whose name was Harinath, and Harinath's son was Trailokyanath. Goloknath also had a son, Dwarakanath by name, and Dwarakanath left a son whose name was Hridaynath.

3. It has already been stated that the Naldanga Raj Family was descended from

Tapan's
 descendants. Tapan, son of Haladhar Akhandal Bhattacharyya. Tapan had three sons: Siva, Byas and Baman. Byas had no issue. Baman's descendants lived at Majhergram. Siva's

son was Ram, and Ram's son was Madhab, surnamed Subharaj Khan. Madhab Subharaj Khan seems, from his title of *Khan*, to have been in the service of the Nabob. At this time the renowned Debibar Ghatak divided the Brahmins into several classes, each of which was called a *Mel*. Madhab Subharaj Khan, according to his surname was made a member of the *Subharaj Khani Mel*. Hence the Naldanga Raj family still belong to that *Mel*. Sometime after this, one of the ancestors of this family (it is uncertain who) probably married the daughter of a Brahmin belonging to the *Bansaj* order and thereby lost his *Kulinism*, and by heredity became a *siddha* (i.e. celebrated) *Bansaj*. Madhab Subharaj Khan had four sons: Gobinda, Paramananda, Bishnudas Hazra and Prasannachandra Maulik.

4. Towards the close of the 16th century there lived a *sanyasi* or hermit

Bishnudas Hazra. (1590 A. D.) much devoted to religious meditation. He dwelt in a cottage in the jungle of Kharasuni;

a place in the neighbourhood of Naldanga which was then full of *nal* or reeds, whence the name. This *sanyasi* proved to be Bishnudas Hazra, the third son of Madhab Subharaj Khan. Bishnudas had retired from the world and eventually become a hermit. He had with him his favourite idol, Galim Gopal, which has already been referred to as an idol of the Raj family. The spot where his cottage stood in Kharasuni afterwards received the name of *Házrabati*, from his surname of *Hazra*, and the modern illustrious members of the Raj family are still proud to call their own modern home *Hazra-Asram* or the abode of the Hazras. The acquisition of supernatural powers by the mystical and magical worship of a particular god or goddess enabled Bishnudas to perform wonderful miracles that had never been heard of before. One day, in the year 1590 A.D., the great *yogi* was sitting in his cottage absorbed in meditation. At this time a military officer dressed in full uniform appeared there with a body of

men. No sooner had they arrived at the spot than their noise caused Bishnudas to rise from his meditation, and the following conversation took place between the officer and the hermit :

Officer. I bow down to you, Lord.

Hermit. Let victory attend you, my son ! Who and what are you, and what do you want ?

Off. I am an officer of His Highness the Subadar of Bengal, who is now going from Dacca to Rajmahal with his retinue and is on board his boat on the river near by. Our provisions have run short, and His Highness has sent us ashore to obtain a fresh supply.

Her. Well, that's good. Will you tell your master that I am ready to supply him with suitable provisions, provided that he will condescend to become my guest and accept my offer ?

At this, the officer again bowed down to the hermit, and returning to the Subadar reported to him all about the *sanyasi*. Now, this Subadar was no other than the

great Man Sing, the celebrated Rajput general of the most celebrated Moghul Emperor, Akbar the Great. Man Sing then went in person to the hermitage and was received by Bishnudas with great honour. The chief, however, was astonished to see that sufficient quantities of provisions had been heaped up behind the *sanyasi's* cottage before his arrival. Bishnudas then sumptuously fed the men and requested them to convey the rest of the provisions to the boats. This they immediately did. Now, pleased with the superhuman and highly charitable conduct of the extraordinary man, the great Rajput, with a view to providing his idol with some landed property, granted him the possession of five adjacent villages which formed the basis of the zemindari of the Naldanga Raj family, which is thus the oldest of all the zemindar families in the district, and promised to let him have the possession of as many more villages as he or any of his successors would be able to bring into their own possession by dispossessing the neighbouring zemindars

with whom the Subadar had been much displeased on account of their revenues having fallen into arrears for a long time. The Subadar then went away, and the *sanyasi* continued for some years to do what he had been doing before. At last he, by means of abstract contemplation, gave up the ghost and effected his union with the Supreme Being.

5. Now, although Bishnudas was unmarried and led a bachelor's life, he had, such is the common belief, a son miraculously born to him through the grace of the gods. This son was Srimanta Deb Roy, commonly known by the name of Ranabir Khan. Srimanta, a beautiful youth of tall stature, charming face, broad chest and lofty air, was really the pride of his father. As he was born through the influence of the gods, the title of *Deb* was added to his usual surname of *Roy* (i.e. a noble man) which he received from the public on account of his having become a very powerful and influential man. He collected several thousand men and trained

Ranabir
Khan, (1600
A. D.)

them as excellent soldiers. Having formed a regular army in this way, he led it against the Afghan zemindars of Sarup-pur, a well known village in the neighbourhood of modern Kote-Chandpur (or more properly Court-Chandpur, as there was established a Munsif's court there by the English Government a few centuries afterwards). There was a hard fight between the two parties, in which the young Deb Roy was victorious. Some of the Afghan *Pathans* died in the fight, while the others were driven out of their village to seek refuge some where else. Thus Srimanta Deb Roy took possession of their zemindaris.

At this time *i. e.* in 1598 A.D. the Emperor Akbar led an expedition into the Deccan, and the Subadar of Bengal, the great Man Sing, was ordered to attend him there. Consequently his *suba* was left to its own fate; and Osman Khan, the intelligent, active and energetic nephew of Katlu Khan, the former independent *Pathan* Nabob of Orissa, being now the chief of the Orissa Afghans, quickly

seized the opportunity and again appeared in the field. It is needless to say anything more in order to introduce these two *Pathan* chiefs to the Bengal public, as the immortal Bankimchandra has very cleverly immortalized them in his ever-enduring novel *Durgesnandini* or "The Chieftain's Daughter." Osman conquered the greater part of Bengal and heard of the valour Srimanta Deb Roy had displayed in his fight with the Sarup-pur Afghans. The magnanimity of the noble *Pathan's* heart induced him to hold a friendly interview with the brave Hindu and to reward him with the title of *Ranabir Khan*. Some say that Srimanta Deb Roy saw the *Moghul* Governor of Bengal at his capital, Moorshedabad, and received the title from him. But this is quite absurd. There was then no *Moghul* Governor in Bengal, and Moorshedabad was at that time not even founded. *Ranabir* flourished towards the end of the 16th century, and Man Sing ruled Bengal from 1589 A.D. to 1605 A.D. When *Ranabir* received the title, Man Sing was absent

in the Deccan. Further, his capital was Rajmahal and not Moorshedabad. The latter city was founded a century later by the renowned Moorshed Kooli Khan *alias* Jaffer Khan, who was appointed Dewan of Bengal only in 1701 A.D. Again, the title of *Khan*, usually held by the Mahomedans, especially by the *Pathans*, could not possibly have been conferred on a Hindu noble man by a Hindu Subadar of Bengal. Osman was a Fersian, as well as a Sanskrit, scholar. So, he seems to have selected the word *Ranabir* from the classical language of the Hindus and the epithet *Khan* from his own classical language, and by a combination of these two formed the Hindu-mahomedan or rather the Indo-Persian surname of *Ranabir Khan*. Thus it appears evident that Srimanta Deb Roy did not receive the title from the *Moghuls*; nor did he receive it from the great Hindu Subadar. However, no sooner had Man Sing heard of Osman's conquest of Bengal than he hastened back from the Deccan, defeated the enemy at Sherepur and re-established

the *Moghul* authority in the province. Ranabir then waited upon him at his court at Rajmahal and reminded him of his promise to his father, *sanyasi* Bishnudas. The high-minded Rajput treated him with honour and kindness, granted him a *sanad* and a big *jaigeer*, and confirmed him in his possession of the zemindaris of the Sarup-pur Afghans.

Ranabir then returned home, and, in 1600 A.D., the famous year of the advent of the English into India, founded the village of Naldanga, which very soon rose in splendour and celebrity. Now, there is an old Indian fig tree (*Ficus Indica*) at a place called Kalikatala near the present Doha or pool of the same name. This tree is commonly called the *Akshoy Bat* or the imperishable fig tree, inasmuch as it is said to have been in existence at Ranabir's time. On a certain day, in about 1600 A.D., Ranabir was out on a hunting expedition, and, while returning home on horse back through the thick jungle that surrounded the tree, he saw a hermit sitting cross-legged under its

shade on his seat of *Jusa*-grass, with his body firm, his eyes fixed on the tip of his nose, and his mind intent on the Deity, and performing a fanciful operation by which the vital spirit seated in the lower part of the body and the ethereal spirit placed in the head, were brought into combination in the brain. The devotee was then supposing himself entirely united with Brahma, or the great Supreme Being, and was in complete abstraction. Ranabir had left his followers behind him and was now alone. This was, he thought, a golden opportunity to meet the holy man and receive religious instructions from him. So, he left his horse at a little distance and approached the hermit with slow and cautious steps. In the meantime the sudden neighing of his horse roused the hermit from his meditation, and the undaunted heart of the brave hero trembled at the thought of incurring the displeasure of such a pious man. He showed from a distance great humility to the venerable personage and bowed down to him again and again. Pleased with the

conduct of Ranabir, the *sanyasi* beckoned him near and intending to initiate him as his disciple directed him to bathe somewhere in the neighbourhood and come back without delay. At this Ranabir searched for water, but there was no water to be found there. On his reporting this to the *sanyasi*, he gave him a ring made of *kusa*-grass and directed him to go out of the jungle and throw it on any open space that might be found there. As Ranabir did this, a terrible noise was heard to issue from the ground, which to his great amazement sank down all on a sudden and a very big and deep pool was formed there. This pool is the famous Kalikatala Doha which was then not less than 150 feet deep. The depth of the Doha is now about 60 feet in the middle. Ranabir, however, bathed in it and returned to the hermit, who initiated him as his disciple, told him that his name was Brahmananda Giri, and, assuring him that he would appear again once or twice at some future time before

some of his descendants, suddenly disappeared. Ranabir did not live long after this.

