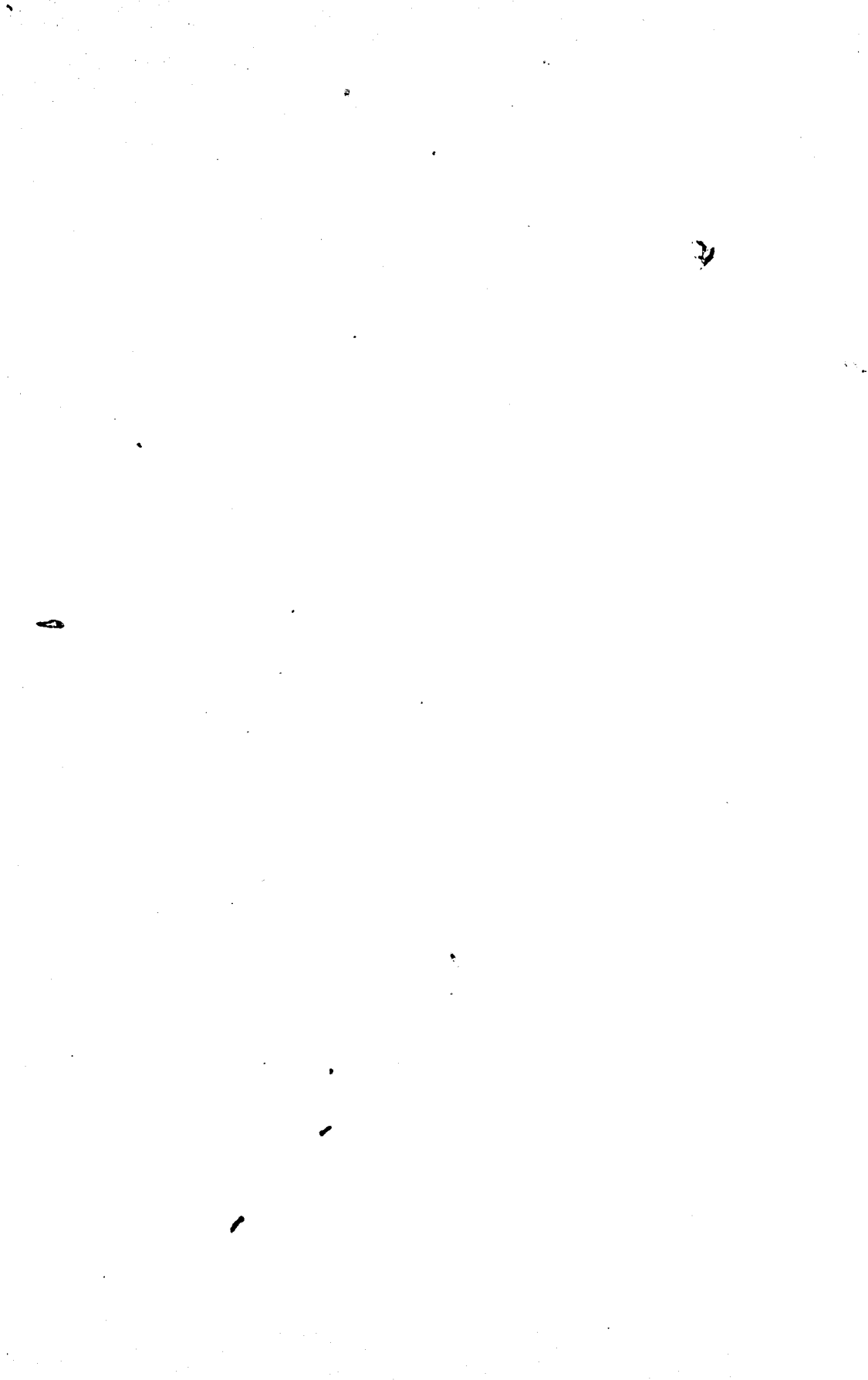


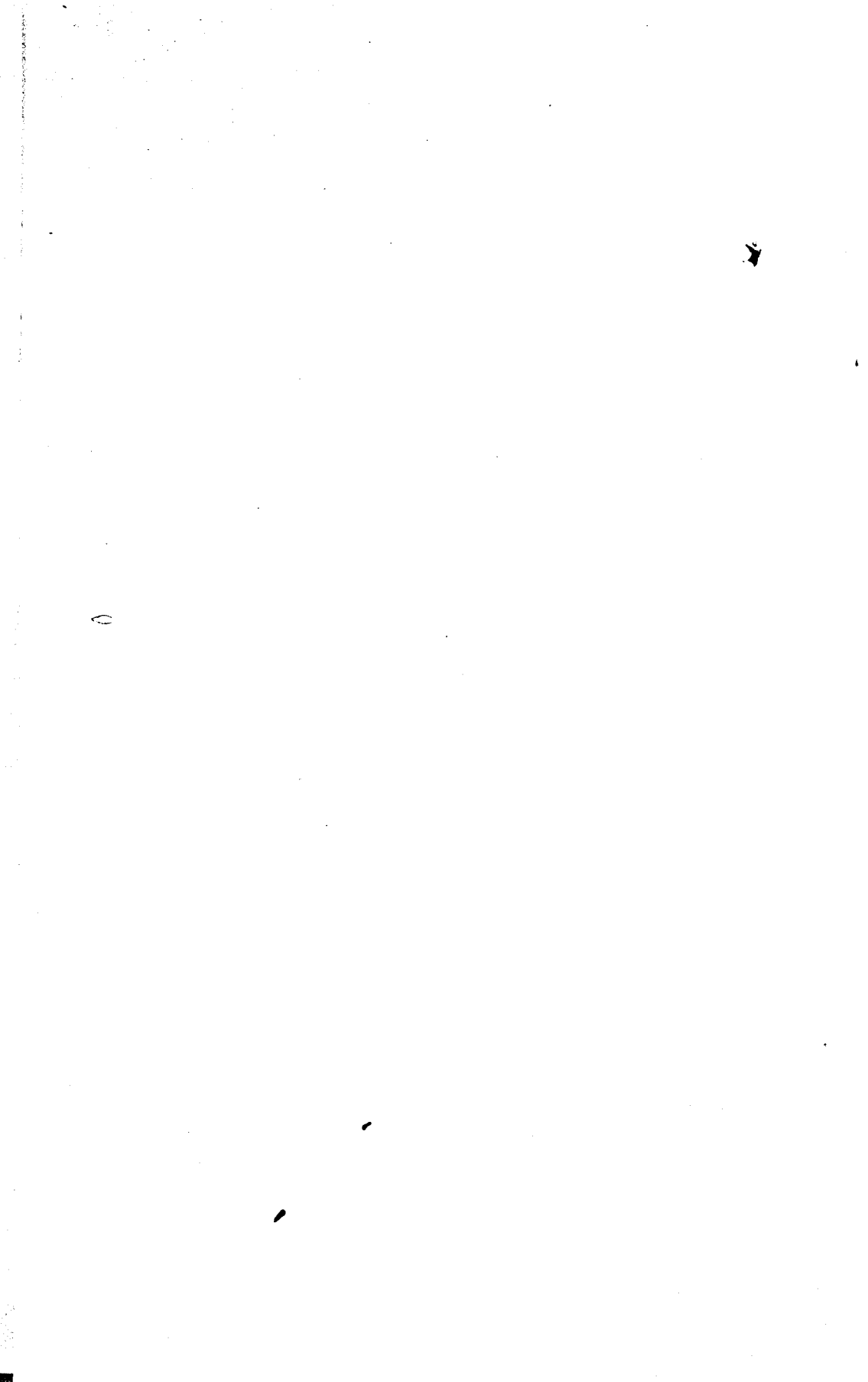


CHANGING TIMES

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CHANGING TIMES



MAHARAJA BHUPENDRA CHANDRA SINHA
OF SUSANGA

*M. Sharmajan Ray
Simla, 1968*

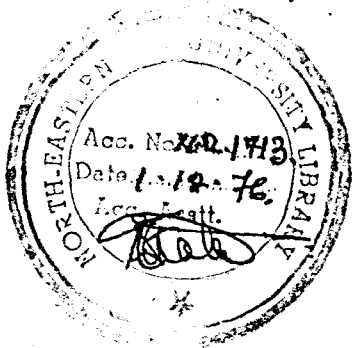


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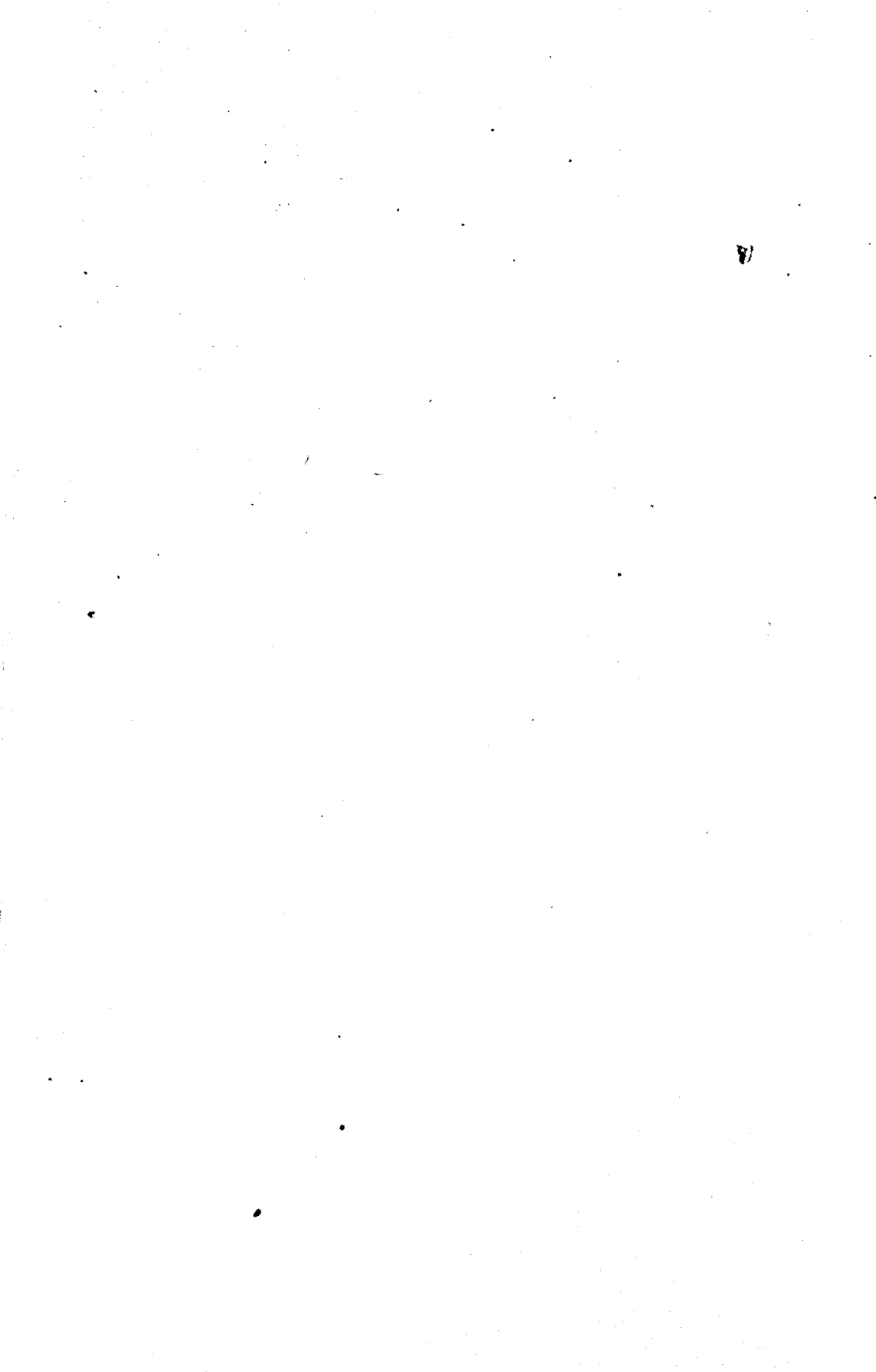
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FOREWORD

I am happy that it has been possible for the Anthropological Survey of India to publish Maharaja Bhupendra Chandra Sinha's autobiography as one of its Memoirs. He permitted the Survey to print the book, although there was the possibility that, as a consequence, it might not gain the public recognition which it justly deserves.

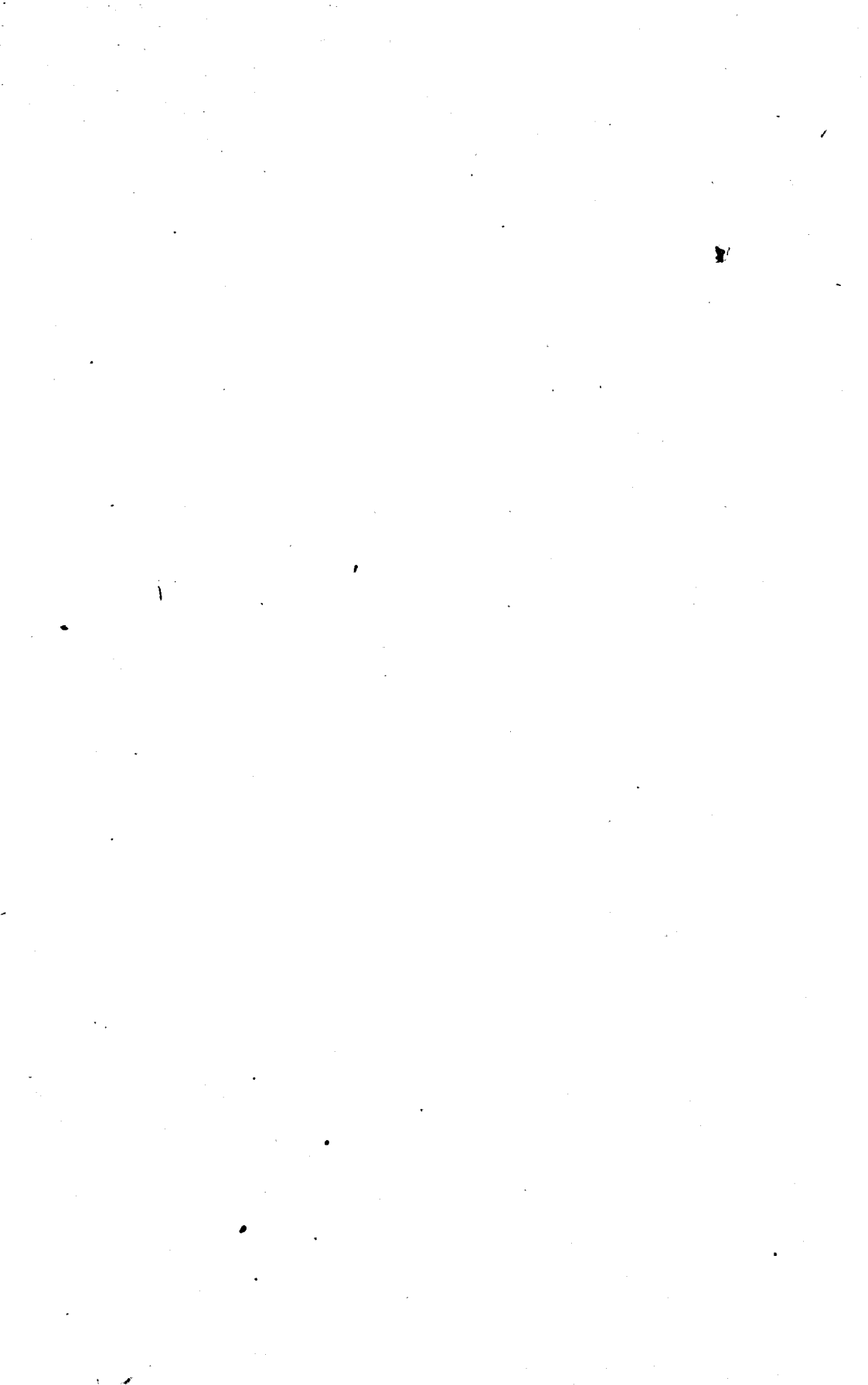
Instead of trying to be studiously or mechanically objective, the author has allowed his thoughts and sentiments to flow without interruption. He has only been subject to two restraints, one of which springs from his culture and traditions, while the other is due to his remarkable instincts as an artist.

