

CHAPTER XV

THE NADIA RAJ

THE following account is based mainly upon an article which appeared in the Calcutta Review of July 1872. It was reproduced almost verbatim by Sir W. W. Hunter in his Statistical Account of Bengal, and he remarked that the incidents related rest chiefly on local traditions, which vary in different districts, and that some of them must be received with caution.

The Nadia family derives its descent directly from Bhattanarayan, the chief of the five Brahmans who were imported from Kanauj by Adisur, King of Bengal, for the performance of certain purificatory rites. The following are given as the successive Rajas of Nadia :—

Bhattanarayan	Ram Samuddhar
Nipu	Durga Das (Majmua-dar
Halayudh	Bhabanand)
Harihar	Sri Krishna
Kandarpa	Gopal
Biswambhar	Raghab
Narahari	Rudra Rai
Narain	Ramjiban
Priyankur	Ram Krishna
Dharmangar	Ramjiban
Tarapati	Raghu Ram
Kam	Krishna Chandra
Biswanath	Siva Chandra
Ram Chandra	Iswar Chandra
Subuddhi	Giris Chandra
Trilochan	Sris Chandra
Kansari	Satisa Chandra
Shashthidas	Ksitish Chandra
Kasinath	

Interesting particulars are related of the career of some of the above-mentioned Rajas, but generally overlaid by tradition Sifting the wheat from the chaff, it appears that Bhattanarayan built up his estate from the villages which Adisur had in part sold and in part granted to him. These villages were enjoyed by him exempt from taxation for twenty-four years. The legends by Sanskrit writers of the Rajas, commencing from Nipu, the son of Bhattanarayan to Kam are of little consequence. They are said to have been wise and virtuous rulers, but it appears that their administrations were sterile of recorded events. Biswanath was the first Raja who proceeded to Delhi, and was confirmed in the Raj by the Emperor, in consideration of an annual tribute. He made additions to his ancestral zamindaris by the purchase of Pargana Kamkadi and other properties. The next Raja whose administration deserves to be chronicled was Kasinath. He was the first of his race who met with conspicuous misfortune. During his government it happened that from a troop of elephants, which had been sent from the Raja of Tripura to Akbar, Emperor of Delhi, being his annual tribute, one large elephant escaped, and straying about in a great forest, broke into villages and alarmed their inhabitants. The Raja of Nadia learning that the elephant had broken into one of his villages and done considerable mischief, hunted the animal to death. This circumstance having been reported to His Majesty, peremptory orders were issued to the Mussalman Governor of Bengal to take the Raja prisoner, and send him to Delhi.

On the invasion of the Musalmans, the Hindu prince, Kasinath, having received timely information of the proceedings of the enemy, fled towards the banks of the Bhagirathi, but the army of the Governor followed and captured him. He was there put to death. His wife who was with child went to live in the house of Harikrishna Samuddhar. Her child, when born, was named Ram. He acquired much learning, and became a great favourite with Harikrishna, owing to his many amiable qualities, and his descent from an illustrious family. Harikrishna

died, bequeathing to Ram his little kingdom of Patkabari, which is supposed to have been situated between Plassey and Jalangi, on the banks of the river Jalangi. In consequence of Ram being born in the house, and having inherited the kingdom of Samuddhar, he was called by the name of Ram Samuddhar. His wife bore him four sons, called Durga Das, Jagadis, Hariballabh, and Subuddhi. Durga Das, the eldest Raj Kumar, was once amusing himself on the banks of the river witnessing sports and dances, when a Muhammedan chief arrived from Delhi in a large fleet and with a numerous retinue. His arrival was the signal for the stoppage of the dances and the disappearance of the spectators. Durga Das was the only person who maintained his place. The chief asked him: "Tell me, Brahman, how many *kros* is it from here to the city known by the name of Hugli?" Durga Das gave the required information, at which the chief said to him: "I am highly pleased with your fearlessness and other virtues; come with me, then, to the country of Hugli." Durga Das readily obeyed, and, accompanying him to Hugli, was appointed Kanungo. The young Raja at first demurred to the appointment, and said: "We are kings by inheritance, and know not how to serve others." The chief replied: "Then I will write to the Sultan of Delhi, that he grant you a title and a kingdom; but now do as I bid you." Durga Das obeyed this injunction, and entered upon the duties of his office as Kanungo. On the recommendation of his superior, the Emperor conferred upon him, in due time, the title of Majmuadar Bhabanand. Some time after, he retired from the service, and built a palace at Ballabhpur, and having inherited the kingdom of his father, Ram Samuddhar, ruled for twenty years. His other brothers lived in happiness, each building a palace of his own, Hariballabh at Fathipur, Jagadis at Kodalgachhi, and Subuddhi at Patkabari. The family originally resided in a palace in Pargana Bagna, constituting the largest zamindari of the Nadia Raj. But after Kashinath paid the forfeit of his life for killing the elephant, his son Ram lived and ruled in Patkabari.