6. Ranabir Khan left two sons : Gopimohan Deb Roy and Gandharba Deb Roy. Gandharba had no issue. Of Gopimohan's three sons, the third, Ratinath Deb Roy, of whom the descendants were Abhilaschandra Roy and Kailaschandra Roy, settled in Khedapara, a village west of Matbati; the second, Raghav Deb Roy, died without leaving issue; and the first, Ram Deb Roy, had three sons : Chandicharan Deb Roy, Radhakanta *alias* Radhaballabh Deb Roy, and Lakshmikanta Deb Roy. Lakshmikanta lived at Maharajpur, about 4 miles north-west of Naldanga. Banamali Roy and others were his descendants. Radhakanta lived also at Khedapara. Chandrakanta Roy and others were descended from him. It was Chandicharan who became very famous through his own intelligent and energetic exertions.

Two Gener-
ations after
R a n a b i r :
Gopi Deb
Roy and Ram
Deb Roy.

7. Chandicharan Deb Roy was a man of intellect, power and character. He won the affections of his people by his affability and moderation. On one occasion, in 1643 A. D., Raja Kedareswar, a neighbouring zemindar, offended him by his jealous conduct. He at once embarked in about a hundred boats on the Begbati and with his well-trained soldiers assailed the Raja in great fury. We find that in Chandicharan's army there were *Feringhee Balwagastis* i.e. Eurasian (or more properly, Europe-Asian) soldiers, the descendants of the Portuguese adventurers, who had settled, about the year 1600, on the coast of Chittagong and Arracan, married the daughters of the native converts, and entered into the service of the native princes. They were well acquainted with maritime affairs and were exceedingly brave. Dr. Francois Bernier, physician to the Emperor Shah Jehan, thus describes these Portuguese adventurers and the manner in which they had settled: "All the vagabond

Raja Chandicharan Deb Roy. (1643 A.D.)

Portuguese from Goa, Cochin, Malacca and other places, sought refuge at Arracan. They were the very lowest of Europeans. The King of Arracan kept them as a guard to protect himself from the *Moghuls*. He placed them at Chittagong, and gave them lands and encouraged them to wander about and plunder Bengal. Thus they were not only pirates at sea, but they sailed many hundreds of miles up the rivers, plundered and burnt the villages, and carried away the people for slaves. The aged they released on receiving a ransom; the young they took into their fleet, made them rowers, and baptizing them made them such Christians as they themselves were. And they afterwards boasted that they made as many converts in one year as the Missionaries did in ten." However, a fight ensued between the two chiefs, in which Raja Kedareshwar was captured and put to death. Chandicharan immediately took possession of his estates together with the image of his family god which he named Bara Gopal or bigger Gopal in comparison with his

own smaller Galim Gopal, and, thus became one of the biggest zemindars of Bengal.

He now directed his attention to the improvement of his finances, introduced a better system of collecting the rents from his tenants, appointed able and faithful officers, and established the Sadar Zemindari Cutchery of Chakla about 8 miles to the North-West of Naldanga. The Cutchery is still in existence and is now in the possession of the Zemindar Babus of Narail. Chandicharan now became master of the entire Pergunnah of Mahamudshahi. His fame now spread everywhere, and even to the Court of Rajmahal which now vied with that of Delhi in magnificence. During this period, under the wise and excellent administration of Prince Shah Sujah, commonly called Sultan Sujah, the second son of Emperor Shah Jehan, and Governor and Viceroy of Bengal, the province enjoyed such peace and prosperity as it had not experienced for centuries. Chandicharan now embraced this opportunity

and intended visiting Rajmahal and paying homage to the Subadar. He accordingly went to the capital in 1656 A. D. and waited upon the Viceroy, who, having the ability to appreciate merit in others, received him warmly, gave him a *Khelat*, and dubbed him a *Raja*. The newly-made Raja presented many valuable articles to the Nabob, who in return honoured him by directing his own soldiers to present arms to him. Feasts and nautches completed what was wanting, and Chandicharan now returned home with his new dignity and honour. He then constructed the *Jore-Bangla* or the M-roofed house already referred to, and consecrated it to the two idols, Bara Gopal and Galim Gopal. Then, in memory of the above two occasions, he entertained many of his tenants with feasts and music. Thus, Chandicharan Deb Roy was the first Raja of this family. Some little time after this he died.

8. The Raja left 4 sons: Indra-



Temple of Siddhiswari.

narayan, Janakiballabh, Kalicharan and Raja Indra- Bisweswar. Janakiballabh
narayan Deb
Roy. lived at Kamarail, a village about two miles south-east of Naldanga, and Bisweswar at Kalikatala. Both died without issue. Kalicharan settled at Gopalpur about three miles south-east of Naldanga, where his descendants still live. It was the eldest son, Indranarayan, who inherited the zemindari and the title. Raja Indranarayan was a pious man and used to devote much of his time to religious rites. On one occasion, Brahmananda Giri, the spiritual guide of Ranabir Khan, appeared before him and secretly instructed him to establish an idol of his family goddess Kali and make arrangements for its daily worship. He accordingly brought from Benares a good sculptor and some valuable black stone, out of which the latter carved an excellent small image of the goddess Kali, which the Raja placed in a temple at Matbati and called, after his own name, Indreswari. This idol is still in existence and is now called Siddhiswari.

9. Though Indranarayan did not live long, yet he left 4 sons : Suranarayan, Rudranarayan, Ramnarayan and Krishnaram, of whom Ramnarayan and Krishnaram died without issue. Rudranarayan's descendants still live at Soonti, a village about 10 miles west of Naldanga. Suranarayan succeeded his father and was like him distinguished for his piety. Once, at the dead of night, when Raja Suranarayan and his Rani were sleeping together in their bed-chamber, the Raja was startled to hear a voice pronounce his own name : Suranarayan, Suranarayan, Suranarayan,—once, twice, thrice. He could no longer keep his head on the pillow : rising hastily he was surprised to see, standing near his pillow, a tall human figure with long matted locks hanging from his head, a trident in his hand, his body being covered with ashes. He could not understand how this *sanyasi*, as he appeared to be, had come in at so late an hour of the night. The watchmen were on guard, and the doors

Raja Suranarayan Deb Roy (Died 1685 A. D.).

and windows still closed as before. The Raja though a little frightened at the sight, bowed down to this venerable man and lay prostrate before him for some time. Then, mustering up his courage he very humbly requested him to explain who and what he was and how and why he had come in at so late an hour of the night. The *sanyasi* moved a little forward, blessed the Raja by placing his right hand on his head, and said, "I am Brahmananda Giri, the spiritual preceptor of your ancestor, Ranabir Khan. I have come here by my supernatural powers to fulfil my promise to him. Before day-break I must finish the consecration of the image of your family goddess Indreswari at Matbati. So, accompany me to the temple and help me to perform the religious duties. The Raja very respectfully and silently obeyed the *sanyasi*, who after sanctifying the image and finishing all other rites put some *ghee* (clarified butter) in a country lamp of copper, lighted it with his own hand, placed it at the back

of the idol, and gave the following mandates :

(1) "This lamp should be kept ever-burning day and night with *ghee*, so that it might not be put out at any future time."

(2) "The idol should be daily worshipped by sacrificing a he-goat before it."

(3) "*Siva-bali* (*i. e.* presentation to the jackals of food consisting of rice, meat and *ghee* boiled together) should be made daily in the vicinity of the temple with strictness."

(4) "Uninvited guests should be daily fed on the premises of the temple of the idol."

(5) "The idol should henceforth be called *Siddhiswari* instead of *Indreswari*."

(6) "The idol should never be removed from the temple."

(7) "Any infringement of the above rules would lead to the downfall of the Raj family."

On this the *sanyasi* struck 22 blows with his fist on the back of the Raja's neck and said, "The zemindari will, in an undivided state, continue to be in the

possession of your family for 22 generations, counting from the original progenitor of the family." At this time the morning was about to dawn, and the hermit, accompanied by the Raja, hurried to the Kalikatala Doha. There he got down into the water of the Doha and disappeared for ever. The latter, after awaiting him there in vain for some time, returned home disappointed. He then gave feasts to Brahmins and others in honour of the occasion, set apart a portion of his zemindari to the idol *Siddhiswari* for its maintenance, and very peacefully passed the rest of his life. He died in 1685 A. D. Now, it is very difficult to ascertain whom the *sanyasi* meant by the expression *original progenitor*. It is seen that the zemindari continued undivided down to the time of Raja Krishna Deb Roy, third in descent from Suranarayan. Counting from Bhattanarayan down to Krishna Deb Roy, there were 23 generations *i. e.* more than 22. So, obviously Bhattanarayan was not meant by the expression, but counting

from Bhattanarayan's son, Baraha, who was usually called Adi-Baraha, down to Krishna Deb Roy, there were 22 generations precisely, and the epithet *Adi* (*i. e.* original) also leads us to believe that it was Baraha whom the *sanyasi* referred to. But it is not easy to ascertain why Bhattanarayan, who had come from Kanouj and become the founder of the family in Bengal, was omitted by him and his son, Baraha, meant by the expression. Some say that the *sanyasi* did not make the above statement, but said that the title of *Raja* would be held by only 22 generations of the family. In that case, 12 generations more are to hold the title after Raja Pramathabhushan Deb Roy who is the 10th in descent from Raja Chandicharan Deb Roy, the first Raja of the family.