The reader will thus not only find the autobiography eminently readable, but also gain a picture, drawn with sympathy and from within, of the momentous changes through which Indian society and civilization have been passing in modern times.

37A Bosepara Lane
Calcutta 3

NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

29th January, 1965



PREFACE

An ideal manifests itself through a definite form. A culture, often the product of a robust ideal, finds its expression through the vehicle of a strong social organization. The vitality of a social organization often expresses itself through its power of absorption of such other foreign cultures with which it may happen to come in contact. However elevated and inspiring a social ideal may be, unless it is supported by a vital and appropriate social organization, the steady flow of cultural growth is impaired. In presenting the above argument, however, I do not intend to place an essential priority on social organization over cultural values. Both the factors must come to some vital terms of mutual reinforcement in order to fulfil the human needs of an age.

In the following pages we shall be dealing with an area originally known as Susanga Desh, later on as Mulke Susanga and subsequently as Pargana Susanga, now situated in East Pakistan. We shall be concerned with how Brahmanical social and cultural order came to be established in this jungle-covered frontier of Hindu civilization through the medium of a feudalistic State organization. More than the remote historic antecedents of the above process, we shall be presenting a picture of human relationship in the area through the writer's personal life experience of over half a century since 1900. As in all cases, a picture of the present can hardly be detached from the past, we shall also present some information on the geographical and historical antecedents of the story.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In his letter dated the 2nd October, 1957, from Chicago the late Professor Robert Redfield suggested that I write a memoir of what I had seen of Susanga during the first half of our present century. He very kindly offered a generous grant from the Ford Foundation for completion of the work. He imposed no conditions and I agreed to write, with the consciousness of my limitations in the fulfilment of such an undertaking.

I cannot in any way overstate the generous help, in suggestions and in unflinching encouragement that I received till the last day, from the very understanding and noble professor from his sick bed. It is a shock to me that I have not been able to place the finished writings before the esteemed professor.

I shall fail in my duty if I do not express my gratitude to Sri Nirmal Kumar Bose who, in spite of various exacting duties, was kind enough to help me with his versatile and intelligent guidance, while writing the second part.

My son, Surajit, has offered me various useful suggestions while going through the autobiographical portion. I thankfully recognize his assistance.

AUTHOR

It is most unfortunate that Professor Redfield expired on October, 1958, before I could finish the charge entrusted to me.

PRELUDE

So many changes have affected our lives after the division of India in 1947 that it is time for assessing the value of human relations with which our lives were intimately bound. Whenever I turn my thoughts to the past, two pictures come up before my mind in strong relief. The rapidly changing phases of adaptation to a new environment and unfamiliar conditions naturally lead us to the memory of the bonds of human affection that have made it impossible to turn the past into the limbo of oblivion. Usually, men placed in my position are prone to become pessimistic about the sincerity and depth of human attachments. But the Mighty Mother has saved me from that calamity; I am presently telling why.

After the creation of Pakistan I visited Susanga, the home of my ancestors without any interruption from the 13th century, for the last time in 1956. I do not think, during my lifetime the conditions of travel between India and Pakistan will improve to such an extent as to render it possible for peace-loving folk to go on pilgrimage to their ancestral homes. However, the two incidents that I experienced during perhaps my last visit, have been the abiding silver lining in the otherwise very dark cloud that seems to have overshadowed the sky of my life.

I was sitting in the verandah of the Rangmahal, the Maharaja's palace, and the last apology for guards, a tottering refuge of the past, were in waiting. My notice was attracted by the presence of a man wearing a wrapper waiting long in the hot midday sun near the gate. I asked one of the attendants to lead the man to me. He was a middle-aged Muslim, who had come from a village nearly six miles to the East of Susanga. I asked him why

he had been waiting for over an hour and a half in that manner in the hot sun. The man was in a hesitant mood, for, these were abnormal times for any ordinary human being to whom mere peaceful existence was enough. When I assured him that if it was not anything against the State or the officials of the State he might freely speak out his mind, the man brought out a one month old child from under the cover who had been running very high temperature. I was almost at my wit's end to find this sight and asked what could ever make him bring this child and stand in the baking sun for such a length of time. The man said, 'I have been asked by a Fakir (a Muslim religious mendicant) to take the child who was running high temperature for the last five days without any remission, to the Rajbari and touch the body of the poor child to the throne of the Gadidhar Maharaja, i.e., the real Maharaja. Then only the child would be cured ; otherwise nothing else could save him.' I was shocked at this enormity of rural ignorance. However, it was there. I told the man, without divulging the identity of the Maharaja, whom he apparently did not know in person, 'The Maharaja has no throne now-a-days, but he usually sits on a cushioned chair on ceremonial occasions and he might place the child on the chair on condition that he would run immediately to a physician for proper treatment.' The man readily agreed and after attaining his objective was apparently highly satisfied. Before he went away, I made him promise to let me know how the child fared so that the information might be communicated to the Maharaja. I was more than certain that the child would expire on his way home. But two days later the same grateful man came and reported that even before approaching a physician, the child was completely cured as soon as he had proceeded no more than two or three furlongs from the Rangmahal, and since then the child was well. Personally, I do not attach importance to how and why the child was cured, but I have been overpowered with the thought as to how and why even the Muslim Fakir had asked a Muslim villager to come to a Hindu Maharaja, his

ex-zamindar, in this way when the last vestige of his territorial possession had been acquired by the State of Pakistan. The attachment to the titular head of the House must have been a real sentiment based on long traditions that had grown among the unsophisticated rural population of Susanga.

The other instance is still more illuminating of the sentiments cherished towards the Maharaja of Susanga even in the neighbouring parganas beyond the limits of Susanga. On another occasion, when I was sitting in the manner stated above, my notice was attracted by the presence of a fairly old Muslim village woman and a young boy squatting in the lawn for an unusually long time. It was the practice of the village folk to come and see the Rangmahal on their way either to or from the local bazar. On such occasions they would keep their belongings in charge of one in the party and the others would go round sight-seeing. I asked my orderly to enquire why they were waiting so long. The old woman pointed to a he-goat and to some contents in a bamboo basket which she had brought with her to offer to the Gadidhar Maharaja, by way of fulfilling a long-standing vow. I asked the orderly to lead the woman to me. I asked her what it was that she had come for. She told me, 'My lord, the incarnation of righteousness (Dharmavatar), it has been the practice in my husband's family to make an offering to the Gadidhar Maharaja of Susanga, if a male child is born. We offer a he-goat, a quantity of ghee (clarified butter from cow's milk), and a quantity of atap rice (rice from unboiled paddy), on such occasions. Thus for the last three generations we have had only one male child born in the family who continues the line. We live far in the zamindari of the Dewans of Haibatnagar. It has taken two days for us to reach the palace of Susanga. My husband who died two years ago, had attempted to place the offerings himself, but as the Maharaja was then not living here, he could not fulfil his vow. But at his death-bed he repeatedly asked me to make the offering for the good of this only son of ours who

is here with me. I have been told that the Maharaja has come home for a short stay. So I have hastened to place the offering at his feet.' I was deeply touched by what she said and could not but divulge the identity of the Maharaja. The touching reaction of the woman was to be seen to be believed. She wept and prostrated herself on the ground before the Maharaja, placed her head on his feet and made the son follow her, dragged all the offerings and placed all these before the feet of the Maharaja. I was touched beyond the capacity of human expression and prayed to the Mighty Mother for blessing the mother and the boy and be pleased to accept their offerings. When I accepted the offerings, she declared, 'I have lived all these years for this and today I am ready to go to the grave in peace. Oh Lord of the Land, bless my child, and may the departed soul of my husband rest in peace.'

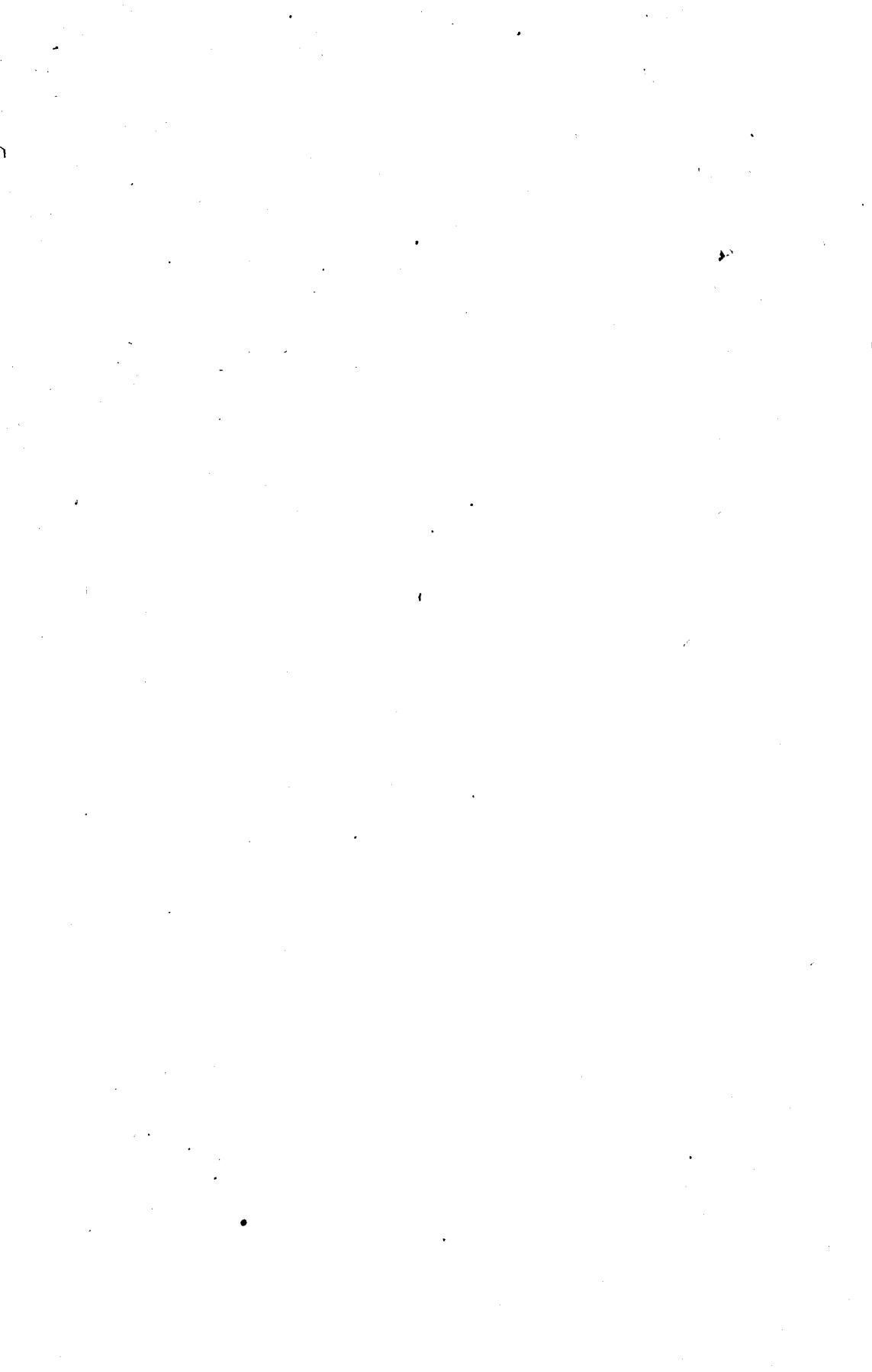
There is no further possibility of my visiting Susanga; but these two pictures have deeply stirred my thoughts whenever I have been in a reminiscent mood. I am grateful to the memory of my ancestors who had left such a great tradition of loving faith amongst the people whom they had the privilege of serving.

My son, Surajit, while he had been studying at North-Western University of the U.S.A., had suggested several times that I should write some memoirs of Susanga life on the basis of my intimate personal experience of the area, as this has become almost a legendary thing even for my sons. The last two pictures had tempted me at times to give expression to my thoughts; but my hesitation prevailed as I was conscious about the limitations of my ability as a writer.

Of late with the assurance and encouragement from the esteemed professor, Robert Redfield of Chicago University and, through his good offices, with the encouragement of the Ford Foundation, I have attempted at giving a shape to my thoughts. I

am deeply grateful to Professor Redfield in particular for this. The following records are in a sense a grateful tribute to the loving people of Susanga who had supported and nurtured us during the long centuries for which we had the great privilege of being intimately associated with them.

The first part deals with the lives and events of the people of contemporary Susanga as experienced by the writer while the second provides information on the cultural background of the people of Susanga.