At this time, of the all the contemporaneous Rajas, Pratapaditya, the chief of Yasohara, or Jessore, was the most powerful. He had subdued, or rather humbled, eleven Rajas; Bengal being now supposed to have been divided into twelve principalities or large *zamindaris*. He defied even the authority of the Emperor, refusing him tribute, and vanquishing more than once the Mughal troops. The Sundarbans placed him for a time in an impregnable position, and enabled him to carry on a guerilla war. He was an usurper, having banished the rightful Raja, his nephew Kachu Rai. In spite of his adverse circumstances, Kachu Rai contrived to acquire a respectable knowledge of the Sastras and of the military art as then practised.

Fortified with this knowledge, and relying upon his rights, he proceeded to Delhi, for the purpose of moving the Emperor to recognise his claim to the Jessore Raj. On reference being made to the Subahdar of Jahangira (Dacca) and the Faujdar of Hooghly, they reported favourably on the claim of Kachu Rai. The Emperor, already enraged against Pratapaditya for his insolence and rebellion, determined to punish this refractory vassal for his usurpation, and appoint his nephew to the Raj. Accordingly he deputed his general Man Singh to Jessore for the purpose of bringing the rebel Raja to subjection. The avenging Muhammadan army with their general arrived by boat at Chakdaha, on the road to Jessore. But their arrival was the signal for the flight of all the neighbouring Rajas. Majmuadar Bhabanand was the only Raja who remained at his post. He paid his homage to the general, and offered a golden ring and other ornaments as his *nasar*, declaring: "Lord of great power! on your arrival all kings of this land have fled; only I, Lord of a few villages, have remained here to see your grace, the king of Justice; if you desire me, who am here to congratulate you, to do any thing for you, be pleased but to order it." To this Man Singh replied: "Well, then, Majmuadar, make the necessary preparations for passing the river, that my soldiers may safely reach the opposite bank." "My Lord," answered the Majmuadar, "although I have but a small

retinue, yet at the orders of your grace all shall be performed." He then collected a large number of boats and transports, and led the whole army across the river. When Man Singh himself had reached the opposite bank, he offered his thanks to Majmuadar for the seasonable aid. But at this time the further march of his army was arrested by stormy weather, which lasted for a whole week. What between this untoward event and the shortness of rations, the army was nearly ruined, but Majmuadar became the Commissary-General, and fed the troops from his own stores. When the weather cleared up, Man Singh thus addressed the Majmuadar, "Tell me after how many days or on what day can I arrive from here at the capital of Pratapaditya? and on which side is the entrance of the army practicable? Write it down accurately, and give it to me." Majmuadar prepared and submitted the required statement. Man Singh was much pleased with the information supplied to him, and spoke to him thus: "Oh, high-minded Majmuadar, when I return again from the subjugation of Pratapaditya, you shall utter a wish, and I will certainly grant it. But come yourself along with me to the capital of Pratapaditya." Pratapaditya defended himself boldly, but after showing a great deal of courage, was overcome. His fort was stormed, and he was captured, pinioned, and shut up in an iron cage to be taken up to Delhi.¹ He died on the way at Benares. Man Singh, on his triumphant return, thus addressed the Majmuadar: "I have been pleased by the zeal you have manifested in this war, and you also saved the lives of my soldiers during the foul weather which lasted without interruption for seven days. Utter therefore any wish you please, and I will certainly fulfil it." Majmuadar then narrated his antecedents, informing Man Singh of the flight of his grandfather Kashinath, and his subsequent capture and violent death, with the settlement of his grandmother and father at Patkabari; and expressed a wish to be reinstated in his ancestral possessions.

