

GEOGRAPHICAL AND STATISTICAL  
REPORT

ON THE

SINGAPORE DISTRICT.

MAJOR M. L. SHERWILL  
BENGAL STAFF CORPS,  
REVENUE SURVEYOR, 2ND DIVISION, LOWER PROVINCE

1863.

Calcutta:

PRINTED AT THE BENGAL CENTRAL PRESS,  
5, Council House Street.

1865.

These have been defined on the professional maps by distinguishing colors, and named after the pergunnah of which each one is chiefly composed. Some of these blocks contain portions of as many as 25 pergunnahs.

There are 9,425 villages, containing an average area of  $311\frac{1}{2}$  acres, but those to the North of the District are much larger than those to the South, which average only 210 acres, or less than one-third of a square mile.

### GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES.

The District of Dinajepore is everywhere intersected by rivers, dry water-courses, small Rivers. streams, and ditches.

The principal Rivers are Kurrocca, Juboona, Attrai, Poornababa, Nagur, Coolik, Mahanuddy, and Tangun. Some of the minor ones to the South are the Cooksoo, Toolscunga, Kharre, Tillai, Cheerco, Chota Juboona, Hurunbattee, Issamuttee, and to the North the Deepa, Gogra, Kankra, Tinaic, &c.

The Kurrocca is a sluggish and tortuous river, navigable for large boats during the rains, and for small boats and canoes during the dry season. The principal grain marts are Raneegunge, and Ghoraghata, and further South, in Bograh District, the large towns of Seebgunge and Bograh. The town of Nawabgunge is situated on the banks of the old Kurrocca.

The Juboona is also navigable for large boats during the rains, and possesses several large grain marts, Berampoor, Kantla, Hillee, Joypoor, Jamalgunge, &c. It bifurcates at Joypoor, and unites at Etakotta; the eastern channel is called the Chota, and the western the Bora Juboona.

The Attrai enters Dinajepore from Rungpore on the North-East, and after passing through this and the Rajshahye Districts from North to South, falls into the Ganges at different points under different names. It is navigable for the largest boats during the rains, and for small ones and canoes during the dry season. It is a sluggish stream running in a wide channel, and constantly changes its course. The principal grain marts are Jubarree, Huringata Bazar, and Khansamagunge to the North, and Sumjeea, Fukcerunge, Patecram, Puglebundur, Muddungunge, Balooghat, Rungmuttee, and Putneetollah to the South.

The Attrai being the more direct course of the old Teesta, whose waters were diverted into the Burmapootra in the year 1787-88, has suffered considerably in consequence, and the large grain marts to the North have declined in proportion.

The Poornababa River, a confluent of the Mahanuddy, is also navigable for large boats during the rains, and for boats of 200 maunds to Nyabundur, till the 1st January, and for small boats and canoes the rest of the year. The principal grain depots are at Beergunge, Kantanugur, town of Dinajepore, Nyabundur, Dumdumma, and Gungarampoor.

The Tangun, also a tributary of the Mahanuddy, enters Dinajepore on the extreme northern boundary, runs through a stiff yellow clay soil, has steep banks, and its bed is confined

a great desire that our parties should destroy the herds of wild buffaloes which do them so much injury; and they would readily come 3 or 4 miles into camp to give notice when a cow had been killed by a tiger, in the hope that we would go and shoot it.

Domes and other low caste Hindoos hunt tigers, leopards, deer, and boars with packs of pariah dogs, and attack them with guns, spears, clubs, and bows and arrows. On coming on the scent of a tiger, the dogs give tongue, but will not approach beyond the bounds of prudence, or follow up a wounded tiger. These curs fearlessly attack the wild boar, and in their encounters with them, exhibit no little sagacity and courage. Many get killed and wounded in these sanguinary and unequal contests. The Domes replenish their packs by stealing dogs from distant villages, whom they keep tied up until they are trained and localized. From constantly feeding on pig's flesh, which is often in a putrid state, these dogs become mangy and die. Some zemindars keep shikarees, for the sole purpose of keeping down the wild pig, which would otherwise overrun the cultivation and drive away the ryots. This course is pursued by Mr. Payter in the Government Khas Mehals in Pergunnah Sagoonah.

