

UNIVERSITY OF BURDWAN

Rajbati, Bardhaman - 713 104

West Bengal

Phone : +091-342-2634975 (30 lines)

Fax : +091-342-2530452

Email : dr.sripatim@gmail.com, registrar@buruniv.ac.in

Website : <http://www.buruniv.ac.in>



Vice Chancellor : Prof. Smritikumar Sarkar
Registrar (Additional Charge) : Prof. Sripati Mukhopadhyay

Burdwan is an anglicised version of the Sanskrit *Vardhamana* and the corresponding *Bardhaman* in Bengali. The origin of this name dates back to sixth century BC and is ascribed to the twenty-fourth Jain Tirthankar, or *Vardhamanswami*, who spent some time in *Astikagrama*, according to the the Jain *Kalpasutra*. This place has been renamed as *Vardhamana* in his honour. A second view holds the literal meaning of the name, a prosperous and growing centre, to argue that this place represented a frontier colony of the progress of *aryanisation* through the upper Ganga valley. However, the Aryans failed to proceed further east. So, the name was retained. Archeological evidences suggest that this region, forming a major part of *Radh Bengal*, could be traced even back to 4000-2000 BC. Burdwan is a place of mixed culture. The deuls (temples of *rekha* type) found here are quite reminiscent of Buddhist architecture. The various mosques and tombs remind us of Muslim culture. The old temples bear signs of Hinduism, mostly belonging to the *Sakta* and *Vaishnava* community. The famous *Sufi* Pir Baharam's tomb is here. The controversy on *Kankaleswari* Kali of whether it originally belonged to the *Jains* or *Tantriks* indicates again the town's multifaceted heritage. Indeed, Burdwan had witnessed, experienced and withstood quite a few historical thunderstorms in the past, mainly due to the Mughal, Pathan and Maratha intruders. The town of Bardhaman was visited at one time or another by many a notable of the Delhi Empire from Raja Todarmal to Daud Karnani, from Sher Afgan and Kutub-ud-din to Ajimuswan or the rebel Sheh Jahan. The celebrated tombs of Sher Afgan and Kutub-ud-din lying side by side in this township relate to a classic love-story of *Mihr-ul-Nissa* and *Jehangir* that made Sher Afgan, the first husband of the great lady, a dead third person. The lady, who once lived here, later ruled India as *Jehangir's* wife for quite sometime, but with a new name *Noor Jahan* (Light of the World) commensurate with her beauty and culture. Burdwan's present panoramic view and modernisation owe mainly to the Raj family. The Burdwan Raj started with Sangam Rai, a Khattri Kapur of Kotti in Lahore, who established the Burdwan House. The year 1657 recorded this Raj first. Among the descendents, Mahtab Chand Bahadur and later Bijoy Chand Mahtab struggled their best to make this region culturally, economically and ecologically healthier. *Sadhaka Kamalakanta* as composer of devotional songs and *Kashiram Das* as a poet and translator of the great *Mahabharata* were possibly the best products of such an endeavour. The society at large also continued to gain the fruits. We find, among others, the great rebellious poet *Kazi Nazrul Islam* and Kala-azar-famed *U. N. Brahmachari* as the relatively recent illustrious sons of this soil. The town became an important center of North-Indian classical music as well.