10. Raja Suranarayan had 6 sons : Udaynarayan, Ramdeb, Ghanasyam, Narayan, Ramkrishna and Rajaram. Of these Udaynarayan, being the eldest, succeeded his father in 1685 A. D. Ramdeb

Raja Uday-
narayan Deb
Roy (1685-
1698 A.D.)

lived with him. Ghanasyam received a very small portion of the zemindari, viz., Taraf Kusabaria, and lived separately at Naldanga. He was usually called the Taluqdar of Kusabaria. The most illustrious of his descendants was Bishnuchandra Deb Roy. None of his family are living now. Narayan received Taraf Belwari and was called the Taluqdar of Belwari. He left a son whose name was Rajkisor Deb Roy. Rajkisor's son was Bisweswar Deb Roy, whose son, Anangamohan Deb Roy, was for his liberality and other good qualities known to one and all in this part of the district. He removed his residence from Naldanga to Chhandra, a village about 10 miles to the South-East of Naldanga. He settled this new village with many new Brahmin inhabitants, built a magnificent house for himself, constructed roads and excavated tanks for the benefit of others. He also established an English school, a Sanskrit *Chatushpathi* and a charitable dispensary at his own house. He used to celebrate all his family rites and religious cere-

monies of the year and feed invited and uninvited guests every day with great care. But all this was beyond his means. He therefore very soon incurred a heavy debt which led to the ruin of his son, Mathureschandra Deb Roy, grandson, Surendrakumar *alias* Kalidas Deb Roy, commonly called Khoka Babu, and great grandson, Haranchandra Deb Roy. Ramkrishna Deb Roy, 5th son of Raja Suranarayan, took only one village, Benga, out of the whole zemindari, and was called the Taluqdar of Benga. Purnachandra Roy was one of his descendants. Suranarayan's 6th son, Rajaram Deb Roy, died without leaving issue.

Now, on the succession of Udaynarayan Deb Roy in 1685 A. D., the management of the zemindari was much neglected. Raja Udaynarayan was given to luxury and did not himself look after the affairs of his estate. Very soon heavy arrears of revenue stood against his name in the *suba*-accounts at the Nabob's darbar, and the Raja could not pay them on demand. Consequently an order for

his arrest was immediately issued by Nabob Shaista Khan, who deputed^o Sowar (captain) Shamsar Khan for the purpose. The Sowar at once came down upon the Raja, who thought it prudent to give him a very warm reception and present to him a large amount of money and many precious articles. The former, instead of taking a hostile attitude, befriended the latter and showed great favour to him. Thus the two friends passed sometime in happiness. This excited the jealousy of Ramdeb Deb Roy, brother of the Raja; who was not on good terms with him. Ramdeb intended to create a difference between the two, so that Udaynarayan might be punished by the Sowar and he himself might seize the opportunity of snatching the zemindari from his brother. One dark night a heavy fall of bricks, bones, broken earthen pots and other foul missiles, into the camp of the Sowar caused a great disturbance to him and his men. It was Ramdeb, who wishing to ascribe this atrocity to Raja Udaynarayan had secretly instigated a body of ruffians

to commit the outrage. The next morning he held a private interview with the Sowar and fully convinced him that on the previous night Udaynarayan had behaved thus with a view to drive him away with his men, and that if he failed in this, he would take the Sowar's life by some foul means. Though Shamser Khan was much surprised, he did not disbelieve Ramdeb's statement, and at once making an engagement with the Raja called on him at his house. Much pleased with so kind a visit, the latter was preparing to welcome his friend fittingly, when the Sowar stabbed him to death with his concealed dagger. This was in 1698 A. D. Shamser, putting Ramdeb Deb Roy then and there in possession of the zemindari, conferred on him the title of *Raja* and left Naldanga for good.

Udaynarayan's son, Ramchandra Deb Roy, was thus deprived of his father's zemindari and received only Taraf Joradah. He was called the Taluqdar of Joradah. Ramchandra had three sons: Bhairabchandra, Jagannath and Nil-

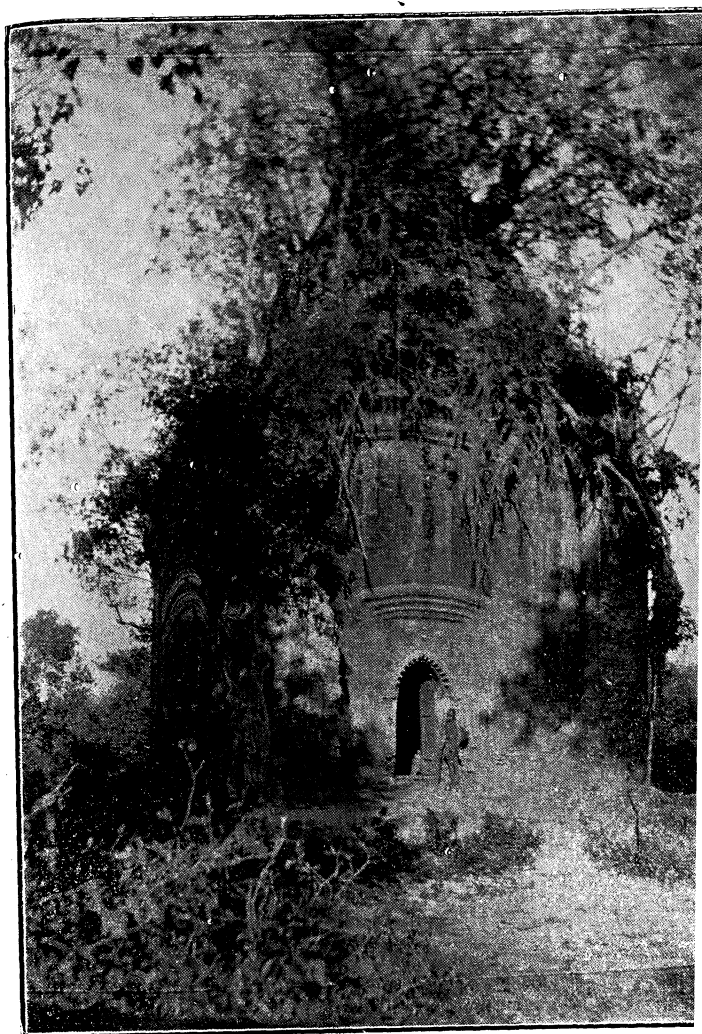
kantha. Bhairabchandra Deb Roy married Maheswari Debi, by whom he had a son, Fakirchand Deb Roy. Fakirchand married Joydurga Debi, by whom he had no issue. So, he adopted as his son Jadabchandra Deb Roy who married Bhubanmohini Debi and Haribala Debi. Jadabchandra's adopted son, Kesabchandra Deb Roy, married Hemangini Debi and at his death left 4 sons: Nagendranath Deb Roy, Jnanendranath Deb Roy, Jitendranath Deb Roy, and Rabindranath Deb Roy, and a daughter. Ramchandra's second son, Jagannath Deb Roy, left a son whose name was Kalikumar Deb Roy. Kalikumar's son was Rajiblochan Deb Roy. Rajiblochan had 4 sons: Chandrabhushan Deb Roy, Bhababhushan Deb Roy, Kuladabhushan Deb Roy and Bidyabhushan Deb Roy. Chandrabhushan Deb Roy married Rakhadasundari Debi. His son is Girijabhushan Deb Roy. Kuladabhushan married Lakshmipriya Debi. Bhababhushan, Kuladabhushan and Bidyabhushan left no issue. Ramchandra's third son, Nilkantha Deb Roy, had a son, Tarinicharan

Deb Roy by name, whose son, Harabhushan Deb Roy, adopted Prabhaschandra Deb Roy as his son. Prabhaschandra's son, Kalidas Deb Roy, married Harimati Debi. His son is Bibhutibhushan Deb Roy.

11. Ramdeb Deb Roy, on succeeding his brother, Raja Udaynarayan Deb Roy, in 1698 A. D., became sole master of the entire zemindari. He was a man of

Raja Ramdeb
Deb Roy (1698-
1727 A D.)

charitable disposition and presented many rent-free lands to his family gods and to virtuous men of all castes and creeds. These lands are still known as *Debottar*, *Brahmottar*, *Baidyottar*, *Baishnabottar*, *Mahatran*, *Pirottar*, and *Lakhiraj* lands, as they were given to gods, Brahmins, Baidyas, Baishnabs, Sudras, Pirs (Mahomedan saints) and Mahomedans respectively. He established an idol of a goddess at Matbati, named it *Rameswari* after his own name, consecrated it with grandeur and pomp, and made arrangements for its daily worship. Ramdeb Deb Roy became very famous for his liberality.



Temple of Rameswari.