1. Compare the account of the downfall of Pratapaditya given by Mr. O'Malley in vol. XV (Khulna), Bengal District Gazetteers, P. 31.

Man Singh promised to further his petition, and took him up to Delhi. He then presented the Majmuadar to the Emperor Jahangir, and brought to His Majesty's notice the services rendered by him in the expedition against Pratapaditya. His Majesty was much pleased with the conduct of Majmuadar, and in compliance with the recommendation of his General, restored him to his Raj, and conferred on him the title of Maharaja. These events are popularly assigned to the end of the 16th, or first years of the 17th, century.

According to Bharat Chandra, the author of Annada Mangal, who flourished in the time of Raja Kishna Chandra, the Emperor Jahangir held an animated discussion with the Majmuadar on the comparative merits of the Muhammadan and Hindu religions. His Majesty dwelt on the evils of idolatry. He pointed out the absurdity of worshipping images of stone, wood, and clay, instead of the one true and living God. He condemned the law under which the Hindu women losing their husbands are precluded from re-marrying, and deplored their perpetual widowhood as unnatural and revolting. He also condemned the shaving of the beard, and the expression of homage by prostration and lowering of the head, as undignified. He characterized the Brahman priests as a crafty tribe, doing one thing and teaching another. He lamented the future of the Hindus who were wedded to a debasing and demoralizing idolatry, and inculcated that God was not incarnate, but formless. The Majmuadar attempted a feeble and inconclusive reply, arguing that the Puranas and Kuran inculcated substantially the same cardinal doctrines; that whether God was incarnate or not, those who worshipped Him were equally entitled to salvation; that all objects, whether stone or clay, were pervaded by the spirit of the Creator. The only remarkable idea to which Majmuadar gave utterance in the course of the discussion, was that there was not much to choose between Muhammadanism and Hinduism, but that the religion of the Feringhis (Europeans) was better than both, inasmuch as it acknowledged neither the rite of circumcision practised

by the Muhammadans, nor that of *Karnabedh*, or ear-boring, practised by the Hindus; but that it recognized only one God, ignored all distinctions of castes, and laid no restrictions on eating and drinking.

Majmuadar returned to his palace at Ballabhpur, and took possession of the 14 Parganas which the *farman* of Jahangir had awarded him. He erected a palace in the city called Matiyari, and removed there because it was more central than Ballabhpur with reference to his newly acquired and extended dominions. He also built another palace in the village called Dinliya, and set up an image there.

About this time the Subahdar of Jahangira (Dacca) began to cast eyes on the kingdom of the Majmuadar, and with a view to obtain the government of it, sent a messenger called Murad to call him into his presence. Majmuadar obeyed the summons, and proceeded to Jahangira, accompanied by his grandson Gopiraman. On his arrival he was treacherously cast into prison. But the grandson so pleased the Subahdar by the exhibition of his extraordinary prowess, that he persuaded His Excellency to liberate his grandfather. On his arrival at home, the Majmuadar showed his gratitude to the gods by *pujas* and sacrifices.