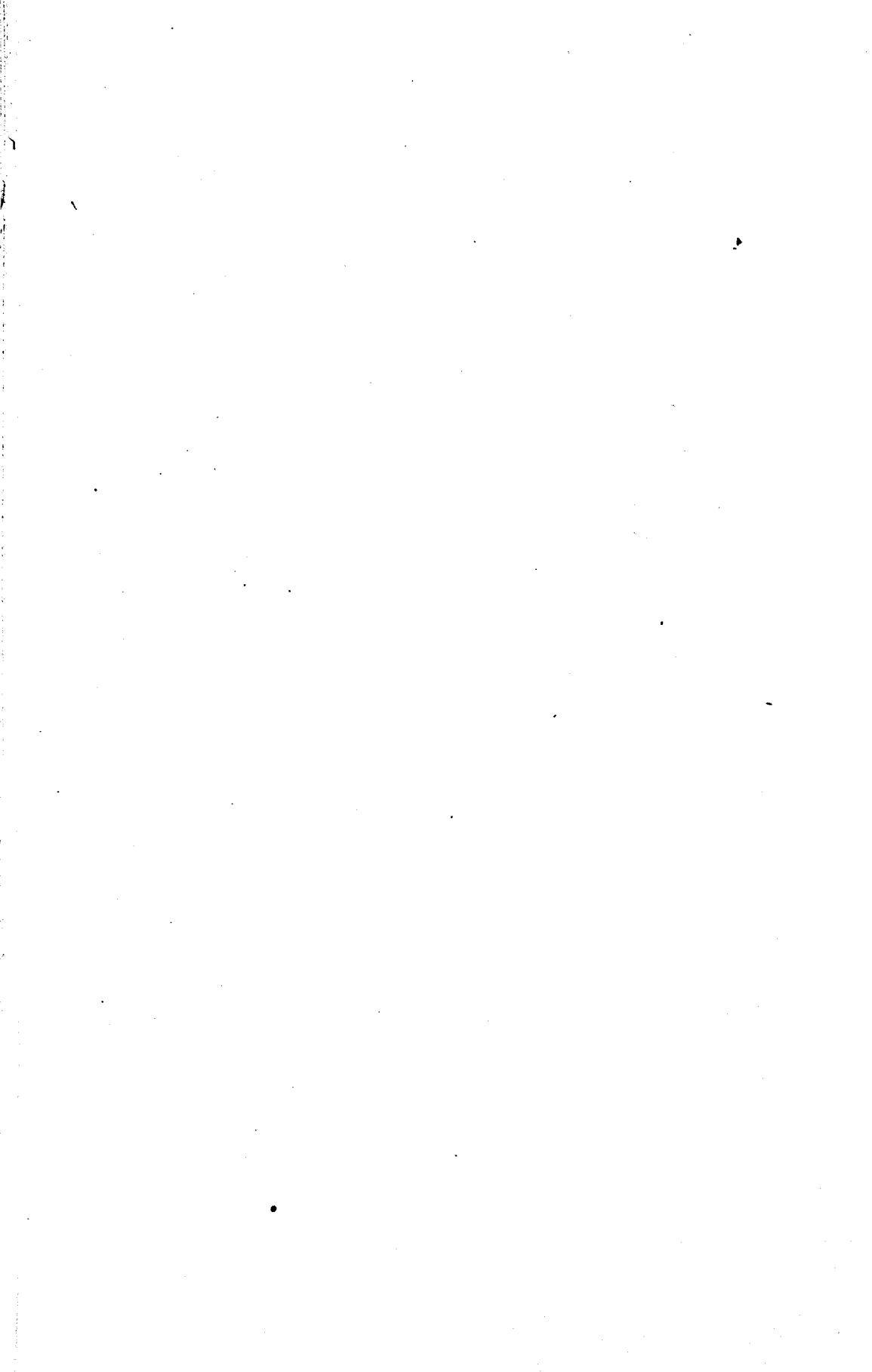


CHANGING TIMES

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

THE SETTING

MEMOIR No. 11 : 1963



AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL



CHAPTER ONE

EARLY MEMORY

IN ATTEMPTING to recall the past I find it difficult to arrange all the events in their proper sequence of time and place. I have related in the following pages the rambles and adventures of my life in that world where I first saw the light of day, and which had set the frame for my attitude towards the world outside when I came into contact with it later on.

I gather from my family records that I was born at Susanga in 1898 on the 18th of September at 6.10 a.m. Amongst some of the tales remembered of my early childhood I recollect most prominently the stories of a terrible earthquake that buried underground the architecture of old Susanga, about one year and three months before my birth, namely, on the 12th of June, 1897. From the latter pages of this memoir it will be clear that I have been mainly a spectator of the rapid disintegration and final dissolution of an ancient institution. The earthquake of 1897, thus in a dramatic way, set the stage for the disintegration which I was destined to witness all through my life.

My earliest memory of the house is associated with the *zenana* (*andarmahal*) compound, the arena of the womenfolk, where there were four east-facing *atchalas* (commodious bungalows), thatched with grass, tied to a strong frame of seasoned bamboo, placed on *sal* posts of enormous size. Each of these houses had a large hall with commodious covered veranda all round, with two side-rooms attached to the west of the veranda. One served the purpose of a combined bath and privy and the other was for various other purposes. The halls had no doors or windows. There were only some wooden frames from which thick screens used to be hung. These screens usually remained rolled up in the daytime. As far as I can recall, all the materials of these bungalows were of local origin, including hinges and bolts. The supply of timber, bamboo and cane came mostly from the Garo Hills.

A long bamboo ladder was fixed behind each bungalow. After a heavy gale, whenever the thick layers of thatching

CHAPTER TWO

GROWING UP AND THE TURMOILS OF LIFE

The death of my father in 1916 was a factor of such great magnitude that it seemed that the family members at last came to realize the greatness of the personality that they had lost. Father had been staying in Calcutta continuously from 1907 in order to avoid the constant quarrels in a co-sharing estate and in a joint family. He was compelled, for financial reasons, to return to Susanga in 1916 in or about July. I was then a student of Second Year I.A. class at the Presidency College. I remember, while attending a class lecture, I was shown a slip of paper in which I was asked urgently to return home. A week before that I had received father's last letter. I do not know why that letter suddenly raised a presentiment in me that it was probably going to be the last letter from my father. The thought was so very painful that tears rolled down my cheeks, and to get rid of the depressing ominous idea I tore all his letters, only few of which had been with me as we had been living together without any gap for all these years. Thus, I have lost all letters from the person whom I had respected most dearly. Frankly, no other human being has been so much adored by me. To me father was nobility, purity and dignity personified.

When I came back home from College, I was told that father was seriously ill and I was to start for Susanga immediately. It took nearly 50 hours to reach Susanga from Calcutta via Goalanda. One had to use conveyances of all sorts: railway train, steamers, horse-drawn carriages, elephants, ferry boats, and what not, to cover a distance of nearly 300 miles as the crow flies. What a contrast today to learn from my youngest son that he flew from Delhi to Moscow in nine hours.

Anyway, I reached Susanga on the third day at about 9.30 p.m. There was a shadow of impending death cast all over the house. When I saw my father at that late hour, his eyes were apparently eagerly searching for me. He had been anxiously awaiting my arrival. His tongue had already been moving in spasm and he could speak only in broken accents,

CHAPTER THREE

THE NEXT GENERATION

In spite of unbearable pressure on the resources of the estate during my father's lifetime, only one of his cousins had entered into the Civil Service of the British Government. All the rest were occupied with the management of their tiny shares of the ancestral estate. A typical nostalgic habit grew from this bad example on the part of the Raj family among the general population of Susanga Pargana. Even during my own generation a good proportion of youths in the Raj family continued to wallow on the farash of the Susanga estate. It is interesting to note that in our times there were about a dozen graduates in the family—some M.A. and M.Sc.'s and one of them a B.L. There was also one B.Sc in Agriculture from Edinburgh. Beyond furnishing foddors to the lawyers, these educated youths have done very little of real benefit for the area.

But through the electric shock received after bringing the Court of Wards' administration at my initiative in 1935, the situation underwent a drastic change. I shifted to Calcutta in 1936 and a cousin of mine took a minor job under the Government in the management of zamindaries. Qualified youths who had been wasting their talents in the residuum of Susanga resources were pushed out of it. Gripped by a feeling of insecurity they struggled to stand on their own feet in this rough world. This beginning in my own branch of the family had its healthy repercussions on the other branches also. Further deepening of the crisis through the creation of Pakistan, which brought about a total emigration for Raj family members from Susanga, made it impossible to draw any farther from the ancestral resources. The urgency of the situation forced the dispersed members of the Raj family to struggle harder to gain a foothold in the portion of Bengal outside the grip of Pakistan. This crisis, in the course of only a decade, has converted the decadent landed aristocracy into a number of struggling middle class families, widely scattered in space

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have attempted to narrate some of the events during my life without maintaining any rigorous sequence in time and space. It may be that I have emphasized minor events and have neglected many items that may seem to be important to others. In recollecting the past, those things appear vividly before the mind that have gone to make me what I am today in relation to the world outside. I have avoided dwelling at length on my personal activities in public or private life. I have emphasized the cultural inheritance of mine that has struggled against the terrible onrush of discordant modern tendencies. I was inherently a conservative, but was not unwilling to adapt myself to the overpowering modern tendencies so long as it did not shake me off my traditional roots.

From the accounts given in the previous chapters it will be apparent that my role with reference to Susanga Raj family has been mainly that of a presiding officer of a liquidating institution. I was born in the family when it was already badly shaken to its roots by partition and continuous litigation. My own life has been that of a spectator of further disintegration of the institution, till the partition of the country in August 1947 made it virtually non-existent. Even with the territorial, economic and political basis of my cultural heritage being completely taken off my feet for over a decade, I feel vitally linked to two elements of my inherited tradition.

One of these may be labelled as that of the princely order. Through nursery tales, other narrations, continuous stay and travel in Susanga Pargana, I became deeply aware of the territory of Susanga almost as living an entity as a human being, with specially endeared spots having traditional, ceremonial and personal associations. This is so different from the state of mind of my own children to whom no locality seems to have such sacred meaning. Somewhat in the same manner, my familiar pattern of life was one of the continuous series of festivities and vigorous and wholesome participation in local life involving the large joint family and the various castes and tribes of Susanga.

THE SETTING

CHAPTER FIVE

INTRODUCTION

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Susanga* is the headquarters of what was once known as Susanga Desh, and later on as Mulke Susanga and subsequently as Pargana Susanga. Now it is located in Durgapur Police Station, under the Sub-Division of Netrakona, in the district of Mymensingh in East Pakistan. It is situated at a distance of thirty-six miles due north from the town of Mymensingh and lies barely two miles to the south of the foot of the Garo Hills Ranges in Assam State of India. The village, or rather the small town, of Susanga is at present the headquarters of the Partially Excluded Area of Mymensingh. It is situated on the east bank of the lovely Someswari with its golden bed of sand, that flows out of the Garo Hills with a strong current. After following a very meandering course, ultimately she joins the river Meghna. The other channels that used to lead the river to the Brahmaputra have now been choked up. Susanga is connected with the nearest railway station at Jaria-Jhanjhail by an unmetalled road from Birisiri on the Kangsa just opposite Jaria-Jhanjhail railway station. The Kangsa river has to be crossed by ferry to reach Jaria-Jhanjhail on the opposite bank. The river route from Susanga, excepting during heavy floods, is a long one and takes nearly fifty hours to reach Jaria-Jhanjhail.

The Garo Hills form the northern boundary of modern Susanga Pargana. The District of Sylhet forms the eastern limit and the west is bounded by Sherpur Pargana. There is no natural boundary line in the south. Some small hillocks form a feature of the northern limit.

The climatic condition of the area is typically tropical. Rainfall is above 200" per year. Cherrapunji, which has the heaviest rainfall in the world, is only 70 miles to the north-east of Susanga. The atmosphere is humid. Though a few hot

*Denoted also as Susang, Susung, Shusung, Shusong, Susong and Susang-Durgapur.

CHAPTER SIX

(A) THE TRIBALS IN MULKE SUSANGA

Susanga within its limited area affords for anthropologists a rare opportunity of studying different kinds of human communities living under various types of social systems. At least, at one time, from the head-hunting, omnivorous tribals to the Vaishnava Hindu professing *ahimsa*, almost all conceivable conglomerations of human cultural types could be met within this area. Modern Susanga cannot boast of having head-hunting tribals within its narrowed down limits, but a few White men have added to the already loaded list of cultural types. Forces of circumstance have wiped out the head-hunting practice from amongst the tribal Garos. I had the opportunity of meeting an aged Garo, about seventy years old, in or about 1923, who confided to me that he had not only killed men, but had actually tasted roasted human meat.* I was camping in a secluded village at the foot of the Garo Hills in the vicinity of the Baghmara Reserve Forests. After a successful day's shikar, my jungle friend, Junga Garo, requested me to treat him and his men to a good drink. Junga, Durga, Biswanath and all others of the village of Badambari—men, women, and children, assembled around my camp fire in the evening and drank and danced till a late hour in the night. Durga who was not less than forty-five years of age, invited his father from the neighbouring Rangajhora village in Garo Hills Reserve Forests to come. On my request, he showed me some of the varieties of war dances and he exhibited a particular dance which used to take place around the human victims dead, or if alive, waiting to be beheaded. While he was taking rest, I asked him if he had killed men himself. He frankly told, 'I have killed many *Bangals*, who could not come with the Raja's permits.' I asked him if he had tasted human meat. He said, once or twice, he had tasted slices of burnt meat which tasted well. But the Garos have given up the practice of head-hunting altogether and they are just as good as other hill tribes in various parts of India.

*It might be an exceptional case, for, no other report on the practice of cannibalism among them is known to me.

(B) THE GAROS

Among the so-called tribal population of Pargana Susanga, the Garos need a special treatment for various reasons. Firstly, they form the most numerous tribal group and they are the least Hinduized among the various tribal groups. They are also perhaps the earliest inhabitants of this area and enjoyed a very special kind of relationship with Susanga Raj.

The Garos are the tribal inhabitants of the modern district of the Garo Hills in Assam. Some of them live in a part of the Goalpara District in Assam and others have scattered over certain areas of the districts of Mymensingh and Dacca in East Bengal, Pakistan. Some of the Garos are also found in Agartala in India. In this section, I shall confine my description of the Garos to such as they were and not as they have become. For this I have partly depended on authentic records published and unpublished. Only in some very limited cases, I have referred to the publications of some very recent research workers among the Garos. I have also taken some light from the versions of some very aged people whom I had met thirty to forty years ago.

One of the latest Governors of Bengal under the British Indian Government had camped at a village, on the Someswari, just opposite to Susanga. The name of the Governor's camping ground was *Dakumara*. The Governor asked me about the origin of the name. I gave him the meaning of the word *Dakumara* (*daku*—dacoit, *mara*—kill, therefore *Dakumara* means where dacoits had killed men). However, I was not satisfied with the reply given then and there. Subsequently, I requested Sri Nirode Chandra Chakravarti, a physician of the Ayurvedic school of medicine and a fairly conversant Sanskrit scholar to help me in getting a clue to the origin of the name. He was interested in collecting data for writing a history of the Brahmin families of Susanga Pargana and also in collecting folklore from the villagers. One day he came very jubilant and told me, 'I have found out clue to the name of *Dakumara*. In the course of my medical practice I was called to attend a fisherman family, where I met a very aged woman who claimed to be above hundred years old and to be the oldest living member among the fishermen folks of Susanga. After some preliminary approaches she sang a song the purport of which was as follows: "in days of yore one

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE STRUCTURE OF THE VARENDRA BRAHMANICAL ORDER OF NORTH AND EAST BENGAL

We have already stated that the Brahmanical culture as brought by the founder of the Susanga Raj family and later on modified by its Bengal cultural pattern, has considerably moulded the cultural life of the people of Susanga.