At this time Nabob Moorshed Kooli Khan realized the revenues from the zemindars with great accuracy and punctuality. They were put to every kind of torture whenever their revenues fell into arrears. Syed Reza Khan, who had married the Viceroy's grand daughter, invented a new means of cruelty. He had a small tank excavated and filled with unclean and filthy matter, and called it *Baikoontha* or "Paradise" by way of mockery. The zemindars who could not pay off their revenues were dragged with a rope through this mass of ordure and filth. Raja Ramdeb Deb Roy could not pay his revenues for some years, nor could he submit some accounts that were called for by the Viceroy, and on that account Nabob Moorshed Kooli Khan at once sent a regiment of soldiers under a commander for the immediate arrest of the Raja, who having been informed before of his impending danger fled from Naldanga and took refuge in a neighbouring village. The officer waited for him at his palace in vain for a fortnight, and then returning

with his men to Moorshedabad reported to the Nabob that the Raja could not be found. This happened in 1721 A. D. Soon after the return of the commander the Raja voluntarily appeared in the vice-regal court and, not being able to pay off the arrears of his revenues, proposed, for fear of Syed Reza Khan's *Baikoontha*, to relinquish his zemindari of his own accord. The Nabob consented, and the Raja submitted to him a written document to that effect. The Raja's am-muktear who represented him at the Nabob's court was not present there on the occasion. He had gone somewhere in the mofussil, and returning to the capital on the following day heard what had happened on the day preceding. He at once hastened to the court and very earnestly prayed to the Nabob that he might be pleased to permit him to see the document executed by the Raja. The paper was still with the Nabob, and he at once handed it over to the am-muktear, who, considering that the destruction of the document might make the relinquishment null and void, put it

into his own mouth and swallowed it all at once. On this the Nabob's men, by his order, beat him very severely and, when he was supposed to be dead, threw him into the Ganges. The Raja who had not yet left the town was then bathing in the river and saw that a human body was floating down the current before him. His men at his direction took the body out of the water, and it was found that life was still lingering in it. The body was discovered to be that of his am-muktear and was revived after much nursing. The Raja heard all from him and, intending to reward him for his faithful act, became *Kalpa-taru* (i.e. tree of charity) on his return home. This means that he appointed an hour's time during which he would give to the am-muktear whatever he would ask of him. The am-muktear, however, asked for a small landed property for conducting the daily worship of an idol which the Raja promised at his request to establish in a temple at his house. The Raja granted his prayer, and

the am-muktear was content. This story is technically known as the story of *Istafa-gela* or the story of swallowing the relinquishment deed. The am-muktear referred to was Srikrishna Das of Nandoali, a village situated near the headquarters of the Magura Sub-Division in the district of Jessore. His descendants are still called the *Istafa-gela-Dashes* of Nandoali. The Nabob, however, restored Raja Ramdeb to his zemindari on receiving from him a promise to the effect that he would pay off the arrears by instalments.

At this time Moorshed Kooli Khan, the wisest and ablest of the Mahomedan governors of Bengal, made many important changes in the collection of revenues. The whole province was divided into eleven *chaklas* and several smaller divisions. Each of these *chaklas* and smaller divisions was placed in the charge of a zemindar who was simply the collector of the dues of the State. The ancestors of the Hindu Rajas of Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Nadia, Naldanga (*i.e.* Maha-

mudshahi) and other places thus gradually became rich and powerful, and their offices eventually became hereditary. In 1725 A. D., Rajshahi was placed in the charge of Raja Ramkanta Roy, husband of the celebrated Rani Bhabani of Natore, Dinajpur was confided to Raja Ramnath, Nadia was made over to Raja Raghuram Roy, and Naldanga (*i. e.* Mahamudshahi) was entrusted to Raja Ramdeb Deb Roy. The Viceroy invariably employed Hindus in collecting the revenues in preference to Mahomedans on account of their docility and ability in accounts. Raja Ramdeb Deb Roy died in 1727 A. D.

12. Raja Ramdeb Deb Roy left two sons: Raghu Deb Roy and Krishna Deb Roy. Raghu Deb Roy inherited the zemindari and the title of his father just after the death of the latter. He also attained celebrity like his father by giving away rent-free lands to many deserving persons in his zemindari. Most of such lands granted by the members of this

Raja Raghu
Deb Roy
(1727-1748
A. D.).

family to Brahmins and others were granted by Ramdeb Deb Roy and Raghu Deb Roy. When Raghu Deb Roy came into possession of the zemindari, the throne of Bengal was occupied by Nabob Suja-ud-deen, who was a model of justice, kindness and liberality. Under his wise administration, there was peace in Bengal and the province became very prosperous. It is said that during the administration of Shaista Khan (1662-1689 A. D.) the price of rice had been reduced to 8 maunds the rupee, but that during the time of Suja-ud-deen grain was reduced to 10 maunds the rupee, through the skilful management of Jeswant Roy, the able minister of an able viceroy. But those days are gone, and gone for ever—never to return!

In 1737 A. D. Raja Raghu Deb Roy was deprived of his zemindari on account of disobeying a summons from the Nabob who transferred it to Raja Ramkanta Roy of Natore; but three years later the Nabob restored it to Raja Raghu Deb Roy.

Now, in those happy days of peace and prosperity sudden calamities unexpectedly befell the province and reduced it to the utmost poverty. On the night of the 11th October, 1737, a very furious hurricane arose in the Bay of Bengal and swept over many hundreds of miles up the Bhagirathi from its mouth. The province suffered beyond description. Thousands of people were rendered homeless, and hundreds of boats were carried over the tops of the trees and lodged inland nearly two miles from the rivers. The water in the rivers rose much higher than usual. The loss of life was very great. At the same time an earthquake did great damage to the province. To complete what was wanting, these calamities were followed the next year by a terrible famine. The people had no end of misery. Raja Raghu Deb Roy had to remit the rents of his tenants and advance money to them.

In the year 1742 A. D. another great calamity visited Bengal. Bhaskar Pundit, the General of Raghujee, the Mahratta

King of Nagpore, suddenly attacked the province with an army of twenty-five thousand horse. The governor, Aliverdi Khan, hastened to meet him at Burdwan, but as he approached the town, the Mahratta Chief set it on fire and reduced it to ashes. It is said that at this juncture, which is still known in Bengal as the *Bargi-hangama*, i.e., the incursions of the *Bargis* or the Mahrattas into the province, Raja Chitrasen, the first Raja of the Burdwan Raj family, fled from his own town with his family and valuables, came over to Naldanga, and took shelter in the house of Raja Raghu Deb Roy. Thus the former, having contracted friendship with the latter by exchanging turbans with his friend, constructed the temple of Goonjanath in Tailkupi and placed in it a symbolical representation of the god Siva and made arrangements for its daily worship. This Siva now goes by the name of Goonjanath, whence the name of the village Goonjanagar. He also built hurriedly for his own temporary residence several other

fine buildings which are no longer in existence, and surrounded them with a deep ditch, the dried bed of which still testifies to the historical importance of the place. The ditch is now called *Ramdhan Datta's gar* by the people of the locality, because it was after a long time in the possession of one Ramdhan Datta, an inhabitant of the village. The Raja also excavated there a big tank which is now known by the name of *Natipara Dighi*. Probably there was a bazar there in which several *natis* or dancing girls (*i.e.* prostitutes) lived at that time. This tank still supplies good drinking water and fresh fish to the villagers of the neighbourhood. During the latter part of 1744 A. D., when Bhaskar Pundit was assassinated by the governor, Aliverdi Khan, and the inroads of the Mahrattas had entirely ceased, the Raja of Burdwan returned to his own town, made over the charge of the temple and the daily worship of the god to his friend and promised to help him with a substantial

annual contribution of money for the purpose. Raja Chitrasesh died in a short time after his return to Burdwan, and his cousin, Tilakchand, who succeeded him and first received the title of *Maharajadhiraj*, much reduced the contribution, which was however continued by him and his successors, Maharaja Tejchand and Maharaja Mahatabchand, till the middle of the 19th century. Now the whole affair is managed by the Raja of Naldanga at his own expense. Raja Raghu Deb Roy died in 1748 A. D.

13. As Raja Raghu Deb Roy left no issue, the zemindari devolved on his brother, Krishna Deb Roy, in 1748 A.D. Raja Krishna Deb Roy had two wives: Rani Lakshmipriya Debi and Rani Rajrajeswari Debi. By Rani Lakshmipriya, he had a son, Kalikaprasad Deb Roy, who died prematurely, leaving a young widow, who adopted Durgaprasad Deb Roy as her son and received Taraf Sanchani for their maintenance. Durgaprasad was called the Taluqdar of Sanchani. Durgaprasad's

son, Guruprasad Deb Roy, married Hara-sundari Debi, and had by her a son, Gopalchandra Deb Roy, who married Nistarini Debi. On the death of Kalika-prasad, the bereaved mother, Rani Lakshmipriya, adopted for her consolation Hara Deb Roy. As Hara Deb Roy grew up, he became disobedient to his foster mother and was very soon obliged to separate himself from the family, on receiving Taraf Koolbaria for his maintenance. He was called the Taluqdar of Koolbaria. His son was Kamalakanta Deb Roy. Kamalakanta's son, Ramkanai Deb Roy, married Harakali Debi, and had by her two daughters: Chandimani Debi and Chandramani Debi. The latter left a son, Dhirendrakumar Ganguli, who has now 4 sons and 2 daughters. Ramkanai Deb Roy, having had no male issue, adopted Abhilaschandra Deb Roy as his son. Abhilaschandra married Bamasundari Debi and had by her three sons: Satischandra Deb Roy, Kshitischandra Deb Roy, and Sukeschandra Deb Roy, and a daughter, Bibhabati Debi, who was

married to Babu Jyotindranath Mukhurji. The eldest, Satischandra, has only a daughter who has been married to the son of Babu Nilambar Mukhurji, late Minister of Kashmere and the present Vice-Chairman of the Calcutta Municipality. The second son, Kshitischandra has three sons and a daughter. The youngest Sukeschandra, who is an M. A. of the Calcutta University and a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector, has only a daughter and a son.