After this the Majmuadar announced to his three sons, Sri Krishna, Gopal and Gobind Ram, his intention to divide his Raj among them. "Take my kingdom; I have divided it into equal shares." But the eldest, Sri Krishna, objected. "No, the kingdom shall not be divided; to the eldest according to custom, belongs the whole." "You are very wise and learned", replied the Majmuadar angrily, "why do you not procure yourself another kingdom?" "If Your Highness's feet permit me the observation", answered Sri Krishna, "what is there wonderful in that?" Fired by this ambition to win his way to a kingdom, he proceeded straight to Delhi, and obtained with much difficulty an audience from the Emperor, to whom he communicated his circumstances and wishes. His Majesty, pleased with his self-reliance

and enterprise, conferred on him a *farman* assigning over the government of two valuable Parganas, Kushdah and Ukhad. Some time after he acquired this estate, he returned home and delighted his old father with the recital of his adventures. After the death of the Majmuadar, Gopal and Gobind Ram governed the divided Raj of their father, and Sri Krishna ruled over the Parganas he had gained for himself. Sri Krishna died childless of small-pox: his brother Gopal, too, after seven years, departed this life. He was succeeded by his son Raghab, who erected in the village called Reui a large residence, containing magnificent palaces and a seraglio. Raghab also excavated an immense lake, and celebrated its dedication to Siva with sacrifices and a public festival.

Raghab was scrupulously punctual in the payment of the tribute to the Emperor; and his punctuality was rewarded by a donation of elephants from His Majesty. He was succeeded by his son Rudra Rai, whose career was eventful. Rudra Rai erected at Nabadwip a temple dedicated to Siva. He changed the name of the place Reui, where his father had built a royal residence, into Krishnanagar (Krishnagar), in honour of Krishna. He also constructed a canal extending northward and southward, and connected it with the moat surrounding Krishnagar. The Emperor having heard of his public spirit and enterprise, conferred upon him by *farman* the government over the two Parganas Khari and Juri; and as a token of further favour, confirmed his title of Maharaja. Moreover His Majesty accorded to him a concession which none of his predecessors, and in fact no other Raja of Bengal, had been able to obtain, to erect upon his palace a turret, which is called the Kangarh, and also made a donation of arrows, flags and drums. In acknowledgment of these favours, the Maharaja sent to the Emperor a *nazar* of 1,000 head of cattle, a mass of gold equal to his own weight, and other valuable gifts.

Basking in the imperial favour, the Maharaja did not think it worth his while to conciliate the Governor

of Jahangira (Dacca), or to sent him tribute. The Governor being highly irritated at his conduct, wrote to the Faujdars of Murshidabad and Hooghly and other subordinate authorities, to inform them that Rudra Rai, affecting equality with himself, would neither pay the tribute nor obey his orders, and directed them to contrive to take him prisoner and send him to the city. In compliance with these orders, Rudra Rai was enticed by some stratagem to the vicinity of Hooghly, and thence brought to Jahangira (Dacca). Rudra Rai paid the Subahdar his respects, and observed the etiquette due to the Nawab, thereby disarming his anger. His Excellency was much pleased with him, and showed him great attention. He obtained his permission to return home and brought with him from Jahangira an architect named Alam Khan, by whose aid he erected a new palace at Krishnagar. He also built a separate *nach-ghar* or concert-hall, and also a *pilkhana* or stables for his elephants and horses. But the most useful public work carried out by him was a broad and high causeway between Krishnagar and Santipur, connecting his new capital with one of the most populous towns and celebrated cloth-marts of his Raj. The grave of the Musalman saint Alam Khan is still found in Krishnagar Chauk. He himself is canonized and is generally called Allaldastur Pir. Though fond of magnificent buildings the Maharaja Rudra lived a very simple and primitive life. His personal wants were few, but his donations were many and large. He governed his Raj with justice and impartiality, tempered of course by his recognition of the prescriptive rights and privileges of the Brahmanical class. He was succeeded by his son Ramjiban. The latter having incurred the displeasure of the Faujdar of Jahangira, was displaced in the Raj by his brother Ramkrishna, who had a long and prosperous reign. During his time, the Raja of Bardwan plundered the apital of Sobha Sinh, Raja of Chitua, a *pargana* in the district of Midnapore. The latter, resenting his attack, and being resolved to revenge himself, led his army through a wood by an unknown route, passed the river Damodar, and took up