The Brahmans of Bengal were divided into three main groups, viz., (1) the Varendra, (2) the Rahri and (3) the Vaidic from the times of King Adisur of Bengal. The exact time of King Adisur is a disputed matter amongst historians. But even before that, the Brahmans from the north-western India came and settled in Bengal and also spread over some parts of Assam. References to this fact may be found even in the Mahabharata. In later times when King Ballal Sen reorganized Hindu society in Bengal, those Brahmans were known as the *Saptasatis* and the *Oupanivasika*. Perhaps these names can be traced to the times of King Adisur. Later on due to Muslim aggressions, the Brahmanical order of Bengal came into conflict with the foreign powers; and, as a result, we find that certain functional and even structural modifications of the Hindus on the basis of a very important law contained in the *Naradadharmasutra*, had been given effect to.*

Previously, *yajan* (worship of the God, personally), *yājan* (worship of God for the benefit of others), *adhyayana* (study of the *Vedas*, *Vedanta*, etc.), *adhyapana* (teaching)—these were the duties assigned to a Brahman. But we also find that deviations from this had started long ago. Parashurama, a

* "Utkrishtang ba apakrishtang ba
Tayoh karma na vidyate
Madhyame karmani hitya
Sarbasadharaney hitay"—*Naradadharmasutra*.

(The path for action does not always lie
along 'best' or 'worst' lines;
Following the middle path is often
for the good of all.)

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUSANGA RAJ FAMILY

During the last phase of British administration in India the Susanga Raj family continued to remain in their ancestral home of Susanga, in the north-eastern frontier of Bengal. It has been indicated already that the Susanga family is considered to be one of the very old zemindary houses of Bengal. Even as late as 1939, when proposals for remodelling the land tenure system of Bengal were being examined by a Royal Commission with Sir Francis Floude as the Chairman, we find from the evidence of a very eminent civilian of Bengal before that Commission, that he divided the Bengal Zemindars under the following three heads :

(a) "Independent Chieftains or tributary chiefs, who submitted to the sovereignty of the Moghuls and were holding the Zemindary neither as rent collector nor as Feudal lords but as an appanage to their quasi-sovereign right, e.g., Maharaja of Susanga, Zemindars of Haibatnagar in Mymensingh (descendants of Isa Khan), Rajas of Ramgarh, etc."

(b) "Hereditary Zemindars, e.g., Maharaja of Nadia, Burdwan, Dinajpur, Raja of Putia, Maharaja of Natore, Raja of Tahirpur, etc."

(c) "Those who were in origin mere rent collectors appointed by the Nazims but, by the effect of time, became hereditary rent collectors imitating or abrogating to themselves the status of hereditary Zemindars."*

I shall try to depict in brief outline the major events that marked the times of the successive Rajas, more or less in a chronological order.

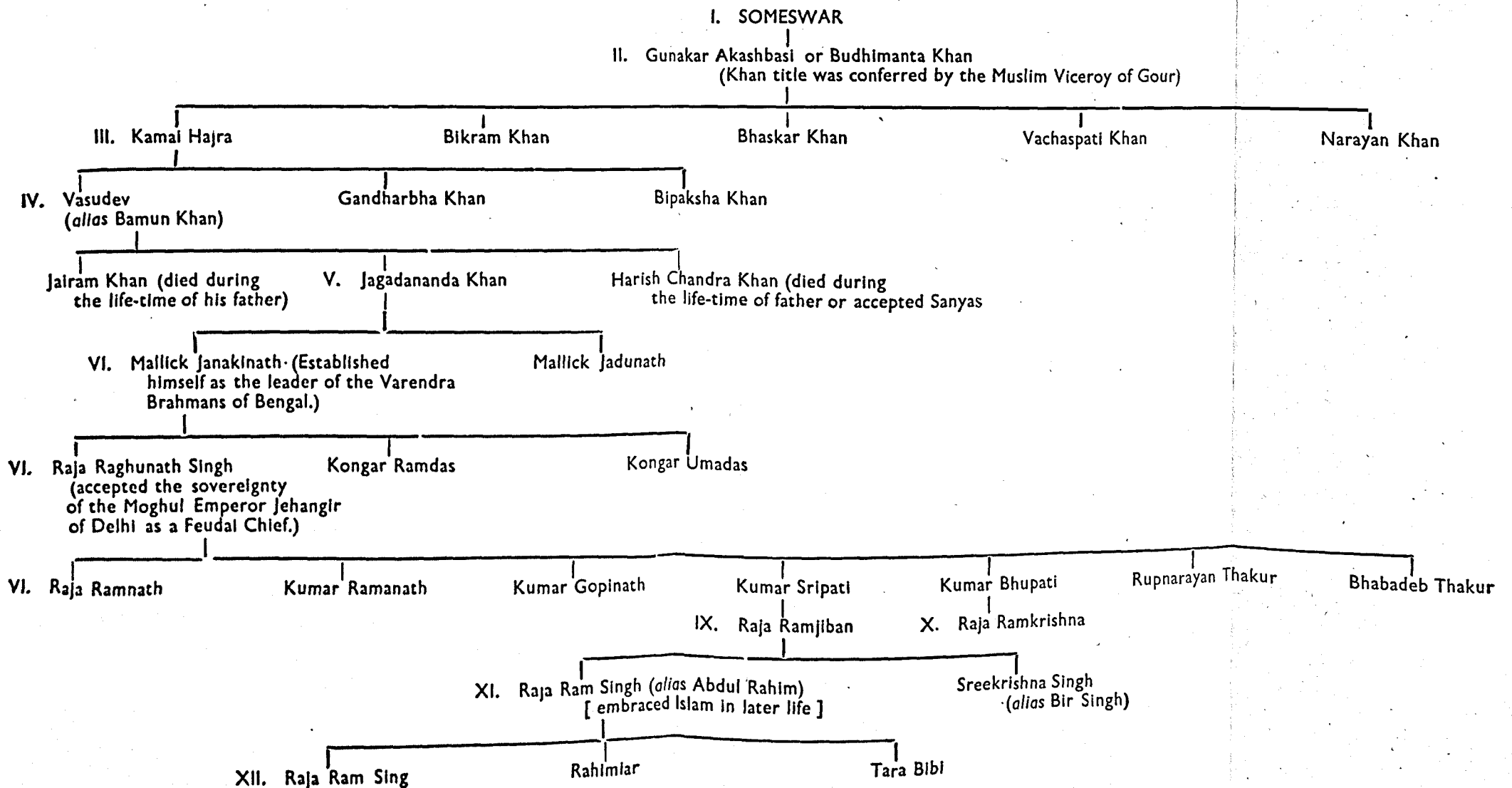
* From Rai Bahadur Kallpada Moltra's answer to the Q. No. 4 issued by the Commissioner of Land Enquiry in Bengal—headed by Sir Francis Floude, 1939.

APPENDIX I

GENEALOGY OF SUSANGA RAJ FAMILY

[The Raj Family was established at Susanga by Someswar Pathak, also known as Someswar Thakur, a Brahman Sadhu from Kanyakubja around 1280 A.D. Someswar belonged to the illustrious Bharadwaj clan, and as laid down by professional genealogists we learn the names of following ancestors of Someswar—tracing back to as many as 26 generations. It is not possible to ascertain how far many of these names are just mythical.]

1. Medhatithi, 2. Gautam, 3. Bibhakar, 4. Prabhakar, 5. Vishnu Misra, 6. Kakustha Misra, 7. Prajapati Agnihotri, 8. Gopi Ojha, 9. Bachaspati Ojha, 10a. Gunakar, 10b. Luxman, 11. Narayan Panchatapa, 12. Bardhaman Agnihotri, 13. Prithwidhar Agnihotri, 14. Sovacharyya, 15. Matanga Ojha, 16. Jingani or Agni Acharyya, 17. Bhaskar Bedanti, 18.(a) Kanacharyya, (b) Sayanacharyya, (c) Dhanacharyya, (d) Bhubaneswar, (e) Sukasti, (f) Binayak Misra, (g) Harihar Bhattacharyya, 19. Parikshit, 20. Buddhimanta or Budhamanti (Budhamantri), 21. Daksha, 22. Bishalaksha, 23. Adibar Dhurjati, 24. Pipar Ojha, 25. Manal Ojha, 26. Kenal Ojha, 27. Someswar [founder of the Susanga Raj family].



XII. Raja Ram Sing

XIV. Raja Kishore Sing
(died without any son in 1784)

Raja Raj Singh (during his life-time the first settlement with East India Company was made, which, later on, during his time, under Permanent Settlement was reduced to a mere zemindary.)

Baidyanath Kongar
(died during the life-time of his father)

XV. Raja Viswanath Singh (1787—1853)
(During his life-time the British Government laid claims to some of the villages in Garo Hills. His brothers registered their names as co-sharers of the Susanga Estate. Dispute arose over this.)

Gopinath
(died without issue, but his widow adopted a son. The adoption was declared invalid and $\frac{1}{3}$ of his share was restored to Viswanath.)

Krishnanath Kongar
(died during the life-time of his father)

Jagannath Singh
(got his name registered as $\frac{1}{3}$ owner of Susanga Estate.)

XVI. Raja Pran Krishna Singh (1808—1864)
(A period of continuous litigations concerning the traditions of Primogeniture and encroachment of the Garo Hills properties.)

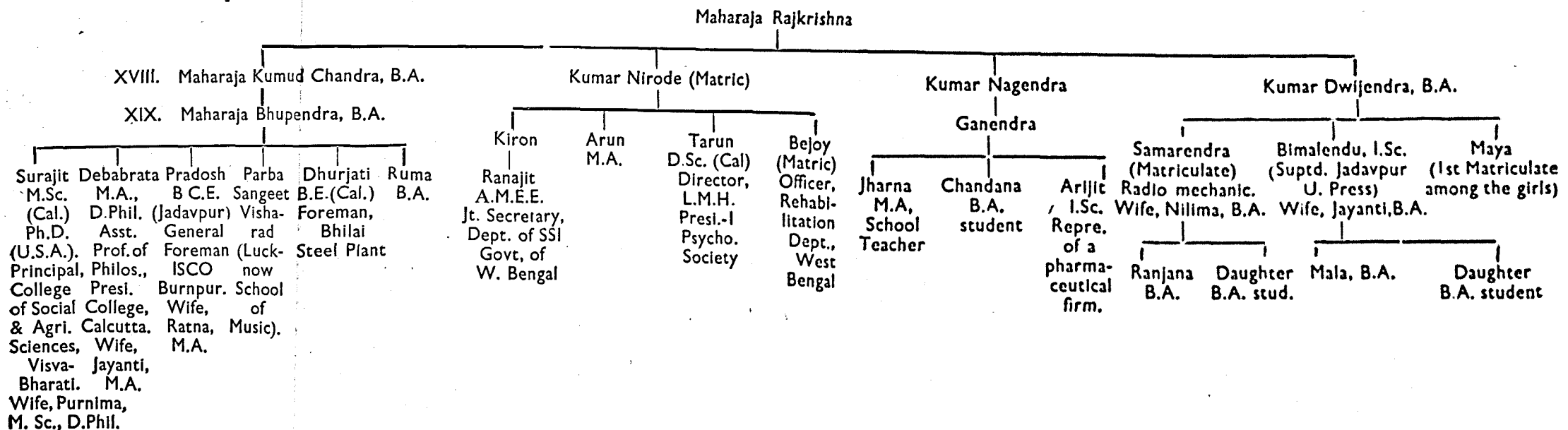
XVII. Maharaja Rajkrishna Sinha
(Title of Maharaja conferred as a hereditary distinction in 1884. Garo Hills were removed from the possession of Susanga Raj.)

Kamal Krishna Sinha
(a person of culture and published several books.)

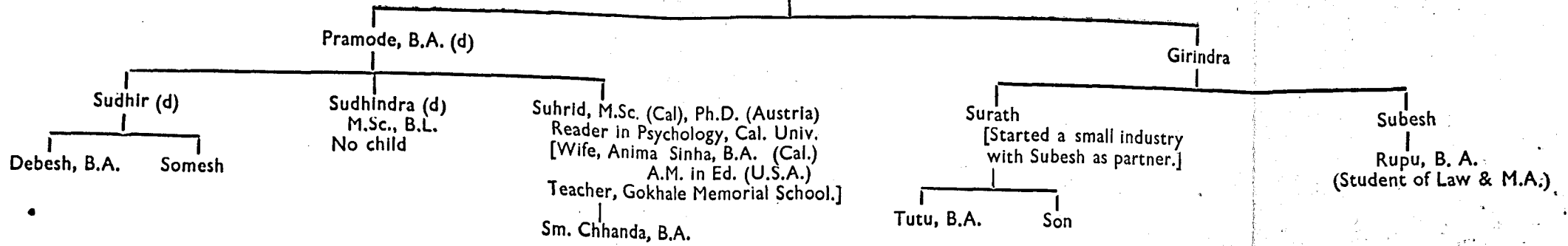
Jagat Krishna Sinha
(a Sanskritic scholar who had the reputation of knowing Manipuri and Garo languages.)

Shib Krishna Sinha
(wrote valuable articles about the management of the cage and singing birds.)

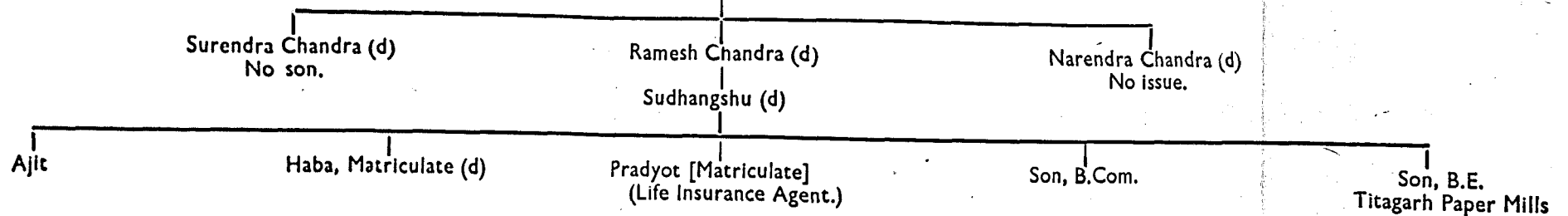
[The table shows the educational qualifications and occupations of the members during the last three generations, as far as could be ascertained. Educational qualifications below matriculation have not been mentioned. Female members of the family have been mentioned only in cases where they have attained education at least upto matriculation standard.]