Now, on Hara Deb Roy's separating himself from the family, Rani Lakshmi-priya adopted Gobinda Deb Roy as her son. Raja Krishna Deb Roy's second wife, Rani Rajrajeswari Debi gave birth to two sons: Mahendrachandra Deb Roy and Ramsankar Deb Roy. She built a temple at Matbati, placed in it a symbolical representation of the god Siva, and named it Rajrajeswar after her own name. It was during the time of Raja Krishna Deb Roy that the famous battle of Plassey, which decided the fate of India and by which the suzerainty of the country

passed from the hands of the Mussulmans to those of the English, was fought on the 23rd June, 1757 A. D. In the same year the English erected the present fort, Fort William of Bengal, and a mint of their own in Calcutta, and the first English coin of Bengal was struck on the 19th August following.

It was also during the time of Raja Krishna Deb Roy that the dreadful famine of 1770 A. D. (1177 B. S.) desolated the whole province of Bengal. Nearly one-third of the population was swept away. The sufferings of the poor knew no bounds. Hungry mothers sold their children each for a single meal. Pale and emaciated husbands gave away their wives to others for whatever they could get in return to appease their hunger. The poor and diseased crawled on their hands and knees around respectable homesteads to pick up a grain or two of boiled rice from the refuse of the houses. In short, men had to keep their bodies and souls together by feeding on seeds of grass and tender leaves of plants. Raja Krishna

Deb Roy did much to alleviate the miseries of his tenants. He died in 1773 A. D.

14. When Raja Krishna Deb Roy died, he left, besides Hara Deb Roy who had cut off all connexion with the family, three sons living: Gobinda Deb Roy (adopted), Mahendra Deb Roy and Ramsankar Deb Roy. These three brothers inherited the zemindari of their father, but in the same year (*i.e.* in 1773) a difference arose. At this time Budhai Biswas, a very intelligent but almost illiterate Mahomedan of Padmabila, a village about 12 miles to the South-East of Naldanga, was the Dewan or Manager of the entire estate. The three brothers appointed him arbitrator for dividing the property among them. Budhai, who held Gobinda Deb Roy in much affection, divided the property in 1773 A.D. in such a manner that although Gobinda Deb Roy received one-fifth of the whole estate in area, his annual income or profit was virtually equal to that of each of the two-fifth-share-holders : He allotted to him all

the excellent hâts, bazars, fisheries, groves, &c., in the estate, which afterwards proved a source of large income to him. As Gobinda Deb Roy received three annas and four gandas or one-fifth-share of the estate, he was called the Raja of *Tinani* (three annas). Mohendra Deb Roy, representing the elder branch of the family, received the western division of the estate and was called the Raja of *Grada Paschim* (western division) or more usually the Bara Raja, while Ramsankar Deb Roy, representing the younger branch of the family, received the eastern division and was called the Raja of *Grada Poorba* (eastern division) or more commonly the Chhoto Raja. Dewan Budhai Biswas granted a release or quit-claim to each of those Brahmins whose rent-free lands were in danger of being wrongly confiscated to the Raj Estate. This quit-claim is still called Budhai Biswas, *chhar* (*i.e.* release). Gobinda Deb Roy had his share separated in the same year (1773), while Mahendra Deb Roy and Ramsankar Deb Roy's shares were jointly managed till 1796. Now, during

the joint management, Mahendra Deb Roy tried to disinherit his brother, Ramsankar Deb Roy, who on that account left Naldanga and went away to Bhat Balli (*i.e.* Bhattapalli or Bhatpara) near Naihati. There he lived for sometime in the house of Baidik Bhatta, a man of great influence, who became his spiritual preceptor, and having obtained a promise from him that the office should become hereditary, assisted him in various ways in securing his succession. Since then the well-known Baidik family of Bhatpara, instead of the old *guru*-family of Mertala, have been performing their spiritual duties in Raja Ramsankar's family *i.e.* in the present Raj family of Naldanga. Now, after a great struggle, by a decision of the Supreme Court which consisted of a Chief Justice and three puisne judges and had been established in Calcutta on the 1st August, 1774 A.D., had the partition of his own share approved by Government in 1796. The three brothers now lived separately and retained the title of Raja in their respective families.

15. It has already been said, that in 1773 A.D. Raja Gobinda Deb Roy received one-fifth-share of the whole zemindari. The Raja's share however fell in arrear on account of excessive assessment and was with his consent given out in farm by Government. The farmer also fell in arrear, and consequently at the time of the Permanent Settlement in 1793 the assessment was much reduced. Now, in 1797 and 1798 respectively the zemindari was twice in arrear and was twice exposed for sale, but anyhow released. It was again put up for sale in 1800, and this time actually sold in the following manner: One Garibullah Chaudhuri purchased a taluq from Raja Gobinda Deb Roy and tried to have it separated from the zemindari of the latter. Gobinda Deb Roy opposed the proceedings of the former, and with a view to set aside the taluq executed to one Rupnarayan Ghosh, to whom he had long owed a large sum of money, a mortgage of all the property directly held by himself, as well as of the large taluqs

The Tinani
Branch of the
Family.

indirectly held by him in the name of his son. The mortgage was made in the name of Rupnarayan's father, Baranasi Ghosh, and antedated by seven or eight years, so that it might be proved that the Raja had no power to sell the taluq to Garibullah, as it had previously been mortgaged to Baranasi Ghosh. The Raja then took an agreement from Rupnarayan that he would never actually foreclose the mortgage. In spite of this agreement Rupnarayan sold up the estate and one of his relations, Pitambar Basu by name, bought it and then sold it to one Krishnamohan Banerji. Krishnamohan held it till 1840, when it was purchased by the Narail Babus. Garibullah's taluq was saved and separated in 1801. Thus Gobinda Deb Roy was deprived of all his property except his *Britti* or stipendiary lands and the religious lands attached to his family. From this time the representatives of this branch of the family have been officially deprived of the title of *Raja*. Raja Gobinda Deb Roy's son, Raja Rajendrachandra Deb Roy, instituted a suit for

the recovery of the estate, but was unsuccessful. Raja Rajendrachandra left a son named Maheschandra Deb Roy. Raja Maheschandra had two daughters, Kasi-swari Debi and Brajeswari Debi, and adopted first Upendra Deb Roy, who died young, and afterwards another son, Amareschandra Deb Roy, who also died prematurely. Raja Amareschandra's adopted son was Raja Saureschandra Deb Roy, who at his death left a son, Kumar Adrischandra Deb Roy, and a young widow, Rani Tarangini Debi.

16. When Raja Ramsankar Deb Roy had his own two-fifth-share separated in 1796, Raja Mahendra Deb Roy retained his own two-fifth-share only. The latter was a man of eccentric disposition.

The Elder
Branch of
the Family.

He now began to celebrate many festivals, of which the *Mugur Monta* festival was the best known. In 1796 a great fire was kindled in a big pit dug in the earth, and a *Mugur Monta* or a gigantic heavy wooden club was placed perpendicularly on its border and worshipped as a god. Goats,

sheep and buffaloes were sacrificed before it and thrown into the fire. Shawls, muslins and garments of broad cloth, velvet, silk, &c., were also cast into the fire and consumed by it. A hundred drums proclaimed the celebration of the festival. Feasts were given to the neighbouring Brahmins and other people to their heart's content. It continued for seven days, when the Magistrate of Jessore on being informed of it, put a stop to it by the deputation of a police officer. Since then, *Mugur Monta* has become a by-word in this part of the district.

Shortly after this, in the same year (1796), Raja Mahendra Deb Roy's share of the zemindari was sold in the following manner: The whole estate was settled in 1772 (*i.e.* some months before Raja Krishna Deb Roy's death) upon the basis of a local inquiry made by Mr. Lane. The next year it was divided nominally into three shares (*i.e.* Gobinda Deb Roy's one-fifth, Mahendra Deb Roy's two-fifths and Ramsankar Deb Roy's two-fifths), but virtually into two (*i. e.* Gobinda

Deb Roy's one-fifth and Mohendra and Ramsankar Deb Roy's four-fifths). This was the first instance of *batwara* in the district of Jessore. Gobinda Deb Roy, it has been said, had his share separated in the same year. Shortly after the above settlement Raja Mahendra Deb Roy, who had been managing his own share together with that of Raja Ramsankar Deb Roy, being considered, on account of his eccentric habits, incapable of undertaking the settlement, the estate was farmed out by Government to one Pran Basu who held it directly in his own name from 1779 to 1781, and indirectly in the name of his son from 1782 to 1784. Now, on account of excessive assessment, repeated inundations, granting of large amounts of land either rent-free or on almost quit-rent tenures commonly called *taluqs*, and the farmer's oppression and exaction, the estate became impoverished and fell into arrear. In 1787 the collectorship of Mahamudshahi, the head quarters of which were at Jhenidah, was transferred to the Collector of Jessore, who at the instance of the