his station before Bardwan. He attacked the Bardwan chief and slew him, and established his authority over Bardwan. Jagadram, the son of the Raja of Bardwan, took refuge in the court of the Raja of Nadia. Emboldened by his success, and strengthened by the co-operation of Rahman Khan of Orissa and the Marhattas, Sobha Sinh sent his Generals against several royal cities, and attacked the authority of the Delhi Emperor in Bengal. The latter was greatly enraged by the intelligence of the conquest of Bardwan by Sobha Sinh. He immediately organized an expedition for the purpose of punishing the rebel Raja of Chitua, and placed at his head the General Azim-us-Shan. When the Mughal army arrived at Murshidabad, news reached them of the death of Sobha Sinh. He was killed while in a fit of drunkenness by the daughter of Krishna Ram, the late Raja of Bardwan, in defence of her honour. Upon this Himmat Sinh, the younger brother of Sobha Sinh, came with a great army to Bardwan, and began to plunder that city as his brother had done. He also attacked Ram Krishna, the Raja of Nadia but was defeated. At this time Prince Azim-us-Shan arrived from Murshidabad at Plassey. Having heard there of the outrages committed by Himmat Sinh, he hastened with his army to Chitua, where he attacked Himmat Sinh, and defeated him. The prince is said to have used in the battle fire-arms called Jelala or Jinjal, a sort of musket fixed on a swivel. Prince Azim-us-Shan remained for some time in Bengal for the purpose of regulating the affairs of Bardwan and other districts. The Rajas of Bengal waited upon and paid homage to His Highness, but most of them came attended with only a few followers, not daring to show their wealth. Ram Krishna came surrounded by a stately retinue, on which the Prince declared: "These are no princes, but offspring of low families, else they would have been attended by retainers. But Prince Ram Krishna is the offspring of a great family, for he alone has a stately retinue, comparable to my own; he himself, too, appears like a second Kandarpa, and shines before one like the sun, and is like Vrihaspati in his spirit; he

is surrounded by numerous soldiers, waited upon by hosts of ministers, who themselves are honoured by retainers in splendid carriages. Thus he is a man gladdening the eyes of such a person as I am, and certainly the first among the Princes of Gaur and those of other countries." The result of this interview was the growth of a great intimacy between the prince and the Raja. The prince repeatedly declared the great pleasure he had derived from his intercourse with Ram Krishna, and expressed the opinion he had formed of his ability and character. The prince having settled the affairs of Bardwan and the neighbouring districts, proceeded to Jahangira, where he resided for some time. While he was at Jahangira (Dacca), the prince reported to the Emperor the valuable services rendered by Ram Krishna.

Ram Krishna administered the affairs of Nadia Raj for a long time, living happily at the new capital Krishnagar, and receiving from the prince Azim-us-Shan valuable support in the discharge of his duties. He also lived on terms of amity with the then Governor of the English settlement at Calcutta; the latter, in token of his regard for the Raja, placed at his disposal a garrison of 2,500 soldiers. He was of a stirring and aggressive nature. A violent difference having arisen between Ram Krishna and the Raja of Yasohara (Jessore) in regard to the boundaries of certain villages, he marched to Jessore and vanquished the Raja. This achievement, as well as the favour he enjoyed at the Court of Delhi, established his power on a solid foundation, enhancing his influence over the neighbouring Rajas and securing him against the extortions and oppressions of the Subahdar. But the Subahdar, being determined to do him an injury, allured him to Jahangira (Dacca), where by treachery he was closely confined. He died in prison of small-pox. The news of his death greatly grieved Azim-us-Shan, who instructed Jafar Khan to confer the Raj on the lineal descendant of Ram Krishna. His Highness wrote to the Subahdar to ask if there was a son, a foster-son, a grand-son, or any such relation of Ram Krishna, in order that the Raj should