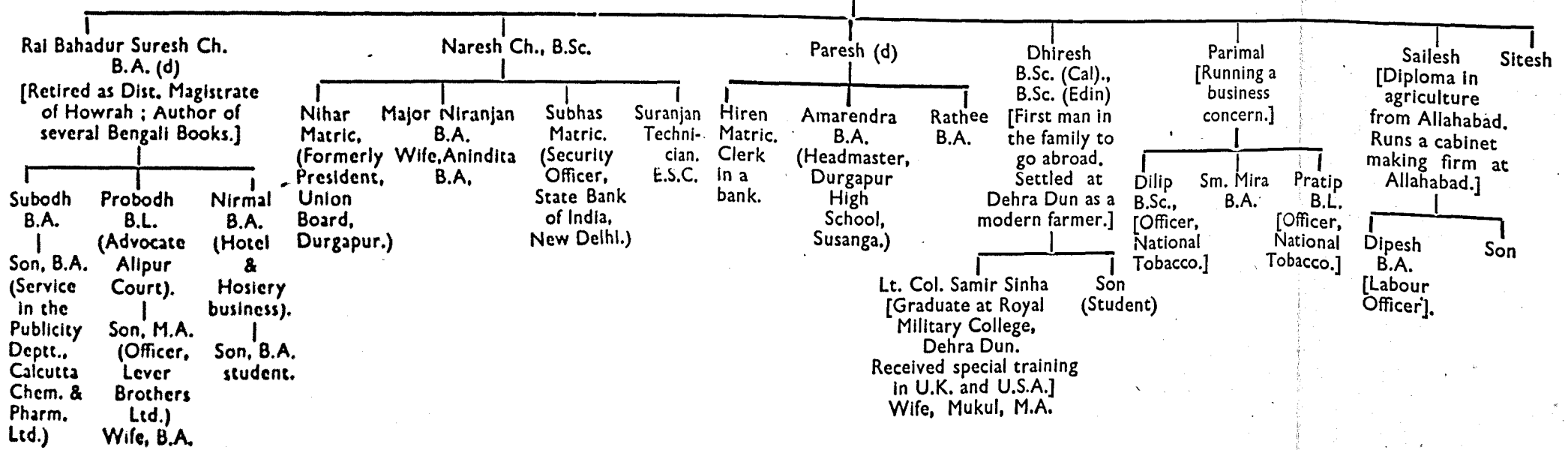
Kamal Krishna Sinha (d)



Jagat Krishna Sinha (d)



Shiva Krishna Sinha (d)



APPENDIX II

KHEDAH IN SUSANGA

I have dealt with the methods of capturing elephants in some detail in a treatise on Indian elephants, published in a Bengali periodical. In the following pages I have presented an account of elephant capturing as used to be practised in Susanga Pargana.

Uptil 1879, the following methods of capturing wild elephants were practised in India.,

- (1) Pitfall, (2) Partallah, (3) Phand (Noosing) and
- (4) Khedah (Stockade).

The Pitfall method has been prohibited by legislation. Pits used to be dug intercepting some very important highways of wild elephants after much careful selection, and a camouflaged bridge would be placed on the mouth of the pits, in a manner that the unsuspecting elephants when rushing forward fell into the pits and became captives, when with the help of trained elephants the victims were brought out.

The percentage of deaths and disabilities from this source was so high that it was stopped by the Government as soon as the improved Khedah methods came to be recognized as a sure and more profitable means of supplying elephants for the commissariat and other departments under the Government.

Let us now describe the partallah method of capturing elephants. The writer had occasions to watch big bulls being captured by this method, by the Daldars (experts in capturing wild elephants by Partallah method) of Susanga, at the foot of the Garo Hills. It is roughly like this:

The readers who have some knowledge of wild Indian elephants know that there is a period when the male elephants get sexually excited and then they forget their natural shyness about men and behave very strangely. Usually, during such period of musth, the bulls cross such females as are physically fit for courting the attention of the excited bull. Very seldom the females show external signs of heat, as is usually found in other quadrupeds. It has been recorded by observers that at times the males that do not show external symptoms of musth also cross the females that attract their attention. But this is not common. In a herd of wild elephants, during the Spring, when several bulls are under rut at times, one or two find it difficult to remain in the herd, and they run away from the herd and naturally have to knock about in search of tame cow.

elephants. When such bulls come to any pilkhana (place where tame elephants are kept), four to seven trained female elephants, known as koonkies, are employed for capturing the bull. The particular cow that is able to attract the attention of the bull is always kept in front of him, approaching his frontal with her back. The Mahut remains seated on the neck of the cow. It is very strange that the bull is completely oblivious of the existence of the man on the elephant. The Mahut is provided with a mere jatha—i.e., a bamboo stick with a pointed iron spike at one end, the only weapon of defense. The bull is usually made to move night and day without rest, mad after his Delilah and when exhausted he takes rest with his trunk placed on the back of the loved one, completely benumbed by the pleasures of the feeling of touch of the sweet-heart. He is now completely oblivious of the surroundings about him. I saw one tusker as high as 10' 2½" being caught at the heart of the Susanga Bazar, and that also on a hot day when hundreds of men had gathered round to see the fun, in broad midday. The bull stood still with his monstrous trunk placed on the hip of the cow, who was at least 2' 6" less in height. This has been recorded in the District Gazetteer of Mymensingh. It was in 1915. Another tusker was caught at Susanga just 100 yds. away from the Durgapur Police Station in the presence of innumerable spectators in 1923. On this occasion the elephant was a very young bull, a lovely tusker about 8' 6" in height. He was a young novice and was enticed by his fair sweet-heart and this perhaps his first misadventure, cost the Samson his liberty.

When the bull to be caught has taken up his position with his fiance, two to four koonkies surround him from two sides and press close to the body of the tusker with their hinds. The koonkies are all specially harnessed with ropes for the occasion. There is one very important koonky who is specially trained to take the hint at the mere touch of the Daidar and respond accordingly. This specially trained koonky is known in East Bengal as the *sindir koonky* (koonky to be used as a ladder). This elephant has some additional ropes tied round her body in a special manner with a view to helping the Daidar in using them as ladder when required to jump on the elephant for protection. A bundle of ropes is kept ready on the back of this elephant, to be supplied to the expert hobbler by the Mahut, according to their requirements. Each rope is about 2" in diameter and 12' to 14' in length.

After the approach work has been completed, the Daidar silently slips down from the koonky with a rope (i.e., *partallah*) in hand and takes his position behind the colossal hinds of the giant taking care not to touch the tail even though the elephant has been almost constantly moving his tail this way and that way. For the uninitiated spectator this is a breath taking sight. Before anything can be realized the first rope has already been tied twice round one leg, and with the thin end of this rope

the Daidar has already been connecting with the noose of another partallah supplied to him by the second Daidar who is always ready with two ropes in hand for supplying to his superior. The Daidar has taken the rope round the second leg and is quickly putting the ropes round and round the legs tying both the legs with a hobble, with wonderful dexterity and precision. All the time, this man minds his work only, with undivided attention and devotion. After at least six ropes in the case of a moderate sized bull, and eight in the case of a big one, have been tied round the two hind legs of the giant, the Daidar takes a little rest and allows his assistant to complete the job of tying additional two to six ropes. The finishing touch is given by the Daidar by tightening one or two more ropes round the centre of the hobble. This done, the partallah (i.e., the hobbling) work is completed. Now comes the important work of gach-loana (i.e., securing the bull to trees). If everything goes right, the securing of the elephant to the tree may be completed within an hour and a half. But all may not proceed so smoothly as that. During the period of hobbling the tusker may slightly move forward or feel disturbed. At the slightest indication of danger the Daidar takes shelter of the ladder koonky, whose Mahut, remains all attention during the whole process to render any assistance to the Daidar. In fact, on his watchfulness and on the thorough training of the koonky depends the safety of the Daidar at some very critical moments. The Daidar may have to begin anew the whole work before the securing business can be successfully finished. I have seen instances when through the wrong handling of the Daidar some elephants could never be caught. For seven days and nights a wild bull about 10' 6" in height was in the heart of Susanga pilkhana, crossed many tame cows and also some newly captured cows, but till the end he could not be caught as the old Daidar badly bungled. On another occasion due to the wrong manner of approach a koonky was pushed over by the bull in a way that the poor beast was almost gored to death and the Mahut was rendered invalid throughout his life. So the sight-seers watch the operations with almost breathless suspense from start to finish even when the whole operation may take days to finish. So long as the koonkies remain pressed to the body of the bull, he usually remains absolutely calm and allows the hobbling to continue without any interruption. When after the completion of the hobbling the thick ropes are tied above the hobbled portions of the two hinds and these are securely tied round the trunks of some strong trees, the koonkies are separated from the sides of the bull, that the giant realises that something has gone wrong. He is rudely shocked and roused from his stupor, when his enchantress leaves him and when trying to reach her he finds himself a captive, his terrific fury is let loose. The sight has to be personally seen to realize what the wrath of a giant looks like after he has received the first stunning shock of a loved one's treachery. He rushes forward with the impact of his huge weight and at

times the mighty tethers seem almost to give way and the huge trees to which he is tied appear to be almost being uprooted. He wheels round, and unable to reach the trunk of the trees, is on his side and presses the tusks deep into the earth out of sheer anger, rises up, falls again in the other direction, thuds with his powerful trunk, shrieks and trumpets in fury, with the powerful fore legs scatters earth and pebbles on all sides, pulls down all the branches of the tree to which his trunk can reach. In fact, this huge beast resorts to make all sorts of convulsive movements of his enormous body and limbs. This continues at intervals for hours. At last, he calms down after making all sorts of frantic baffled efforts at tearing away from the shackles. This picture is a touching one—a giant in captivity, frustrated in all his attempts from breaking away his chains. Two paths remain open under the circumstance, the one is to die and the other to resign absolutely to fate and accept life as it comes. Probably, the tropical climate makes the giant accept the second philosophy, the philosophy of resignation. The last part of the excitement is not yet over. The Daidars after a few hours rest, attempt to tie two or three huge ropes (nooses), each weighing half a maund to one maund round the neck of the bull. This is no easy task, but the performance of the Mahuts with the help of their elephants evokes admiration from all spectators. The courage, tact and expert knowledge that the men and animals show at these times have to be seen with one's own eyes to be believed. After the noosing has been completed the fore feet are tied with ropes almost as big and as heavy as those mentioned before. The fore feet are not hobbled, so the work of tying the fore feet is somewhat easier than those narrated already. Where suitable trees are not available, very huge posts are placed for securing the captured elephant. The tying work being thus completed, plantain trees are thrown before the captive, whose first reaction is to kick at the gift and throw away with vehement force the whole tree. The impact of this thrown off missile may be so great as to kill or disable anybody who may be hit. But it is very strange that within half an hour the elephant begins to exhibit signs of accepting one or two succulent banana tree, though not always without a demur. After two days of bondage the bull is led every morning or evening to the river for drinking and bathing, being tied to koonkies. On the first day of taking the bull to the river or stream, the moment the elephant feels that the shackles have been removed from his hinds, he makes a desperate attempt to make good his escape. It is a tremendous strain on the koonkies and the Mahuts to stop this rush. The koonkies are at times dragged flat and escape fatal accidents only through chance. The captive after making three or four such abortive attempts at escape, realizes that mere force cannot remove his bondage. After a week the training starts, and, in three months the giant obeys human commands.

The above is roughly the picture of partallah capture. I

write this in some details as this is the process practised in East Bengal for securing the larger elephants within a stockade. I have known a case where the mother of a calf that had somehow remained outside the khedah, while the calf was caught along with the others of the herd, was caught by partallah outside the stockade. This is very uncommon. Stray bulls, even if they are not in musth, may be caught by partallah but they are more prone to be scared away by the smell of the Mahuts on koonkies. But once the bull is enticed by a koonky, he is almost sure to be made a victim. The East Bengal (including Sylhet) Mahuts and Daidars were experts in this line of work. We are told that the Nepalese also practise partallah.

Let us now deal with the practice of noosing. By this method single animals of lesser height than the koonky are generally caught. This is known as mela shikar in Assam or phandi shikar elsewhere. The Assamese noosers are the best experts and their koonkies are the best adepts for this particular work.

Two elephants usually form into a batch of phandies. For the purpose of noosing male elephants are also used. Koonky is the name applied both to males and females used for indicating the tame elephants used for capturing wild ones. The specially prepared ropes from jute fibres are made into strong nooses, each rope weighing 12 to 15 seers, are tied round the girth of a koonky, one from the inside and the other to the off side of another. Each elephant is mounted by the nooser who sits on the shoulders and the assistant on the back of the koonky. The assistant is to goad the koonky with a small jatha (spear) in order to overtake the one after which the nooser directs his koonky. The pair of koonkies enter into the herds and select the victim and when any of the phandies has been able to approach the objective within a distance from where the noose may be thrown over the intended victim he takes the chance, and usually the wild one twists his trunk in a manner that the noose very easily is fastened round the neck while the second phandi throws the other noose from the opposite side. The phandies with great speed tie two thin ropes round the noose to prevent any accident happening to the victim by strangulation. Frantic struggles for escape ensue as soon as the animal is aware of the danger. It is a life and death struggle. It may end in fatal accidents at times, though fatal accidents actually occur only in one out of twenty cases. In this process the entire thrill is enjoyed by the phandies and the expert koonkies also enjoy the sport thoroughly. There is no possibility of derth of expert phandies in Assam, so long as the Government does not stop koonky owners carrying on the practice. It affords a life's thrill to witness the phandies and the koonkies at work, in the midst of a herd of wild elephants.

Now let me come to the most lively of sport that the ingenuity of human mind has yet been able to devise, namely,

capturing of a herd of wild elephants by the stockade method, that is khedah. The main features in all khedahs are as follows:

- 1) Surrounding a herd of wild elephants with the help of men.
- 2) Construction of an enclosure either circular or polygonal in shape made from trees placed vertically and horizontally with props supporting from outside. The gate of the enclosure is placed on the highway of the wild herd encircled.
- 3) After the elephants are stockaded, koonkies enter into the stockade and secure the wild elephants and bring them out one by one as captives.

Practices differ regarding the size of the stockade. The circle could be anything with a radius of 20' to 100'. At times trenches 6' wide at the mouth and about 6' in depth are dug within the enclosure all along the circumference of the larger stockades. In some places a strong enclosure known as 'strong room' (room ghar) used to be constructed either within or attached to the stockade. Wings in the shape of funnels extending from the two sides of the entrance to the stockade used to be added to the Assam and East Bengal stockades.

Evolution of elephants capturing, culminating in khedah has been possible only because of the very close study of the habits and habitats of the wild elephants. It speaks very highly of the Indian intellect that has evolved this most exciting live sport that is at once a sport and a basis of sound income from forests.

The forests of India, where elephants are found, abound in fodders for them suitable for the different seasons. Men who know the ways of wild elephants know where the herd moves to get the right type of food during a particular season. The Assamese who are experts in khedah method of elephant capture can tell precisely if a herd be present within a certain belt and when exactly they are likely to visit the important salt lick nearest to the stockade. I have known experts in Susanga side definitely telling that a particular herd never goes beyond a limit covering portions of the districts of Garo Hills and Khasia Hills. I have found their observations fairly accurate.

It may be of interest to give roughly the number of men required for conducting a khedah in the Garo Hills District from Susanga side.

(1) Trackers in two batches	8
(2) Messengers permanent	4
(3) Shikaris with gun licenses	6
(4) Head Sirdar (or Jamadar)	1

(5) Assistant Jamadar	1
(6) Sirdars	18
(7) Assistants or mate Sirdars	18
(8) Koolies at the rate of 14 under each Sirdar	252
(9) Extra Koolies	48
(10) Medical Officer	1
(11) His staff	1
(12) Khedah officer	1
(13) His staff	1
(14) Mobile camp—man in charge	1
Koyaldar	1
Armed guard.	1

Besides the above personnel, a considerable staff has to be maintained for the elephant's stable or pilkhanas. At least 12 well-trained koonkies must be ready in hand to start with. Twenty captured elephants of different sizes may be managed with the help of these. The number of koonkies must be increased as the number of capture increases. The pilkhana staff includes the following:

- (i) Inspector 1 (to be in charge of the depot)
 His staff 1
- (ii) Assistant Inspector 1 (to be in charge of the pilkhana at the operational theatre)
 His staff 1
- (iii) Each koonky must be provided with
 - (a) mahut 1
 - (b) assistant 1
 - (c) grass cutters 1 or 2
- (iv) Each newly caught animal under training shall require
 - (a) mahut 1
 - (b) assistant 1 (in case of a big tusker 2)
 - (c) grass cutters 1 or 2 (in the case of a big tusker 4)
- (v) Armed guards 2 (1 for the permanent, the other for the mobile pilkhana)

Each koonky must be provided with its complete gears and attendants. They have to take their own utensils. The Inspector of pilkhana is supplied with a good quantity of jute which he distributes among the Mahuts to prepare, during their spare time, various types of ropes, with which to bind wild elephants. These have to be done under the direction

of the Daidar. Usually, the pilkhana men arrange for their own rations. Medicines for men and animals have to be supplied from the Stores.