Board of Revenue took it out of the zemindars' hands and settled and managed it directly, giving them only their very meagre stipendiary lands to support themselves with. In 1788 the Collector divided the whole estate into parts, and gave each part in farm. The Collector's management even failed. Consequently in 1793 at the time of the Permanent Settlement the assessment was much reduced. Then, when in 1796 Ramsankar Deb Roy had his share separated, Mohendra Deb Roy's share was found heavily in arrear and in the same year sold up by the Sheriff on that account. It was purchased by Babu Radhamohan Banerji of Salikha. Raja Mahendra Deb Roy had two sons: Anandachandra and Banichandra. On their father's death they brought a suit against the purchaser, but a compromise was made, by which they obtained seven annas of the estate they had lost. In about 1840 this seven annas or $\frac{7}{16}$ share was sold up for arrears of revenue and the Narail Babus bought it in. They subsequently purchased also the remaining $\frac{9}{16}$ share

which had been retained by Babu, Radhamohan Banerji. Since then the elder branch of the family has been officially deprived of the title of *Raja*, though the representatives of this family still retain it in private use inspite of the deprivation. Thus it is seen how the entire shares of the Elder and Tinani branches (*i.e.* six annas and eight gandas and three annas and four gandas, altogether amounting to nine annas and twelve gandas or three-fifth-share of pergunnah Mahamudshahi) came into the possession of Babu Ramratna Roy, the well-known zemindar of Narail, to the utter exclusion of the members of the above two branches who were, as has already been said, deprived of their title also. Raja Anandachandra left three sons : Umeschandra Deb Roy, Tareschandra Deb Roy and Bhumischandra Deb Roy. Tareschandra and Bhumischandra left no issue. Raja Umeschandra Deb Roy, the eldest, died in 1869 A. D. and left two sons : Raja Kamaleschandra Deb Roy and Raja Byomkeschandra Deb Roy. Raja Kamaleschandra has three

daughters, of whom the second is married to Babu Bijoychandra Ganguli, son of late Babu Harabhushan Ganguli, who was nephew to the late Raja Indubhushan Deb Roy. Raja Byomkeschandra has three sons only.

17. Raja Ramsankar Deb Roy retained his title of *Raja* in a recognized form. The commonly used epithet *Raja of Naldanga* now refers to a representative of the younger branch only.

The Younger
Branch of the
Family. (Raja
Ramsankar
alone in his
own share
1796-1812
A.D.).

He also retained his six annas and eight gandas or two-fifth-share of the zemindari. His descendants have since then made additions to their property and become richer than their ancestors were. Raja Ramsankar had a son, Mohanchand Deb Roy, who died during his father's lifetime on the 24th October, 1811 A. D., and left a young widow, Rani Taramani Debi who in the same year gave birth to a posthumous son named Sasibhushan Deb Roy. Raja Ramsankar Deb Roy then adopted a daughter who was married to Babu Krishnachandra Mukhurji, whose

son was Dwarakanath Mukhurji. Dwarakanath left a son whose name was Gangacharan Mukhurji. Gangacharan's son is Kaliprasanna Mukhurji.

Rani Rajrajeswari Debi, mother of Raja Ramsankar Deb Roy, died on the 11th October, 1812 A.D., and Raja Ramsankar himself died about a month later *i.e.* on the 7th November following. His wife, Rani Radhamani Debi, burnt herself on the funeral pile of her husband and thus became a *Suttee*. This happened during the administration of Lord Minto. It is said that when the Raja breathed his last the Rani did not lament at all but calmly expressed her desire to accompany the deceased to the cremation ground and to burn herself on his pile. "My lord," said she, "has departed from this land of the living! I will accompany him to the land of the dead!" The people around now wanted to test her moral courage and firm resolution by proposing an ordeal by fire. At once this brave woman—this undaunted incarnation of Hindu chastity—put the forefinger of her right

hand into the burning flame of a country lamp and held it there most calmly and cheerfully till it was burnt to ashes. Loud shouts of *Bravo* and *a suttee, a suttee*, rent the air, and the whole assembly present most willingly approved of her proposal. The *suttee* was then led to the cremation ground of the Kalikatola Doha—where a big funeral pile was arranged of sandal wood. On this furnace of human vanity was placed the corpse of the noble Raja, whose image occupied the whole soul of his most devoted and most faithful Rani, whose conviction of his worth and whose sense of her own destitute and painful situation assisted her in stepping forward to the melancholy threshold of a future world to which all that was most lovely and loving to her had departed for good. The Rani then put on her best attire and exquisite ornaments, painted her forehead with vermilion, distributed rice and money to the poor, walked round the pyre seven times, and then amidst the cheers and shouts of *Ulu, Ulu, Ulu*, and *Haribol* lay on the pile by the side of the

body of her beloved husband. As soon as she lay there, she became senseless, and it was found that life was no longer in that poor mortal frame. The beating of a number of drums rent the air. At once the pile was set on fire and a large quantity of *ghee* mixed with incense was poured in. The dreadful tongues of the funeral flames immediately wrapped the pyre all around and consumed in a few hours the unconscious pair to the great glory and honour of the sacred family. This was however a very rare instance of a true *suttee*. If all the cases of the *suttee* were found to have been of a similar nature, one might very pleasantly say, "Modern Civilization, that can't not bear the sight of these dismal things! I bow down to thee and keep aloof as a distant observer of thy proud steps in the advanced societies!" In the majority of the instances the practice of *suttee* was merely a suicidal one. But thanks are due to Lord William Bentinck, during whose administration that memorable act was passed on the 4th December, 1829 A. D.,

by which the practice of *suttee* was put a stop to throughout the British Dominions.

Rani Radhamani Debi, mother of Mohanchand Deb Roy, left at her death to Rani Taramani Debi a landed property called the *Ranian Britti* or more commonly the *Andar Britti* which the former Rani had received from her mother-in-law, Rani Rajrajeswari Debi, wife of Raja Krishna Deb Roy. Rani Taramani managed it for a long time, and then during the latter part of her life, made over its management to Rani Patitpabani Debi, wife of her great grandson Raja Pramathabhushan Deb Roy, and the present principal Rani of the family. Then, on the death of Rani Taramani Debi, Raja Pramathabhushan Deb Roy amalgamated this property with his zemindari.

18. Now, when Raja Ramsankar Deb Roy became very ill just before his death, his daughter-in-law, Rani Taramani, with her boy, Sasi-bhushan, only 10 months old, was in the house of her father at Mahespur, a village about

Raja Sasi-
bhushan Deb
Roy. (Born
1812 A.D.)
(Minority and
Majority 1812-
1834 A. D.)

20 miles to the South-West of Naldanga. No sooner had she received information of the illness than she hastened home, but to her extreme sorrow and disappointment she learnt that her father-in-law and her mother-in-law had been burnt together on the same funeral pyre only a few hours before. The Court of Wards then made arrangements for the management of the minor's estate as well as for his future education. But on the 1st January, 1813, the estate was, however, formally transferred to the infant Raja in pursuance of orders to that effect from the Court of Wards, and a guardian appointed.

The following extracts from a letter dated the 11th January, 1826, from Mr. R. W. Maxwell, the then Collector of Jessore, to the Board of Revenue, reviewing the condition of the three territorial houses of Jessore, show that the Government recognised Raja Sasibhushan Deb Roy as the representative of the old Rajas of Mahamudshahi (*i. e.* of Naldanga) who had been, during the Mahomedan rule in

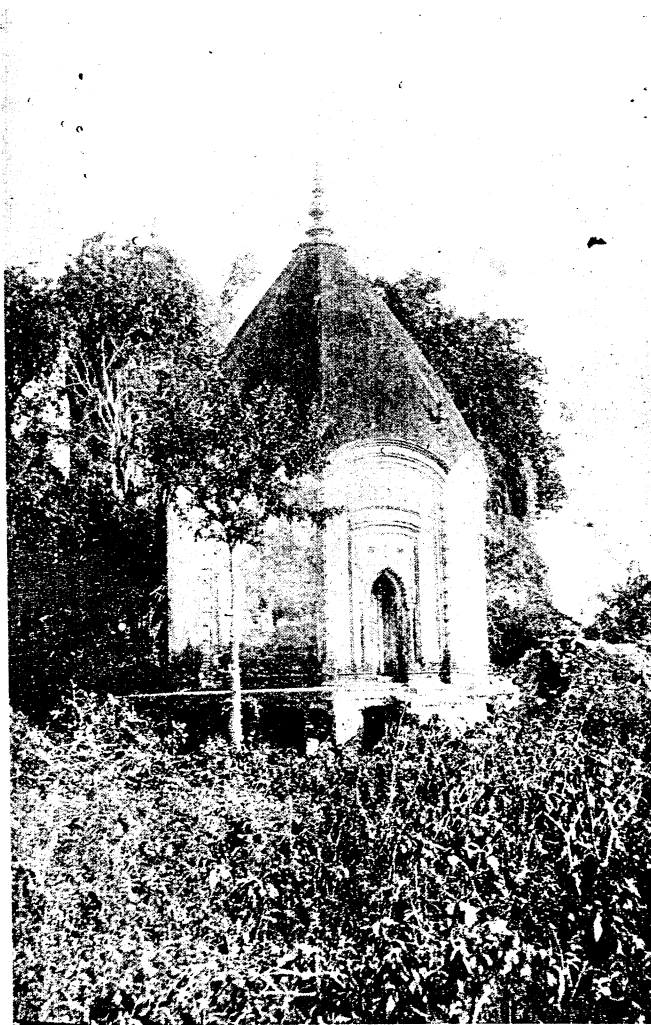
reality sovereign princes in their own territories, though nominally tributary to the Emperors of Hindoostan :

* * * * *

(3) On the commencement of the British Supremacy in the East and the sub-division of the conquered territory into Zillas, the district of Jessore consisted of three grand divisions or chaklas containing nearly an hundred pergunnahs and denominated chaklas Bhoosna, Mahmudshahi and Jessore.