Game is moderately abundant, and very little molested, except by Europeans. Pigs and Game. hog deer, as above stated, are hunted by the low caste

Hindoos, but water fowl, snipe, land and water rails, hares, peacocks, black partridge, quail, and plovers, all of which are plentiful, are almost disregarded, and made no use of by the indolent and caste ridden population.

Fish is an important article of food in this District. The Bongalee ryot is very partial Fish. to fish, and many are the ingenious devices he resorts to for

the capture of a few little brats, with which to prepare himself and family a curry. Most of the large rivers and perennial marshes contain large fish of good quality, but elsewhere, in the numerous small rivers, marshes, and tanks, the quality is inferior, and the dimensions small. During the rains small fish are found in every water-course, flooded field, and puddle. Great quantities of these are sold in the village hâts. During the hot weather fish is brought to market in a state verging on putrefaction, the stench of which, which is so offensive to the European, seems strongly to recommend it to the Native consumer. The supply of fish is inexhaustible.

The Jukur settlements in this District are not yet completed. The amount at present Fisheries. paid into the Treasury on account of fisheries is 282

Rupees, and it is doubtful if any more will be obtained. Most of the large fisheries belong to zemindars. The right of fishing in most of the small rivers and bheels is not reserved.

These consist of various kinds of lizards, water and land snakes, including the boa- Reptiles and vernine. constrictor, frogs, rats, mice, cockroaches, mosquitos, in

myriads, whose sting is very irritating, and often attended with festering when the part stung is much rubbed, Bats, musk rats, moles, centipedes, the very destructive white ant, also the red ant, which forms pendent nests from trees, and whose sting is painful, bees, wasps, &c.

Annual fairs are very common throughout Dinagepore, and are mostly held in April, which is the season of the year when the agricultural classes

Fairs and markets.

"Nekh Murd" Fair.

have most leisure; this is likewise the season of the year for celebrating marriages. The principal fair is that held at

"Nekh Murd," about 40 miles north-west from Dinagepore.

It takes its name from a Mussulman saint who is buried there, and at whose shrine, or "Door-ga," it is customary to make offerings. The fair takes place about the 10th or 11th of April (1st of Bysack), and lasts about a week or ten days. It is principally a cattle fair. The number of people who attend this fair fluctuates, from year to year, between 100 and 300,000. The following is a rough estimate of the numbers of horned cattle, elephants, horses, &c., &c., brought to the fair for sale in 1861:—

30,000 oxen.
3,000 ponies of kinds.
5 or 600 horses.
200 elephants of all sizes.
12 camels.
1 rhinoceros.

The oxen come principally from Purneah and the surrounding Districts, and are bought up by agents from Mymensingh, Sylhet, and various other localities. The ponies are mostly Bhootan hill ponies, brought down by the Bhootahs. The horses all Cabuls and country bred animals from Arrah and that neighbourhood, and even from more distant places. Elephants are brought from the Morung and Assam; the principal purchasers are the rich zemindars of the Dinagepore and neighbouring Districts. Camels are brought down from the North-West, laden with goods; they are very few in number, and are generally sold to Mussulmans, who eat them on occasions of great feasting.

People from all parts of Northern India frequent this fair. Moguls and Afghans bring dried fruits, embroidered saddlery, daggers, swords, looking-glasses, &c. Sikhs may be seen manufacturing combs out of ivory and sandal-wood. The hill tribes bring down blankets, woollen cloths, walnuts, musk, ponies, and yak tails. The Nepalese sell Kookries and chiretta leaf. Large quantities of real and imitation coral beads are exposed for sale by the Bankers of Dinagepore; much of the latter is bought by the unsuspecting Bhootahs, who are now growing wiser. Besides the above, there are English picce goods, brass pots of all sorts and sizes, hookas, &c., &c. There seems to be a limited supply of grain for sale, not more perhaps than is required for actual consumption on the spot.

The Magistrate of Dinagepore and his assistants attend the fair to keep the peace.

That next in importance takes place at Gopeenath, just beyond the southern limit of the "Gopeenath" Fair.

Dinagepore Survey, in Pergunnah Khotlall, District Bograh.

It is held in March, during the Bengalee festival of "Dhole Jatra," and lasts a fortnight. There is an idol at Gopeenath, from which the place derives its name. It is an extensive cloth and cattle fair; brass-ware, spices, drugs, metals, &c., are