Let us give here some ideas of the things to be supplied to the khedah sirdar and his men when they start for the field of operation. Usually, ten days rations are to be given to each person along with the articles to be supplied to each Sirdar and his group for the whole operation. This is what each man can carry without any difficulty over steep hills. Rations are supplied after every ten days at the field of operation.

Materials required for the stockade men and the rations are as follows:

- (1) jute, (2) buckets, (3) empty kerosine tins, (4) torches and spare batteries and bulbs, (5) matches, (6) kerosine, (7) Hurricane lanterns, (8) dao or chopper, (9) axe, (10) spades, (11) picks, (12) digging spikes, (13) crow bar, (14) saw, (15) chisel, (16) hammer, (17) pulleys, (18) Manila ropes, (19) nails : 2 dozens—1'6" in length, (20) spikes pointed at one end, (21) a blanket for each man at work, (22) iron pots or karai, 2 to 3 for each Sirdar and his group, (23) 1 seer of rice for each man per day on active service and $\frac{3}{4}$ seer when at rest in base camps, (24) molasses, (25) tobacco leaf, (26) nuts, (27) tamarind, (28) pulses, (29) mustard oil, (30) salt, (31) onion, (32) potato, (33) dried fish, (34) chilly and turmeric.

Some of the Assamese people have to be supplied with opium and tea, instead of tamarind, potato and molasses. Tea, sugar, barley, condensed milk, cigarettes, etc., have to be supplied. I do not mention about the special requirements of the manager and his personal staff.

After the preliminary arrangements have been completed by the middle of November, the panjallas (i.e., trackers) are sent in two batches to report very correctly about the movements of the elephants. When the number of koonkies is 12, a herd of 30 animals should be looked for; when the number of koonkies is 20, a herd of 50 heads should be found out. As soon as the herd moves to a convenient location the panjallas carry the news immediately to the Jamadar, who in the meantime waits with the full strength of his army at some convenient place. Usually, it is wise to start the actual operation as soon as the main herd has divided into smaller herds and immediately after the harvesting has been completed, usually by the third week of December. There cannot be any harm if the herd be a larger one but a herd of a very small number of elephants does not prove to be an economic proposition. Unmanageable lot may be let loose if the capture to be too large. In view of

the enormous costs of commodities due to increase of wages, for the economic success of a Khedah operation at least 60 elephants of salable types should be caught at the very first attempt. In that case, of course, a good return is ensured. The success of Khedah depends much on the organizational capacity of the Managing Director. The selection of the time for the start suited to the local conditions is a great factor in keeping the expenses within bounds. Organization of the sale of the captured animals is also an important factor that affects the economic position ultimately.

To save unnecessary expenses it should be so arranged that on getting information from the trackers the Head Sirdar should be despatched directly to the place of operation with ten days' rations so that he reaches with his men within a mile of the locality where the elephants have been reported to be grazing either in the evening of the date of start or on the next day. They take rest over night.

The trackers must report very correctly on the following points, before the order for surrounding the herd at the particular area is passed by the Manager. These are:—(1) The number of animals in the herd—if big tuskers or makhnas have been found in the herd—the approximate classification of the animals in the herd; (2) the particular area and its accessibility by the koonkies; (3) whether food and water is enough for the herd for three weeks; (4) whether the place is suitable for the construction of stockades (i.e., if it is very stony, stockades cannot be erected); (5) whether sufficient trees are available for the construction of the stockade within easily accessible area and (6) whether the captured animals can be safely brought down to the nearest stream or river and from there to the depot. Ill founded report from trackers lead to disastrous results.

Things getting on all right, on the morning of the following day, the Jamadar reaches with his personnel at the fort of operation, he divides his staff into two groups—one under his leadership and the other under the lead of his assistant. One tracker accompanies each party. From a convenient point suggested by the expert tracker, pickets start the work of encircling the herd giving the animals sufficient room for grazing comfortably for the next 1-4 days. Two men are placed at each picket at a distance of 50 to 100 yards from one to the other. In three hours' time the two Sirdars meet completing the encirclement. This done, the area between the pickets is ordered to be cleared and thus a road is made all round the encircled area 12 to 15 feet in depth. A light bamboo fencing is completed in this area almost all along with the completion of the road. This helps to detect if any elephant has escaped through the encirclement. Before the sun has set each picket has constructed a little shed, collected logs and firewoods to keep the fire burning night and day, and also attached a sort of ladder

to the nearest formidable tree that can stand the charge from an infuriated elephant. This is to be used as protection against any determined attack in case of emergency. In the evening each picket has lit up his firewood and from a distance it looks like a ring of fire. The place, once the haunt of silence broken occasionally by the trumpeting of an elephant, the cry of a baby elephant of the grunts from a disturbed mother, occasionally a crushing of a tree by a playful youngster, the bell of a sambar or the barking of a Kukur, has now the merry appearance of a Dewali night. The more active amongst the rank and file of men surrounding the area have already started making various articles of use from bamboos and canes and some have been playing on flutes that have been made from the materials near at hand. Some are cutting jokes or telling fairy tales, while on their watch at the post. They have all finished their meals before dusk. It should be remembered, till they get orders from the Jamadar to do otherwise one man at each picket must keep up alternately throughout the nights.

The reaction that is perceptible amongst the elephants to this foreign intrusion is usually to assemble under the leadership of the patriarch or the matriarch. After dusk the herd reconnoitres the whole area and makes attempts to break through the circle and move off to some other pasture ground. This is done at intervals during the night at some one or other point of the large circle. Usually, this is done during the first and the last parts of the night, that being their usual time for grazing. But a shout here, a noise from the bamboo clapper there, or a little stirring up of the fire is enough to keep the herd within bounds. The intruder stray bulls cause some troubles and they are always difficult to tackle. They cause occasional serious false alarms or, at times, real causes for grave anxiety. The herd is content to remain within bounds so long as the food and water is sufficient for them in the area allotted to them and in that case the animals do not become unnecessarily violent and avoid the guards and remain out of harm's length from them. Each Sirdar and his assistant alternately keeps up the whole night and watches that the pickets under him are functioning all right, for the Sirdar and his assistant shall be held responsible for any shortcoming on the part of the men under them. Some device is made by which the Jamadar can detect if the night watches are being kept up all right. This he does by sending two sticks round the circle from the head Sirdar at regularly recurring intervals. Wherever there is a lapse the culprit is found out and very severely dealt with. In ordinary circumstances, the elephants graze from 3-30 P.M. (during the winter) till 11 P.M. and again from 3 A.M. till 8 A.M. During the remaining period they usually take rest. During day time they retire to deep tree-covered cool glens and at such times it is not possible to realize that the area contains a herd of wild elephants. Of course, the baby elephants like our human babies scream aloud at any off period of the day or night and

thus divulge the existence of elephants in the particular surroundings.

The next morning after finishing their meals by 8-30 A.M. each Sirdar leaving one man at every alternate picket as guard collects before the Jamadar's shed. The men carry *daos* and other implements with them to the Jamadar's shed; these implements are required for the construction of the stockade. The Jamadar, in the meantime, had reconnoitered round the area and had selected the place of stockade on the most strategic part on the highway through which the entire herd is almost certain to pass. Let me repeat, the success of Khedah depends 75% on the right selection of the spot for stockade and on the correct placing of the gate.

As soon as the spot for the stockade has been selected, a portion of the jungle is ordered to be cleared in a circular shape, the trees and the jungles within the cleared ring is allowed to remain undisturbed as far as possible. Now the task of construction of a side of the stockade is allotted to each Sirdar. The gate is constructed under the direct supervision of the Jamadar with an expert Sirdar and his very competent group of men. From now on till the elephants are brought out of the stockade as captives, the rank and file, engaged in the work of Khedah know no rest, night and day. Some are digging holes, some are felling trees, some carrying them down along steep hills. Though the order from the Jamadar is not to make any noise, I have seen this order is never followed and the place is full of noise. Two huge posts, known as *rajkhambas*, are required on which the enormously heavy gate hangs. The felling and bringing down of these two heavy trees and placing them into the large holes correctly, roughly requires a day and a half of labour for 40 to 60 men. These two posts are placed in position first and then the Sirdars go on placing the posts in their portions of the arms of the stockade. It requires roughly six to seven days to complete the stockade with the extended wings. When completed, the whole appearance is a formidable structure of huge posts of trees all round. The trees are placed horizontally and vertically. It is hardly possible for a man to slip comfortably through the openings between the trees thus placed. Props are placed from outside strengthening the barricade to save the structure from the impounding of the charges from the mighty giants. The placing of the supporting props and reinforcing bars are extremely well planned and every detail of construction is the result of very careful thoughts given to the matter. Any way, it is a mighty construction fit to keep in confinement the largest of the living animals on the face of the earth. It may be mentioned that the portions of all wings on the two sides of the gate upto twenty feet are constructed as strong as the sides of the stockade. This is converted into a room of the stockade by placing some posts in holes kept ready as a barricade joining the two wings,

The gate when completed looks like one constructed mainly from ropes only. After the gate is completed, the Jamadar makes several trials to find out if the gate can be pulled up and down smoothly. This done, the work of construction of the stockade is almost completed. Now two lines in extension of the wings are ordered to be made by clearing the jungles in between. Another line is also opened a few yards down, joining the two lines in extension of the wings. Some dried straws and logs are collected in convenient spots in the jungles that can be easily set fire to by the men lying in ambush to frighten the herd into the stockade. All these preparations done, the next morning has to be awaited with great expectations for spectacular events.

The Sirdars with their own men after leaving one man at every alternate picket, mass together with the rest of his staff near the stockade very early next morning. Each man is now burning with enthusiasm and the more adventurous new recruits are looking forward with eager expectations to prove their mettle in this final day. On their arrival, the Jamadar deposes the men to cover the stockade with fresh leaves and branches making the whole thing appear as much normal as any artificial forest can possibly be made to appear. Some tubris (a form of fire works) are kept hidden in some convenient places so that when the elephants rush towards the stockade, these may be lit up with very helpful effects from behind. This preparatory work does not take more than an hour to be finished.

The visitors who come for sight seeing are all seated in convenient platform from where the whole operations may be watched without disturbing the khedahs by any indiscreet act due to excitement or otherwise.

The beaters are now sent in batches with directions to drive the groups of elephants into one herd and force the herd along the desired highway leading into the stockade. Each man is dressed in a mere apology for a loin-cloth, each one is provided with a dao or a tribal axe in hand and some have bamboo clappers hanging from their waists. In each group there is a gun man, with amunitions enough for firing some blank shots and only smaller pellets in case of emergency. Guns are not allowed to be fired excepting for extreme emergency. But when the groups assemble and take to the intended highway and when the groups of beaters have met, one or two blank shots are fired as a signal for the rest to be ready. In the meantime, the Jamadar places his selected bold men in their position along the clearances already made in extension of the wings. Twenty to thirty men are placed in each row. The Sirdars at the two heads of the lines are to be courageous men of proved stamina and veterans of previous operations. Two Sirdas at the middle position have to be bold men of proved stamina and the two near the end of the wings have also to be

old veterans. These six men are provided with guns and amunitions enough for firing good number of blank shots; a very limited number of small pellets are given for emergency only. The dry straws and logs kept hidden in the bushes are smeared with kerosine oil.

As soon as the herd is within the cordoned area the Sirdars close in from the two wings and a deafening noise is raised. The elephants puzzled and perplexed rush forward, screaming, trumpeting and breaking through any obstacle in front. The fire works gash out, the guns boom, fires are ablaze and the poor beasts, already perplexed and out of their wits end, bolt straight ahead into the stockade and the gate falls closing in all the animals huddled together within the narrow compass of the stockade. The experts lying so long in ambush rush forward and tie down the gate with ropes and others take their position behind the pallsades of the stockade with spears, and protect the stockade from giving way under the smashing charges of the infuriated animals.

The koonkies have been kept in readiness at some convenient post to render any help to the beaters when the herd is well within the cordoned area formed by the men waiting in the extended lines of the wings. Only such koonkies are allowed to help in such work as are definitely known to stand the noise and din that is given rise to on such occasions. The rest of the koonkies wait for their part to play after the elephants have been in the stockade.

After the first zeal for breaking through is over, the herd huddles together at the centre. The mothers with calves stand at the heart of the group. At times an adventurous youngster kicks out some stones and earth, twist the trunks and with ears out rush towards a pallsade to be repulsed by the spears of the guards. It is not unusual to find at times a turbulent attacker snatching away a spear from the hands of the guards and twisting and breaking it to pieces. Some lose their courage half way and turn back to the protection of the group. When jumbled together, the animals close up in such a manner that it is impossible to count their number correctly even from very close quarters. However, in about two hours time the elephants are more or less exhausted and they somewhat settle down. Individuals sprinkle water from their in-exhaustible storage within their bodies with their trunks. Some throw dust over their bodies.

If the stockade is considered not to be sufficiently strong to withstand the charges from the turbulent members of the stockaded herd, during the night and for some hours in the morning following, the roping in of the stockaded elephants have to be started immediately. In fact, the hobbling and the tying to the trees of the leader of the herd and of the other disturbing animals have to be finished if necessary, even during

the night. This part of the work regarding which it has been written, "The whole scene exhibits the most marvellous example of the voluntary alliance of animal sagacity and instinctive active co-operation with human intelligence and courage, and nothing else in nature, not even the chase of the whale can afford so vivid an illustration of the sovereignty of man over brute creation even when confronted with force in its most stupendous embodiment", is now going to be witnessed. Let us try to narrate how this is done. Ten koonkies have now to enter the stockade ready for action, as we have seen in the partallah process of capture. The head Daidar and his assistant are seated on the two very best koonky elephants that have stood many tests in the matter of negotiating with big tuskers and bulls. The koonkies approach the gate with their backs in the following order—first two, then three, then four, and last of all comes the Sirdir koonky with two extra Mahuts on the back. These Mahuts replace the Daidars when they start their work of roping in. After the elephants have taken their stand, a barricade is formed converting this portion of the wing into a part of the stockade and the gate is now pulled up. The first reaction of the stockaded elephants is to stand puzzled and perplexed with ears out, trunks twisted and heads drawn. At times, the leader charges the gate as it is pulled up and on such occasions spears are freely used to keep the giant out of harms length. This is very unusual. The more common reaction is the attempt on the part of the leader and some of his followers to stretch forward their trunks in order to smell the private parts of the koonkies as soon as the latter appear at the gate with their hinds exposed. While the leader approaches somewhat boldly, the others do this with some hesitation. When this is done smoothly, i.e., in the languages of the Mahuts, when the big bull takes to a koonky without troubles, it becomes easy in getting him secured by the partallah process. The koonkies enter into the stockade and the gate is dropped down. The Daidars jump upon the "ladder" koonky and make room for the Mahuts to manage their koonkies. The leader of the herd is separated by the tame ones and is encircled by them. Now the process, as already narrated in partallah system of capture, is followed and the bull is made a captive in an hour and a half. In this way all the turbulent animals are secured one by one till the position is considered safe enough for allowing the rest of the herd to remain at large till the next morning. While the tying in operations are going on, it is very curious to find naughty youngsters suddenly biting off parts of the tails of some of the fellow prisoners and thus disfiguring the elephant. One wonders what may be at the root of this sadistic pleasure enjoyed by the miscreant. At time it seems that a particular elephant is a very unwelcome member of the party and he or she is very roughly handled by almost any and every member of the herd. I remember to have read somewhere that very likely such an unwanted intruder happens to be a stranger to the herd from some other herd and has not as

yet been accepted as a member of the herd enclosed. This explanation deserves due consideration.