These chaklas have, prior to the accession of the British been in undisturbed possession of three powerful Rajas or chieftains to whom they had descended through a succession of generations, and who constituting the original grantees of this part of the country remained tributary to the Emperors of Hindoostan and paid the revenue of their estates to the late Nazims of Bengal at the offices of the Khalisa Shurifée at Moorshedabad and Dacca.

(4) After the termination of the



Temple of Taranath Siva.

Mussulman authority and their subjection to the British power the three Rajas above mentioned with most others of the native-princes in the province of Bengal voluntarily submitted to the British power, and under the security thereby afforded, they cheerfully consented to pay their revenue to the British authorities.

* * * * *

(8) * * * The remnants of the Raja's family of which the minor Raja Shushee Bhoosun' Dev Roy, a Ward of Court, is a member have since resided at Nowaldangah."

Rani Taramani constructed a temple at Matbati, established in it a symbolical representation of the god Siva and named it *Taranath* after her own name.

It was at this time that, in 1817 A. D., there was celebrated a *Baro-iyari Pujah* in Khedapara, a small village very close to Matbati. The assembled gathering was entertained with various kinds of amusements, such as horse-races, music, dancing of idols, &c., &c., Some of the

idols were made to represent the drunkard, the cobbler, the fisherman, and the like. In one part of the compound there was made, for amusement's sake, an idol—the representation of a boy—showing all the symptoms of nausea and diarrhœa. Another idol representing the mother of the mimic boy was made to stand there by its side with a dose of medicine in its hand. Now, among the people who assembled to see the *tamasa*, there was a woman who had her small boy with her. The boy was much frightened at the sight of these two idols; and no sooner had he returned home with his mother, than he was attacked with that terrible disease of vomiting and diarrhœa. This dreadful and infectious malady, which had, it is said, never been seen or heard of before this, turned fatal in a few hours, and then in a few days assuming the form of an epidemic began to spread westward with great rapidity. At last, it reached Europe where it received the blood-congealing name of *Cholera Asphyxia* or *Asiatic Cholera*.

Raja Sasibhushan Deb Roy attained his majority in 1830 A.D. and proved a very good zemindar. He always looked after the welfare of his tenants and tried to ameliorate their condition in various ways. He was a good Persian scholar and a fine-looking man of excellent conduct, polite manners and genial disposition. His fair dealings at once engaged the attention of those with whom he came in contact. After attaining his majority he lived for 4 years only, but within this short time he constructed many splendid buildings and purchased through his own exertions eight-anna-share of Sanchani, Pratap-pur, Kanejpur and Kusabaria and $4\frac{1}{8}$ anna share of Pergtunnah Nasaratshahi. His wife, Rani Joydurga Debi, constructed a temple at Khedapara, placed in it an idol of the goddess Durga, and called it *Joydurga* after her own name. His premature death in 1834 A. D. was much lamented by the people who held him in respect and love. On his death his wife Rani Joydurga Debi managed the whole estate

till 1836, and in the same year adopted a son, who was afterwards called Raja Indubhushan Deb Roy, by virtue of the permission granted to her by her husband before his death. Rani Joydurga died in 1837. Raja Sasibhushan's mother, Rani Taramani Debi, survived her son, Raja Sasibhushan, and her grandson, Raja Indubhushan Deb Roy, and lived till the year 1894 A. D. when she was sent to Benares by her great grandson, Raja Pramathabhushan Deb Roy. She died there in the same year at the age of 100 years. Even at this age she had not lost a single tooth. Although her sight and hearing were affected to some extent, yet the long white hair of her head, the pearl like teeth that were arranged in her mouth in a beautiful order, and her general appearance and intelligence made her look like a goddess, and commanded respect from all. On account of her wide experience in the management of landed properties and household affairs she was called by the local public *karta ma i.e.*, the respected female head of the Raj household.



Rani Jaramani Debi.

19. Raja Indubhushan Deb Roy, son of Raja Sasibhushan Deb Roy, had an elder sister, Manadasundari Debi, who was married to Babu Purnachandra Ganguli. She gave birth to three sons : Harabhushan *alias* Babadas Ganguli, Jogendrabhushan *alias* Sibadas Ganguli, and Surendrabhushan *alias* Gatinath Ganguli. Of these three, the second, Jogendrabhushan, died young and left a widow without issue. The eldest Babu Harabhushan Ganguli, left a widow with five sons : Bijoychandra, Bankimchandra, Akhilchandra *alias* Ananta, Anilchandra *alias* Haridas and Amalchandra *alias* Manu, and three daughters : Giribala, Surajbala and Sibarani. Of the five sons, the 5th, Amalchandra, died very young. Babu Surendrabhushan has lost all his property and now leads the life of a hermit. He has three sons : Smarajitbhushan, Umabhushan, and Brajendranath, and a daughter, Susilabala.

During the minority of Raja Indubhushan Deb Roy, his estate was under the

Raja Indubhushan Deb Roy. (Born about 1835 A.D., attained his majority in 1853 A.D., died in 1870 A.D.)

management of the Court of Wards and was let out in *Izara* to Mr. T.I. Kenney of Kushtia. The Raja was educated at the Jessore Zila School under the care of a guardian tutor who lived there with him. It was at this time that his grandmother, Rani Taramani Debi, removed the Raja's residence from Naldanga proper to Jagannathpur which was named by her Goonjanagar after the name of the idol, Goonjanath Siva. When Raja Indubhushan Deb Roy attained his majority in 1853 A.D., he gave a small portion of his zemindari to his sister for her maintenance. He constructed splendid buildings and excavated big tanks near his house. Raja Indubhushan was distinguished for his charity. Almost every day he distributed rice, money and several pieces of cloth to the poor, and very frequently fed a large number of Brahmins and people of other castes at his house. He granted monthly allowances to many of his relations and encouraged Sanskrit scholars with annual gifts. His contributions towards the funds raised either by the Government or

by the public for the construction of hospitals, schools, libraries and roads, as well as for the excavation of tanks for the public good, rendered his position very conspicuous. He purchased the taluq, Khamarail, and some 1,000 or 1,200 bighas of rent-free lands which he presented to poor Brahmins as gifts to them. He was really the *ma bap* of the poor, and sympathized with them under all circumstances. He established a charitable dispensary at his house, excavated several tanks, and founded many hâts and bazars for the convenience of the public in the different parts of his zemindari, and offered Rs. 10,000 for excavating the source of the river Begbati which had been silted up. At the time of the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 A.D. he helped the Government with a number of elephants.

In the same year there arose a difference between the Raja Bahadur and Mr. Orne, the then superintendent of the Gyedghat Indigo concern, belonging to Mr. Mackenzie; the matter at issue was the possession of the Gaherpur *hât*. The

former deputed one of his chief officers to settle the difference, but the officer being a man of hot temper picked a quarrel with Mr. Orne and ordered his men to assault him. It is said that they obeyed his order and treated the European gentleman with great cruelty. Mr. Maloney, the then Magistrate of Jessore, tried his utmost to punish the Raja on this account, but his counsels, Messrs. Money and Doyne, very satisfactorily proved his innocence and he was allowed to go scot-free. The Magistrate still persisted and requested the Government to deprive the Raja of his title and confiscate his zemindari. The Government did not comply with such an unreasonable request, but simply asked the Raja to produce the *sanad* which Raja Chandicharan Deb Roy had received from the Nabob of Bengal and by which the title had been granted to him and his successors, so that his claim to it by heredity might actually be proved. Thus, his title was kept in abeyance for about three years *i.e.* from 1857 to 1860 A.D.

The *sanad* was not in his possession, but in expectation that a copy of it might be found in the Nabob's record-room at Moorshedabad he sent one of his officers there to search for it. After a long and tedious search it was found in the *Khalisa* archives of the Nabob and produced before the Government by Mr. Money, the Advocate for the Raja. The Government being thus satisfied that the Raja had an actual claim to the title, formally granted it to him again through the Commissioner of the Division in the year 1860 A. D. The usual ceremonies were held on the occasion, and the Raja distributed alms to the poor and entertained all classes of men with feasts and music.

Besides charity, he had many other good qualities. He was intelligent, honest, and upright, and had a fair knowledge of English and Bengali. He could write a very good hand in these two languages. His love for music distinguished him in this part of the district. He could efficiently play on various musical instruments, such as the *Sarad*, *Esraj*, *Pakhoaz*, &c.,

&c. He took into his service many distinguished musicians. After some years he let the major portion of his zemindari in *putni* and kept the rest in *khas*. In 1866 A.D. he went out on a pilgrimage to Gya, Benares and Brindaban. On his return home he made over, by a registered document, the charge of his entire estate to a council consisting of Babu Abhoycharan Mukhurji of Naldanga, Babu Gopinath Chatterji of Kumrabaria, and Babu Madanmohan Roy of Soonti, of whom Babu Abhoycharan had the casting vote. He then retired in 1867 A.D. to Tribeni with his two wives, Rani Madhumati Debi and Rani Sukhadamayi Debi, and his minor son, Kumar Pramathabhushan Deb Roy. In 1869 Rani Sukhadamayi died. The Raja lived at Tribeni for two years and a half, and then in the beginning of 1870 went out on another pilgrimage to Benares and thence to Puri to see the holy shrine of Jagannath. On his return to Tribeni he fell ill, and his illness assuming a very serious aspect in a short time,

he hastened to Moorshedabad and placed himself under the treatment of the renowned native physician, Gangadhar Kabiraj. But fate would have its own course. His disease gradually became more and more serious, and in the month of May of the same year the great friend of the poor breathed his last at the age of 36 years only.