be conferred on him. Jafar Khan replying that there was no such relation, the prince ordered, "Then give it to any minister of Ram Krishna who is fit for the government and who will protect the wife and family of Ram Krishna." Jafar Khan replied, "Your Highness, there is no such minister; Ram Krishna's elder brother, however, Prince Ramjiban, lives in prison here. If you command, I will commit the kingdom to him." No other alternative being left to him, the prince sanctioned the proposal of Jafar Khan. Ramjiban was thus entrusted with the Raj for a second time. He had, of course, to pay the full price for the favour thus shown by Jafar Khan. He was fond of poetry, and especially of the drama. He patronized the *nataks* and his court was frequently enlivened by dramatic performances. He had a son, Raghu Ram, who combined a benevolent heart with a genius for warlike pursuits, and rendered signal service to Jafar Khan by assisting his General, Lahurimall, in vanquishing the army of the Raja of Rajshahi. The latter, in consequence of a quarrel with the Subahdar, had taken up his position with a considerable force near the village of Birkati. In recognition of this service, his father Ram Jiban, who had been a second time imprisoned by Jafar Khan, not at Jahangira (Dacca) but at Murshidabad, his new head-quarters, was liberated. Raghu Ram, during the lifetime of his father, had a son born to him, for whom a glorious future was predicted. When the child had reached the age of six months, Ram Jiban celebrated with great pomp his *Annaprasan*, or the ceremony of feeding him with rice for the first time. He invited learned pandits and powerful Rajas from Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Kasi, Kanchi and the adjacent provinces. The child whose *Annaprasan* was celebrated with such splendour was named at that ceremony Krishna Chandra.

Ramjiban was at this time summoned by Jafar Khan to Murshidabad, to settle the accounts of the tribute due from him and he died at that city.

Ramjiban was succeeded by his already celebrated son Raghu Ram. Having governed the Raj for two years

at Krishnagar, he was arrested by orders of Jafar Khan, carried to Murshidabad, and kept there in confinement. He was a very benevolent man, and dispensed his charities from the jail.

After some time he was released and allowed to resume the management of the Raj. He, however, survived his liberation for only four months. He died on the banks of the Bhagirathi in 1782, and the same year Krishna Chandra was anointed as Maharaja.

One of the first acts of the Maharaja Krishna Chandra Rai was the celebration of *yajnas*, or festivals called *Aginhotra* and *Baj-peya*. He spent twenty lakhs of rupees in the ceremony. Learned Pandits from different parts of Bengal and from Benares came by invitation to assist in the performance of the *yajnas*. They were rewarded with valuable presents, according to their respective ranks, and in turn for the same, as well as for the recognition of the merits supposed to inhere in the performance of the *yajnas*, they conferred upon him the title of *Aginhotri Bajpei Sriman Maharaj Rajendra Krishna Chandra Rai*.

He was fond of sport and delighted in hunting, being a fearless rider and a good shot. On one occasion he set on foot a great hunting expedition, and went in pursuit of game to a place now known as Sibnibas. He was so struck with the beauty of the place and its pleasant situation on the banks of the river, that he built a palace there for his occasional residence. He called the palace the Sibnibas Rajbari, and the river Kankana. He established in connection with the palace an asylum for the infirm and the aged poor, and also several *pathsalas* and *tols* for the benefit of Sanskrit scholars.

Krishna Chandra is described in the Annada Mangal as the patron of the four *Samajs*, viz., Nadia, Kumarhatta, Santipur and Bhatpara, all of which towns were noted for learning, and as the seats of scholars. In order to encourage the cultivation of Sanskrit learning, he fixed a monthly allowance of Rs. 100 as stipends to students

who came from a distance to study in the *tols* of Nadia. This allowance was perpetuated by his grandson Iswar Chandra, who made arrangements with the Government for its punctual payment, and Rs. 100, subsequently increased to Rs. 300, is now paid every month from the Collectorate of Nadia. The munificent patronage accorded by him to various branches of learning formed a leading glory of his administration, and still renders it famous. There is a Bengali proverb still current in the country, that any one who does not possess a gift from Krishna Chandra cannot be a genuine Brahman. The custom of inviting and giving pecuniary presents to learned Brahmans on occasions of *sraddhas*, marriages, etc., received encouragement from him.