The koonkies are now led out of the stockade and they take rest over night in some spot very near the stockade where foddors have been kept ready for them. After taking rest for half an hour they are taken to some spring where they heartily enjoy a drink and some sprinkling of water over their bodies after the hard work for all these hours. They thoroughly enjoy their food and take a little rest. Fire is lit up all around the stockade and the merry band of watchers are on their guard to protect the stockade against any mischief from any refractory youngster who may still have some courage left to attempt an escape. The Mahuts have kept fires burning before their improvised sheds for the night to keep off the stray bulls from doing any mischief to their koonkies. The night has a romantic appeal in this peculiar setting. Inside the stockade the animals are making every possible kind of sounds and shrieks which are being echoed and re-echoed in the hills—and some members of the herd, who may have remained outside, are responding with their grunts, trumpets and roars. The koonkies join at times in this strange music. This chorus of shouts of men, shrieks of elephants, cries of the babies, the grunts of the resentful mothers become a source of great thrill. Lucky is the man who remains at night to enjoy all these from a bamboo platform. With the break of the day the Mahuts finishing their hasty morning meals, get ready with their elephants and again enter into the stockade and finish tying the larger animals to the trees and catch hold of the smaller ones by the noosing process. They leave aside the suckling babies only, who do not leave their mothers. The reaction of the little babies after seeing their mothers as agonising captives is very amusing, interesting and at times even touching. The mothers, as all mothers in pain are apt to do, push away any baby that comes to suck the breast. A tenacious calf is even given rough push with the trunk or a kick by the pad of the forefoot. Some mothers are, however, exceptionally motherly. They caress not only their own babies but even show signs of affection towards the babies of others.

The next day, koonkies enter into the stockade and start capturing the younger ones by the noosing process which is a comparatively easy task inside a stockade. Two nooses are attached to big size koonkies from either side. Two younger elephants are tied to each koonky and the younger ones are the first to be brought out of the stockade, and if water be available at hand, they are allowed to drink and sprinkle some water over their bodies and are tied to trees near at hand, where they are provided with some succulent foddors. As many of the elephants as possible are brought out of the stockade before evening and tied to trees outside the stockade. The larger ones are left into the stockade to be brought out on the following day.

The third morning is a morning for great exciting scenes

as the leader is brought out of the stockade. Readers may try to revive the picture of the big bull caught by partallah; the only difference is that you have to picture it in this setting, which is full of trees and the ground is rough and uneven. The giant tied with enormous ropes round neck and four legs is secured to six powerful koonkies and two or three more koonkies stand by as guards and escorts. The animal comes to the end of the narrow wings and where the wings expand out without much troubles. All on a sudden, he feels that now is the time for him to escape. With all his might he makes a dash. It is now a life and death struggle for the koonkies to withstand this pull. Most of them hold with all their mights to trunks of trees to escape being dragged into any dangerous position. The Mahuts use all their skills in managing their elephants for avoiding any danger that is inevitably associated with such work. A dash against a tree may mutilate him for ever or even kill him and may as well as injure or kill the koonky whom a good Mahut often values more than his own life. I have seen various accidents taking place on occasions like these, some very grave and some minor. It takes a good deal of time to secure the giant to the trees in the temporary pilkhana outside the stockade. The next big elephant is then similarly dealt with and before evening the elephants have all been brought out of stockade. The Head Sirdar orders his men to help the Mahuts in placing some foddors before each captive and if possible supply water by improvised methods. Utmost care is taken not to spoil a captured elephant through rough handling.

This done, the koonkies retire to the posts. To-night the Mahuts and koolies are all in a holiday mood and make merriments in every possible way. In the absence of drums they use the kerosine tins as their drums and enjoy fully a well-earned rest, singing and dancing. The next day the Head Sirdar orders dismantling of the stockade. The ropes, pulleys, etc., are all collected back and they retire a merry band to the temporary base camp. There they are provided with a feast and enough of enjoyments for a couple of days and they wait for a week for moving to the next place of operation.

It is now the work of the pilkhana department to bring down the captured elephants by stages to the depot. Here royalties are paid to the Government and the elephants are brought under training and disposed of. From after the Daidars handle the elephants, till they are disposed of, it is the tireless work of the pilkhana department to look after the captured elephants and their training.

Occasionally, some stray bulls follow the captured herd to be made captives by the partallah method. At times this becomes a tame affair but at other times these stray bulls cause a lot of damages.

Elephant capturing from beginning till the elephant is fully trained, affords many exciting experiences all throughout. Here only the successful khedah has been described. I avoided narrating the various adventures and misadventures that are incidental to a complete khedah operation for the entire season. "There are too many slips between the cup and the lip", "Do not count your chicks till they are hatched"—all these are rightly applicable with regard to the success of a khedah operation. So far as the visitors are concerned the khedah is a source of unmixed enjoyment. For the investor he has to look to the balance sheet before he passes his verdict as to the success of an operation.

Elephant capturing has all the good sides of Shikar without its darker aspects. To camera men khedah affords ideal opportunities for taking wonderful jungle pictures. My readers who love adventures in jungles, with wild elephants in particular, should make it a point to witness the khedah if any opportunity affords itself. Anyone who spends a lot after adventures in jungle should do well in spending a portion of their money to arrange khedahs. This is bound to give thrills and some return in money as well.

Properly conducted khedah should not prove to be a losing adventure even in these days.

The Maharaja of Susanga lost his ancestral right of capturing wild elephants in the Garo Hills after the British Government had unlawfully annexed the territory under their own possession in 1879. However, my grandfather continued the khedah operation upto 1883, with no interference from the British Government. He conducted the khedah in the usual indigenous method of Susanga mainly with the help of Hajong tenants and with the help of local Daidars and Mahuts. As the estate used to maintain a large herd of about 40 or more elephants of its own and the labourers and the Daidars were regularly practising this operation, which was almost an annual affair, the whole operation used to go on very smoothly as traditional feature of the area.

After the death of my grandfather when my father became the Maharaja, the whole order changed and the British Government no longer allowed the khedah in the Garo Hills except with their special permission. As a result, khedah as an annual event was discontinued and the traditional set of Hajong labourers and leaders of these operations gradually became out of practice. My father took a lease of the Garo Hills from the Deputy Commissioner and captured some 40 elephants in 1905. This was done by the mixed group of workers. Only a few of the old Hajong Sirdars were available and the others were the Garos, who got their training under the British masters, but had not

yet quite imbibed the subtleties of the complex series of operations involved. It is of some interest to mention here that the Garos, who have lived alongside the wild herds of elephants in the Garo Hills for thousands of years never developed an indigenous method of capturing elephants. In this changed order father felt all the difficulties of enforcing discipline amongst these new set of people. The khedah under my father was conducted entirely according to the Sanderson method. Fortunately, our old trained elephants and Mahuts were still there in good number and the khedah was not a failure.

In 1915, the Susanga Joint Estate took a sub-lease from Mr Kingsley, the lease-holder for capturing elephants under Assam Government. This time the number of trained hands were few and most of them were Garos. Many of the trained Mahuts and elephants of our estate were also dead. So the operation was almost a failure. Only fourteen elephants were captured. The only success was in the fact that one of the captured elephants was a huge tusker caught by partallah.

After this in 1923-24 and in 1924-25, I took the right of conducting khedah in the Garo Hills virtually as an employee under a Government khedah lease-holder of Shillong. My difficulties were greater in recruiting men who had been farther out of practice in the game by then and the number of our tame elephants also were reduced. But I got response from all types of tribals of Susanga area and also from a group of Muhammedans. I personally supervised the work and captured thirty-six elephants during the first operation. Unfortunately, the Muslim Sirdars were often not able to stand the rigours of this work and a few of them died while the khedah operation was going on or immediately afterwards. On the second year, I made an experiment with supposedly trained men from Assam but I had to pay the price of introducing reforms untimely and only five elephants were captured this time.

So khedah for the last time, so far as Susanga was concerned, was done in 1924-25, a year before the birth of my eldest son Surajit. It is, in a way, very significant that Surajit, prospective heir to the title of Maharaja under normal circumstances, had never seen a khedah operation or an wild elephant in the Susanga jungles, a fact symbolizing very well the extent to which the next generation has been uprooted from Susanga tradition. I cannot but here refer to the talks that I had with the then Secretary, Forest Department, Government of Bengal, to whom I went for getting a lease for elephant capturing. Mr Hubert Graham remarked: "I wonder why you still want to capture elephants, while it is an age of automobiles and still faster conveyance." I replied with a smile: "Because we have been destined to be tied to the elephants. Susanga and elephants are inseparable; so they must perish together."

APPENDIX III

CHRISTIANITY IN SUSANGA

The history of the progress of Christianity in Bengal is more or less well known. It flourished mainly under the protective patronage of the conquering power along with the spread of the new method of English education espoused by the British Government in India. When conversion to Christianity amongst the educated section of the Hindus was largely checked owing to the advent of social reformers like Raja Rammohan Ray, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and religious reformers like Ramakrishna and his disciple Swami Vivekananda, new pastures were found out by the highly trained and disciplined Christian missionaries for work among the innumerable untouchable sub-castes among the Hindus in the rural area and also among the tribal peoples in more outlying areas. Most of these missionaries had rigorous scientific training in such departments as were connected with the special nature of the work amongst the particular type of people where they were sent. They knew the language of the locality even before they came to the field and they had also a clear idea of the various practical problems they were to face in the locality.

The much-abused caste system was, to my mind, not the weak point of the Hindu society, but untouchability became a really vulnerable point after the advent of foreign proselytizing religious powers. The existing discontents amongst the untouchable sub-castes of the Hindus were fully exploited by the trained foreign missionaries with the assistance of the converted natives under them.

In Susanga itself the authority of the Maharaja as a leader of the Hindus had already been on the decline when the Christian missionaries came to these areas towards the end of the nineteenth century. The cohesion of the different segments of Susanga Raj family was rapidly disintegrating and it became increasingly impossible for the family to give a united lead to the Hindus of the locality which the Maharaja had been doing so long as the representative of the family. So the Christian missionaries, with the conscious security of the support of the Government, were able to work confidently without any fear of major conflict.

They grappled the advantage with both hands and systematically fanned discontents amongst the tenants against the Hindu landlords, and also interfered with the village caste society organizations of the Hindus by invariably siding with the aggrieved, and very often engineered troubles with the help

of pliable dissenters, and thus artificially created grievances increased. The Christian missionaries had the untouchable Hindus and the numerous aboriginals inhabiting Susanga Pargana in view as their target for conversion. It is strange, however, that in spite of the lack of any firm leadership of the Hindus, neither the Hinduized tribals like the Hajongs and Banals, nor the depressed sub-caste Hindus such as Namasudras, Muchls, Malls and others—are known to have been converted into Christianity in our area. However, the artificial favourable condition created by the British Government in the Garo Hills portion of the Susanga Pargana by the passing of the Garo Hills Act of 1869, made the work of the Christian missionaries comparatively easy and more effective, among the Garos. When the Garo Hills had gone out of the control of the Susanga Raj, the introduction of a new order of tenancy demanding cash rent by the Susanga Raj amongst the Hajongs of the plains gave rise to much agitation. As is natural, the lawyers exploited the situation. But soon the missionaries felt that this was an opportunity for gaining influence with the Hajongs and ultimately bring them under the fold of Christianity. So the Christians and the lawyers at the outset joined hands against the Susanga Raj. However, soon the lawyers realised that the Hajongs as a community had the possibility of going out of their clutches and fall into the hands of the Christian missionaries. So, some of them at least veered round. However, the effect of this was that the Hajongs, so long very loyal to the Susanga Raj, revolted in a body against the Raj, with dreadful consequences on the order of peace and goodwill so long at work in this region. It is interesting, however, that though this revolt against the Raj had brought in confusion, still, the Christians were unable to make a single convert out of the Hajongs.

This is a typical instance how Christianity has very often created disorder and disruptive influence in breaking the harmony and peace of the local order without offering any compensating good result. All these happened some time during the last decade of the nineteenth century. It will be relevant here to narrate the genesis of the advent of the Christian missionaries in the north-eastern frontier of India. The coming of the Christian missionaries in Susanga Pargana was linked with the advent of the Christians in the N.E.F. region of India. The quotations from Mr Mackenzie's "North East Frontier of Bengal", will bring into relief how the Christian missionaries were actually introduced by the British administration for meeting their political ends.

The first quotation refers to the method of seizing the political administration of a tribal area. The existence of cultural corruption, discontent and maladministration under the native rulers are the pretexts on which the British power comes. "It was indeed owing chiefly to the intestine (probably internacine?) troubles brought about by the fanatical Brahmanism and their

bigoted persecutions of the Moamaris dissenters that the British were first led to take cognizance of Assam affairs."

'Give the dog a bad name and hang it' has always proved to be an effective motto for the politicians in ruling over the unwilling.

For the removal of the "ghostly" Hindus and their spiritual influence, and for paving the path for the comfortable entrance of the divinely Christians "Regulation X of 1822, a regulation for exempting the Garo Mountaineers and other rude tribes on the North East Frontier of Rungpore, from the operation of the existing Regulations, and for establishing a special system of Government for the tract occupied by them, or bordering on their possessions. Passed by the Governor-in-Council on the 19th September, 1822." This is the first step towards the attainment of the end in view.

From the extract of the letter to W. B. Secretary to Government, dated 27th April 1825 as quoted by Mr Mackenzie further brings out the real nature of the policy underlying the introduction of the Christian missionaries for political ends and the modus operandus for this purpose.

"In reply to a commission that I sent to my agent in London for one or more Missions of the sort suited to convert the Garos, I have referred to the Bishops of Calcutta by the person, probably a friend of his, whom my brother consulted..... If we do not interfere on behalf of the poor Garos they will soon become Hindoos or half-Hindoos."

