

RAMESH CHANDRA MAJUMDAR

(PART-1)

PG SEM-3 CC:10

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- Among the most outstanding Indian historians of the 20th Century , the name of Acharya Ramesh Chandra Majumdar , better known as R.C. Majumdar , can hardly be forgotten in years to come. Apart from his massive scholarly production, for which he is justly famous , he is also the only historian in India who has , to his credit, voluminous scholarly works on both ancient Indian history and culture and

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equally precious works on South-East Asian history and culture.

- Coming from a Vaidya family, Majumdar was born in Khandarpara, Faridpur, Bengal Presidency, British India (now in Bangladesh) on 4 December 1884, to Haladhara Majumdar and Bidhumukhi. He studied in several schools at Calcutta and Dacca but finally appeared at the Entrance

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Examination from the Ravenshaw Collegiate School at Cuttack, Orissa. He came out in the first division and obtained a divisional scholarship. He then joined the Brajamohan College, Barisal (Bangladesh), which was a hot bed of politics in the days of the Swadeshi Movement of Bengal; he had to come back to his old Calcutta , where he joined the Surendranath College,

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wherefrom he appeared at the First Arts Examination of the University of Calcutta in 1907. He stood fourth at the examination in order of merit and obtained a scholarship. The Presidency College of Calcutta was then the meeting ground of all outstanding students of the time, and the young Ramesh Chandra was admitted to the B.A. class. Two years later, he took his honours degree in history and got a post-graduate scholarship to prosecute his further studies.

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In the M.A. examination in history in the year 1911, he stood second in the first class.

The research career of R.C. Majumdar began almost immediately thereafter. His thesis for the Premchand Raychand Scholarship was entitled the "*Andhra-Kushana Age*". Considering the data on the subject available at the time, it was highly commended by Dr. Thibaut, the examiner, and Sri Majumdar got his coveted scholarship in 1912.

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- He joined the teaching profession in 1913 as a lecturer in history at the Dacca Government Training College , but he stayed here for one year only. At this stage of life the great Sir Asutosh Mookerji, offered him the post of lecturer at the newly started post-graduate department of the University of Calcutta in 1914. After seven years of teaching there he joined as

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professor in the Department of History at University of Dacca. Later on he became Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University. But he performed his duties equally well. Such combination of scholarship and administrative ability is not often seen. He retired from University Service in 1942. In 1950, he accepted the post of principal of the College of Indology , Banaras Hindu University.

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Between 1953 and 1955 , he was the Director of the Project connected with the writing of the history of the Struggle for Freedom in India, sponsored by Govt. of India. Later on he disassociated from the project on account of differences of opinion with the government. In 1955, he joined Nagpur University as Professor of Ancient Indian History. During 1958-59, he was for some time a Visiting Professor at the Universities of Chicago and Pennsylvania in USA.

(To be continued)