The political condition of Bengal during the time of Maharaja Krishna Chandra Rai was extremely critical and unsatisfactory. It was complicated by the dissensions of the Subahdars and their principal officers, arising from the tyranny of the former, and culminating in civil wars. It was further complicated by incessant warfare waged by the Marhattas. The evils attending this state of things were the destruction of crops, with the consequent scarcity of grain, the depression of foreign and inland trade, and the prevalence of universal oppression.

In A. D. 1739 Sarfraz Khan became Subahdar of Bengal. His oppression had alienated from him his chief officers and the leading noblemen of the country. Among the former were the Topkhana Daroga and Haji Hamit, brothers of Ali Vardi Khan, Governor of Patna, and Alam Chand. Among the latter was Fathi Chand, who had received from Aurangzeb the title of Jagat Seth, and who was esteemed the greatest banker and the most opulent subject in India. His indignation against the public misgovernment was intensified by a private wrong perpetrated by Sarfraz Khan. He had about this time married his grandson, Mahtab Rai, to a handsome girl, and the fame of her exquisite beauty having reached the

ear of Sarfraz Khan, the latter longed for the possession of her person. He sent for Jagat Seth, and demanded a sight of her. The Seth remonstrated against his demand as a gross violation of his honour and caste, but Sarfraz Khan insisted on committing this outrage. She was carried off by force to the palace of the Subahdar at night, and sent back after a few hours. This indignity rankled in the heart of Jagat Seth, and his whole family influence was exercised with a view to the dethronement of Sarfraz Khan. He was joined in this project by Hem Chand and Haji Hamit, the latter not only wanting to get rid of the oppressor, but to place his brother, Ali Vardi Khan, on the throne. The triumvirate arrived at the resolution "that none could be secure in their lives, honour, or property whilst Sarfraz Khan, remained invested with the Subadarship." They further resolved that "Ali Vardi Khan was the only one capable of rescuing the provinces from apparent and inevitable ruin, and that he should be immediately advised of their sentiments, and entreated to concur with their proposal, by preparing for a speedy march to Bengal to take upon himself the government."

The events which followed belong to the general history of the Province. Ali Vardi dethroned the tyrant and was himself succeeded by his adopted son Siraj-ud-Daula, whose violence and perfidy ended with the battle of Plassey. The part taken by Krishna Chandra of Nadia in the establishment of the English power reflected credit on his foresight, and in recognition of the services rendered by him, Lord Clive conferred on him the title of Rajendra Bahadur. He was also presented with a dozen guns used at Plassey. They may be still seen in the Rajbari.

The Maharaja was a scholar, and fond of the society of scholars. He also patronized musicians of the upper provinces, and was a great connoisseur in matters regarding oriental music. As a patron of architecture, he constructed a large building for *puja* in the Rajbari, and built a marble staircase for going down the sacred well Gyan

Bapi in Benares, for the benefit of the pilgrims. He was universally considered the head of Hinu society, and the arbitrator on all questions of caste.

In 1758, the Nadia Raj became a defaulter to the English Government, on which Mr. Luke Scrafton proposed to send a trusty person into Nadia to collect the revenues for the Maharaja, and to deprive him of all power in his district, allowing him Rs. 10,000 for his subsistence. It appears from the proceedings of the Government, dated 20th August 1759, that the revenue of the Maharaja Krishna Chandra for the Pargana Nadia was nine lakhs of rupees, less Rs. 64,048, being the revenue of Nadia lands included in East India Company's land, so that the net amount was Rs. 8,35,952. This amount was payable by monthly *kists* or instalments. For its punctual payment the Maharaja entered into the following agreement:—"I promise to pay the above sum of Rs. 8,35,952, agreeable to the *kistbandi*, without delay or failure. I will pay the same into the Company's Factory. I have made this that it may remain in full force and virtue. Dated the 23rd of the moon Tulhaide (*sic*), and the 4th August, of Bengal year 1166."

Maharaja Krishna Chandra died at the good old age of 70, and left six sons and one daughter.

Siva Chandra, the eldest son of the deceased Maharaja, succeeded to the title and estate of his father, in accordance with the provisions of the will of the latter. Krishna Chandra was one of the first Hindus who adopted the custom of making written wills, a practice unknown to the *sastras*.