.....I would greatly prefer two or more Moravian Missionaries of the old school who along with religion would teach the useful arts.....Of success I have no more doubt than that, if allowed, you could make Christians of Hindoo boys, and the great error of the Missionaries appear to be that of directing their attention to polished natives instead of rude tribes, who are still in that state of national childhood which enables the stranger priest to enact the school-master and to teach them what he likes....."

To this the Secretary demi-officially replied approving generally.....

"The Government could not however give a salary to the people who might be employed in the capacity of Missionaries, but they might call them school masters, and give assistance to them."**

*So the real cause of fear is the conversion of these tribals into Hindu folds.

**So, it is clear, the missionary is introduced in the garb of a school master so that there be no difficulty in bringing him as a salaried servant of the State!

Words in bold are mine.

Planned legislative measures were introduced one after another for bringing the Garo Hills under the direct control of the Chief Commissioner where the segregated Garos are left to the charge of the Christian missionaries for recasting the Garo tribal people into a pattern that could fit in with the requirements of the foreign rulers. A peculiar disruptive alien culture is introduced that has far-reaching consequences in alienating the Christian Garos from the natives, with whom they had been living more or less in harmony. The Susanga Raj, which represented the Hindu culture, never interfered with the aboriginals in their social practices and religious beliefs. But all the same it is worth noting that some of the Hindu mythological stories have been accepted even by the Garos who had nothing in common with the Hindus. I have been surprised to find Garos propitiating the Pabana god with songs and dances, to gain the favour of Hanuman the son of Pabana—of the Hindu mythology during prolonged draught. I have also found that the Garos of the interior had freely participated in the Basanti and the Durga puja festivities of the Hindus. I may cite many instances of Garos accepting the Hindu divinities and mythological personages. The Christian civilization was of an exotic nature and for its association with the ruling British power gave an unwelcome twist to the lives of the converted Garos. A false sense of superiority kept them aloof from the natural life and social festivities of their own people, but these very converts always felt their inferior position when before their white masters. So the Christian culture, probably, ultimately jeopardized the free, slow but sure growth of progress under the non-interfering Hindus. The converted Garo Christians like the Anglo-Indians of Calcutta, did not have a robust cultural pattern in Susanga Pargana. The Christian converts have invariably suffered from a complex and they have seldom been able to fit in with the people of the land. Compared to this, even the Mahomedans, in spite of very great divergence from the Hindus in many essential matters, did not suffer from a feeling of isolation for the Hindu-dominated cultural pattern of Susanga Pargana.

The Garo Hills were annexed from the Susanga Raj and formed into a separate district and was formed into a partially excluded area. Particularly in the Susanga Pargana, portions of the Garo Hills District the Garos formed a compact population. So the development of a new pattern under an isolated arrangement worked according to the plan of the foreign rulers. Even here the cleavage between the converted and the unconverted was very well marked. The Christian converts could get over their false feeling of superiority and were never at ease even in their own territory.

In the schools run by the missionaries, the Roman script was used, though the Garos of the Southern Ranges were required to deal with the neighbouring Bengalees. The new method separated the Garos from the Bengalees very tactfully to the advantage of the rulers though very much resented even

by the Garos for a long time, till a group with special interests had grown up amongst the Garos.

One day when I was in a Shikar Camp near Arwakfang, I saw some of the books which the boys read in the village school there. The picture of the Raja on his state elephant, passing along a Garo hamlet, where a little boy had been brushed aside by the trunk of the tusker mounted by the Raja drew my curious attention. On further scrutiny of the picture I saw a Christian missionary lady who happened to pass that way picked up the child on to her breast and the Raja arrogantly passed mounted on his state elephant without taking any cognisance of the sufferings of the poor child. So this is how the Susang Rajas were held out in contrast to the missionaries, before the little boys during their elementary formative period of life! The education of this one way traffic pattern could go on unhampered in the Excluded Areas of the Garo Hills with the desired effect. The seeds sown had not only germinated but the trees gained in stature under carefully manipulated protective measures.

In the plains of Susanga Pargana a considerable number of the Garos inhabited. An Australian Baptist mission started work at a place opposite Susanga known as Birisiri sometime towards the close of the nineteenth century. This mission had the direct support of the Government from the very beginning. But at first the connection between the Government and the mission could not be detected by the common people. But the patronage of the missionaries helped the people who sought that from the priests. It was observed that the influence of these priests very often had the power to influence the attitude of the administrative authorities of the Government, and soon people realized that it payed ultimately to please the missionaries in gaining their objectives from the Government officials. The local police officers and the other petty native officers had not the courage to go against the dictates of the missionaries. Soon the Susanga Zemindars felt that the Baptist Mission was an effective rival in the field of influence over the people. However, the very nature of the work undertaken by the missionaries also endeared them to the people. They started schools for boys and for the girls and introduced minor home industries. The hospital and social service work laudable and attractive activities that increased the spread of the missionaries' hold. A sort of rivalry developed between the Raj and the Birisiri Mission. The Raj stood on losing grounds as the Mission had the solid support of the British Government. In the rivalry for social service work, the very nature of the Christian mission placed it on an advantageous footing. The Hindu conservative Susanga Raj was at a disadvantage.

However, the missionaries went on spreading their faith and culture amongst the Garos—as the intercommunication of

the Garos of the Garo Hills and of the plains people were not difficult in those days. So some Garos of the Southern Ranges of the Garo Hills also came under the fold of the Birisiri Mission. But in spite of this many Garos could never be converted into Christian faith. As already mentioned, as far as I know, no other recruit from any other sub-caste or tribe in the locality came under the Christian fold. In spite of this, the mission was the place where a disgruntled tenant or a Hindu, aggrieved against the caste decisions, would go for seeking advice. This caused a disruption in the local order of things, mostly not with happy results for the good of the area.

I know of instances where the local officials violated the law to satisfy the missionaries, and the High Court, which was more or less free from political prejudices, would on some occasions change the decisions of the local courts.

In the Garo Hills the influence of the Deputy Commissioner could render all out support to the missionaries who found the work of establishing themselves more firmly without any hindrance. In the plains however the missionaries had their very formidable rivals in the Mahommedans, whom, for political reasons, the British authorities would placate. Hence the Mahommedans were left alone. The Hindus also, where they chose, could not be tamed and made to behave as the missionaries chose. So, here the three cultures came into conflict and the tribals could not be developed into the pattern desired by the British Government. In the meantime, a Roman Catholic Church was established at Ranikhong on a lovely hillock by the side of the Someswari. The site commanded an excellent view. This Church was being financed from U.S.A.

It is interesting to note that for some years the two churches used to fight in a very degrading manner, and at times the quarrels of the two White heads of the missions used to be very much enjoyed by the non-Christian people.

The support of the British officials used to go chiefly to the Australian Baptist Mission. The Catholics had only indirect support of the Government and at times, they had to go on without official support. Hence, this mission had to develop more of the humanitarian works that attract the people. In fact, some of the handlooms developed by this mission and its spread, particularly amongst the Garos, has substantially improved the quality of the Garo handloom work in the locality. I have watched every stage of development of the Catholic Mission with admiration. This mission in particular, stands on the very solid basis of ungrudging sacrifice of successive inspired missionary youths for achieving the goal.

In this connection, I cannot help mentioning one evening's experience to illustrate the nature of the fire through which the missionary youths had passed who had built up the foundations of the Ranikhong Catholic Mission. When one Mr Binjman (or

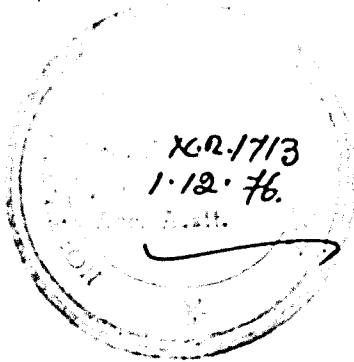
Mr Benjamin, I forget the exact spelling now), was the Deputy Commissioner of the Garo Hills, I was returning from Bagmara after an interview with him. It was nearing sunset, I was on my elephant and advancing towards the Ranikhong mission. I saw a Catholic priest coming towards Bagmara. I was somewhat surprised to find him coming towards Bagmara and taking rest after every steps. When we were sufficiently close, I enquired, as the gentleman appeared to be in some physical distress, whether I could be of any help to him. The priest very politely declined to receive any help from me. I realised the cause of refusal and admired the spirit of the ailing priest. Even at this stage he refused to receive any help from the Maharaja of Susanga—a pagan of importance. I further enquired if he could tell me why he was walking alone in this way at this late hour of the day. He told me that he was going to fetch the mail from Bagmara as he was alone at the mission. He expected a letter from home, that would bring the news of relief in the shape of arrival of the next priest to succeed him. He said, "I only pray that God may help me in making over the charge to my successor before I leave this world." He further added that more than half a dozen of priests had perished before him, in the service of God, at Ranikhong. I had no doubts that this Christian mission was bound to flourish spontaneously—even if empires had perished. I enquired a few days later and was grieved to learn that the ardent young priest had died at his post.

I shall mention another instance to show the secret of success of the Christian missions in Susanga area in spite of the adverse criticisms made by me elsewhere.

During the later thirties of the present century the Birisiri Mission, when very sure about the hold over the people, used to behave more generously with the influential portion of the Raj family. I was invited to inspect the boys and girls' schools by the Head of the Mission. I gladly availed of the opportunity of seeing the educational work done by the mission at Birisiri. While I was shown round the girls' section, the matron brought in a Garo infant barely three years old, very elegantly clad, in her arms, and left her in my presence with a chalk pencil in its hand. The smiling little baby was in perfect health and gaily moved about. She sat with a smile on the wooden floor of the bungalow and wrote perfectly some of the English alphabets. This performance could do credit to any child of her age. This girl was picked up by the matron from the breast of a dead mother from a Garo hamlet, deserted by the villagers after a devastating outbreak of cholera. Had she arrived a few minutes later, the poor thing would have been a meal for the wild animals which were in the neighbourhood. This suckling little thing had become what she was then. Such humanitarian actions cannot be actuated in the workers by mere political

motives. So Christianity flourished because of the genuine humanitarian workers, and the number of such men and women was never negligible.

Though Christian religious influence has left very little trace on the minds of the people of Susanga, the cultural stamp of the Christians, with their emphasis on industry, education, sanitation and personal hygiene can by no means be ignored. Unfortunately, the amalgam of political influence with the humanitarian and cultural aspects in Christianity has proved to be a drawback.



E R R A T A

PAGE	LINE	WORD	WILL BE
2	15	villages	<i>villagers</i>
6	18	whorls	<i>wheels</i>
7	13	The milk had before	<i>The milk had been supplied before</i>
9	4	season	<i>season</i>
12	11	acquanted	<i>acquainted</i>
12	26	Krishnadhan	<i>Krishnadhar</i>
13	23	Krishnadhan	<i>Krishnadhar</i>
16	30	Raj Baries	<i>Raj Baris</i>
18	30	Underwares	<i>Underwears</i>
19	39	state	<i>estate</i>
20	26	omit <i>linseed</i>	
22	1	with a long sticks	<i>with long sticks</i>
22	14	1987	<i>1897</i>
23	4	batterings of the same age	<i>batterings of the age</i>
25	35	insignies	<i>insignias</i>
29	3	tigress	<i>tiger</i>
29	4	gazhi's	<i>ghazi's</i>
29	5	her	<i>him</i>
29	21	propitiated the	<i>propitiated the Pir</i>
29	29	headmen	<i>headman</i>
29	33	Nokhma of that	<i>Nokhma of Chimitap</i>
30	16	co-oprative	<i>co-operative</i>
31	2	sopt	<i>spot</i>
32	36	I have written	<i>I have already written</i>
33	2	out-house for	<i>out house for Barabari</i>
34	1	To come to	<i>To come back to</i>
34	31	of the life a	<i>of the life of a</i>
36	7	faher	<i>father</i>
37	8	unchangable	<i>unchangeable</i>

37	16	Benaras	<i>Banaras</i>
37	32	scholarly	<i>scholarly</i>
38	5	premeir	<i>premier</i>
41	41	not have tear	<i>not have to tear</i>
49,	1	unscrupolus	<i>unscrupulous</i>
49	15	that often remains	<i>often remains</i>
51	25	doctrins	<i>doctrines</i>
52	4	dilema	<i>dilemma</i>
53	11	following	<i>flowing</i>
56	14	while the people	<i>while the people of</i>
58	19	trown-off	<i>torn-off</i>
58	24	man had	<i>man had been</i>
59	20	against her	<i>against them</i>
59	21	sprinkle her	<i>sprinkle them</i>
59	24	realize	<i>realized</i>
63	24	metamorphosised	<i>metamorphosed</i>
65	3	to be failure	<i>to be a failure</i>
65	35	messanger	<i>messengers</i>
66	27	choelra	<i>cholera</i>
67	35	administrative	<i>administration</i>
73	3	farewel	<i>farewell</i>
74	18	by mentioning	<i>by mentioning</i>
		gividg out	
77	32	possessed	<i>possessed</i>
78	37	propenstities	<i>propensities</i>
79	33	the remote	<i>this remote</i>
80	18	raided on the ground	<i>raised to the ground</i>
81	17	paultry	<i>paltry</i>
83	9	wallow on the farash	<i>wallow in the marsh</i>
87	10	worship of God	<i>worshipping of God</i>
87	37	to shake this	<i>to make this</i>
88	3	member	<i>number</i>
90	11	recovered the	<i>recovered from the</i>
99	35	omit like the <i>Susanga Rajas</i>	
106	32	form	<i>from</i>

107	12	Hajgons	<i>Hajongs</i>
110	6	streamlet	<i>streamlets</i>
111	29	besmear with	<i>besmear him with</i>
111	37	masquerade	<i>masquerade</i>
112	8	State	<i>estate</i>
114	33	Brahmin	<i>Brahman</i>
116	4	casualties	<i>casualties</i>
116	11	entre	<i>enter</i>
117	26	distortitions	<i>distortions</i>
117	33	north-weastern	<i>north-western</i>
117	38	do not	<i>does not</i>
122	2	The most	<i>At first, the</i>
124	10	villages	<i>villagers</i>
124	18	for two seasons	<i>for several seasons</i>
125	5	omit along	
126	27	goodwill	<i>good will</i>
127	26	dhring	<i>during</i>
129	28	atfer	<i>after</i>
130	36	Kashyp	<i>Kashyap</i>
131	30	the	<i>them</i>
132	13	gardation	<i>gradation</i>
133	18	as	<i>was</i>
134	4	challenged	<i>challenged that</i>
134	30	was a very unique in character	<i>was of a very unique in character</i>
140	1 (foot note)	vessals	<i>vassals</i>
144	17	in Sankarpur	<i>to Sankarpur</i>
165	31	fort	<i>field</i>
166	2	infurated	<i>infuriated</i>
169	34	lose	<i>loose</i>
170	27	streach	<i>stretch</i>
173	23	losing	<i>loosing</i>
178	35	for	<i>from</i>
178	38-39	partially excluded area	<i>Partially Excluded Area</i>
178	44	could get	<i>could not get</i>
179	40	service work	<i>service work were</i>
181	7	after every	<i>after every few</i>
181	37	three	<i>five</i>