20. Raja Pramathabhushan Deb Roy, born on the 22nd December, 1858 A.D.,

Raja Pramathabhushan Deb Roy, (Born 22-12-1858 A.D.) succeeded his father 1870 A.D, attained his majority Dec. 1879 A.D.)

was a minor, only 11 years and 6 months old, when his father died. The Collector of Jessore immediately took charge of his entire estate on behalf of the Court of Wards and removed the young Raja to the Wards' Institution, at Maniktola in Calcutta, where he received a very good training along with some other young zemindars of Bengal under the guardianship of the distinguished scholar and disciplinarian, Dr. (afterwards Raja) Rajendralal Mitra. His mother, Rani Madhumati Debi, died in December,

1872, and the minor Raja's great grandmother, Rani Taramani Debi, who was still living, made a proposal to the Collector of Jessore for his early marriage. The Collector consenting, he was married in May, 1873 A.D., at the age of 14 years and 6 months only. The new Rani, Srimati Patitpabani Debi, resided with her staff in Calcutta in the vicinity of the Wards' Institution as long as her husband remained in that institution. In 1878 she gave birth to her eldest daughter, Rajkumari Surasaibalini Debi, in Calcutta and herself fell very ill. She was immediately placed under the treatment of three renowned European doctors and two experienced graduates of the Medical College of Bengal. Another graduate and a nurse of the same College were employed to watch her throughout the whole period of her illness. She thus became gradually convalescent.

The Raja Bahadur attained his majority in December, 1879 A.D., and took charge of his estate at the same time. In the next summer *i.e.* in the summer of



Kumar Pannagabhusan Deb Roy.

1880, he solemnized the occasion by celebrating the *Punjaha* ceremony of his estate with great pomp and grandeur. He was then gradually blessed with two sons and three other daughters. Of his four daughters two very prematurely left this world, and the other two, Rajkumari Surasaibalini Debi and Rajkumari Sarojini Debi, and his two sons, Kumar Pannagabhushan Deb Roy and Kumar Mrigankabhushan Deb Roy, are living now. The elder Rajkumari was married in 1889 to Babu Girindranath Mukhurji of Subarnapur, who is a Bachelor of Law of the Calcutta University and a pleader of the Krishnagar bar. She has given birth to four sons, Kshftindranath, Rabindranath, Manindranath and Jnanendranath Mukhurji, and a daughter, Basantibala Debi. The younger Rajkumari was married in 1891 to Babu Surendranath Mukherji, son of Babu Jadunath Mukhurji, a respectable gentleman of Bhowanipur, Calcutta. She has no children. Kumar Pannagabhushan married in 1897 a daughter of the Raja Bahadur of Hetampur in Birbhoom. By

her he has three daughters only. Kumar Mrigankabhushan married in 1906 a daughter of Babu Panchanana Mukhopadhyay,* the second son of the late Rai Bahadur Radhikaprasanna Mukhurji, C.I.E., formerly Inspector of Schools, Presidency Circle. She has recently given birth to a daughter. Those two daughters of the Raja Bahadur (Rajkumari Pankajini Debi and Rajkumari Binapani Debi) who are not living, were successively married to Babu Narendranath Mukhurji, son of the late Babu Bhutnath Mukhurji of Beadon Street, Calcutta.

The Raja Bahadur has travelled through different parts of India and Ceylon and acquired a lore which is not generally found in those who are nursed in the lap of fortune. He is a man of handsome appearance, mighty stature and robust frame, and has many manly qualities in his character. He is a good swimmer, an excellent rider, and a gallant sports-man who has hunted and killed an

* Vidyabhushana, Member, Asiatic Society of Bengal, First Class Honorary Magistrate, Howrah etc.



Kumar Mrigankabhushan Deb Roy.

innumerable number of leopards, wild boars, and deer. He speaks English very fluently, and his conversation is so charming that those who talk with him cannot but at once yield to his guiding spirit. He is a hard student and his knowledge of mechanics, medicine and veterinary science surpasses that of those who are proud to call themselves adepts in those sciences. It is under his personal instructions and supervision that his motor cars, which are four in number, are repaired whenever they are out of order. He encourages all sorts of arts and is himself skilled in the art of drawing.

He is a nice gentleman of amiable conduct and affable manners, very courteous and very polite. He knows well how to command respect by holding others in respect and love. His moral character, which is elevated and pure, is an adornment to his life. His undaunted heart is filled with moral courage, which enabled him to brave all dangers and face all opposition in the cause of widow-marriage among high caste Hindus, which he

espoused and furthered in 1884 A.D. with great firmness of mind. He was then called "the great champion of widow-marriage." He understood the position and miseries of the widows of the present Hindu society, for whom his sympathetic heart wept with sorrow and led him to contrive means for the redress of their grievances. The moral strength of his mind is also evinced by the fact that he is always "slow to promise, but sure to fulfil." Unlike the average run of wealthy people, he abstains from drinking and does not seek any sensual pleasure. He is constant to one wife and is an affectionate parent who knows well how to give a good training to his children. Many of his deserving relations receive monthly allowances and kind dealings from him. He is exceedingly loyal to the Government and is always ready to help it in all possible ways. He is frequently consulted in many matters by its high officials, who treat him with respect and kindness.

He is a friend to education and maintains a High English School at Naldanga

at his own cost. There is a Middle English School at Nohata which also is substantially helped and greatly patronized by him. He has founded in the name of his father, Raja Indubhushan Deb Roy, a scholarship of Rs. 100 per annum at the Jessore Zila School for the encouragement of English education, and another of Rs. 10 per month, in the name of his mother, Rani Madhumati Debi, at Benares for encouraging Sanskrit education. As a well-wisher of the Mahomedan community he has invested Rs. 1000 in Government Securities in favour of the Mahomedan hostel attached to the Jessore Zila School. The interest accruing from this amount is contributed towards the fund raised for the maintenance of the hostel. His sympathy for the local public is also praiseworthy. The Indubhushan Charitable Dispensary at Naldanga, which was named after his father, is solely supported by him, only for their good. He also chiefly supports another dispensary at Nohata which receives a grant-in-aid of Rs. 25 only from the District

Board of Jessore. He is always ready to stretch forth a helping hand to those who seek his aid in really distressed circumstances. He freely contributes money to the funds raised either by the Government or by the public for the excavation of tanks, the construction of roads and buildings, and the relief of famine-stricken people, at various places in various districts.

He is a good master and always looks after the welfare of his officers and menial servants whom he treats with great kindness. He loves his tenants and very often tries his utmost, by his words and deeds, to convince them that the English Government is the best Government in the world and that they therefore should always be unhesitatingly loyal and grateful to it.

He encourages agriculture and horticulture with great fondness, and keeps, as an agricultural measure, foreign and country cattle and poultry for the purpose of producing excellent cross-breeds. The numerous offspring thus produced amelio-

rate the condition of the poor farm live stock of the locality and testify to his knowledge of the science of cattle rearing. Some of such cross-breeds were exhibited to the public at the Jessore Exhibition in 1909 and secured medals from the authorities. One example of his giving encouragement to the introduction of agriculture among the high caste Hindus may be cited here. On the 9th October, 1907, at the instance of the Raja Bahadur, a grand meeting was held in the premises of the temple of Siddhiswari in Matbati for celebrating the ceremony of introducing the custom of ploughing among the high caste Hindus. There was a very large gathering and the ceremony passed off with great *eclat*. The *elite* of Naldanga followed by an assembly of gentlemen and peasants walked on foot to the temple of the goddess at about 10 A. M. The family priest of the Raja Bahadur first offered prayers to the goddess. Then the whole body, with a great demonstration of joy, moved to the selected plot of land where the actual ceremony was to be

held. The priest then consecrated the plough and the pair of bullocks which had been previously brought in for the purpose. When this was done, he addressed the assembled people and quoted several *slokas* from the *shastras* to prove that, in the case of high caste Hindus even, the practice of ploughing was not prohibited in ancient times. On this, the object of the meeting and the usefulness of the practice were explained to them. Then, amid the cheers of the people the priest took the lead and began to plough the land. No sooner had he stopped than his example was enthusiastically followed by the members of the several branches of the Raj family and many other gentlemen present there. It is very interesting to notice that, when Kumar Pannagabhushan, the eldest son of the Raja Bahadur, held the plough and drove the pair onward, repeated shouts of *Haribol* and *Allah, Allah, ho*, rent the air to the unbounded joy of the gathering. Thus the ceremony was successfully brought to a close.

The Raja Bahadur understands zemindari business so well that he, by his excellent management, has much enhanced his annual income by making new additions to his estate which has been improved by him in various ways. Some other zemindars of Bengal look to him as their guardian and adviser, and are guided by him in the management of their own zemindaris. On one occasion a high European official, who knew him well, remarked that, if there had been half a dozen such zemindars in Bengal, the fate of the province would have been a different one. In short, he is an accomplished and enlightèned model zemindar who is loved and esteemed by all. His youthful sons, Kumar Pannagabhushan and Kumar Mrigankabhushan, the future hope of Naldanga and the Naldanga Raj, promise to prove themselves in future worthy successors of a worthy father.