Siva Chandra retained in his employ the old officers of the Raj and availed himself of their experience. He managed the affairs of his estate with great tact and judgment. He was a more profound scholar in Sanskrit than even his father. A manuscript work of his composition has been lately discovered. He was a religious man and

spent a large portion of his time in performing ceremonies. He celebrated the Soma Yaga, and died at the age of 47, leaving one son and one daughter.

Siva Chandra was succeeded by his son, Iswar Chandra, a generous and extravagant prince, who diminished the estate to the extent of three lakhs of rupees. He built a villa called Sriban, situated in a romantic spot about two miles from the Rajbari. Iswar Chandra died in the fifty-fifth year of his age, leaving one son and one daughter. The son, Girish Chandra, a young man sixteen years of age, succeeded to the title and property. During his minority the estate was managed by the Court of Wards. Like his father, he was a very extravagant man, and a considerable part of the property was in his time sold, owing to the non-payment of the Government revenue.

The *debottar* lands which had been expressly set aside for the worship of the family idols, yielding an income of about a lakh of rupees a year, and some zamindaris heavily encumbered, were alone left to him of an inheritance which at one time embraced a vast extent of country, and comprised eighty-four *parganas*, the seat of great manufacturing industries, and rich in agricultural resources.

Girish Chandra, like his predecessors, was a great encourager of Sanskrit learning, and delighted to reward the learned men of his time. During his administration the celebrated poet, Rasasagar flourished, and was for a long time an ornament of his Court. Girish Chandra had two wives, but left no issue at the time of his death, which took place in the sixtieth year of his age. Before his decease he adopted a son named Srisa Chandra, who succeeded him.

Srisa Chandra was only 18 years of age, and had scarcely passed his minority, when he took charge of the estate. By tact, sagacity, and judgement he managed to clear off the encumbrances and increased the income to

some extent. He was an intelligent, affable man, and very popular with all who came in contact with him.

Srisa Chandra, though representing the most orthodox family in Bengal, emancipated himself from the fetters of bigotry, and caught the spirit of innovation characteristic of the present age. He introduced European customs, and observed no distinction of caste in eating and drinking. When the first petition for legalizing the re-marriage of Hindu widows was prepared, he headed the list of subscribers to the document. He also opposed the system of Hindu polygamy, and heartily joined in the movement for abolishing it, except in certain cases. He established an Anglo-Vernacular school at his own residence, with a head master, three assistant masters and two pandits, without aid either from Government or subscriptions from private sources. He also presented to the Government the tract of land on which the Krishnagar College stands, and subscribed a large sum for its erection. Though not a scholar he was a great admirer of learning, and had his two sons educated at the Government College. He was tolerably conversant with Persian and Sanskrit; a patron of Hindu music, and himself a good singer, his name was known to all the celebrated singers of the day, and they came to him even from distant places like Delhi and Lucknow.

The Government recognised and confirmed his title of Maharaja Bahadur, and bestowed upon him the usual *khilat* and other honours appertaining to the same. Srisa Chandra died in the thirty-eighth year of his age, leaving one son and one daughter.

Satisa Chandra succeeded his father at the early age of twenty, and carried still further his imitation of English habits. He died at Masuri on the 9th October 1870 in the thirty-third year of his age, and was succeeded by his adopted son, the present (1909) Maharaja Kshitish Chandra, during whose minority the estate was again managed by the Court of Wards. He came of age in May

1889, and was installed by Sir C. S. Bayley, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, at Krishnagar in July 1890. He has maintained the tradition of his house as a supporter of learning.

At present the total land revenue payable by the estate is Rs. 62,542, while its annual value, according to the Road Cess returns, in Rs. 2,17,790. The largest compact block within the estate lies in the Chapra thana: the remainder consists of smaller blocks, scattered over the thanas Kotwali, Santipur, Kissengunge, Chakdaha, Ranaghat, Gangni, Tehata, Hanskhali and Jibannagar.