

## Preface

The preface to the present study contains the first words in respect of the issues which impelled me to undertake research work on the history of the national movement of Contai. In my student-life I used to attend *Harikatha* and *Dharmasabha* sittings where the *kathaks* discussed Epic and Puranic tales with emphasis on their essence. In almost all cases, the *kathaks* emphasized that pride of rulers like king Kamsa of Mathura, the Kurus of Indraprastha and so on had all met with their falls for their pride, arrogance and insolence. They also made it fully clear that a '*pararaj*' would not look after the well being of his subjects, so he should have to be rejected and exterminated. The essence of the *Harikatha* sittings greatly impressed me, and since then I had been thinking for a long time of the epic and puranic base of nationalism of the Contai people. Bankimchandra's *Kapalkundala* which was written when the author was in government service in Contai, bore in this respect the torch to me a little, and Dr. Amallesh Tripathi's *The Extremist Challenge* made the point in question fully clear to me. That is why I decided to work on the religious nationalism of the Contai people.

The present thesis has been completed under the able guidance and supervision of Dr. Bijoy Kumar Sarkar, Associate Professor & Head of History, University of North Bengal. It was Dr. Sarkar who highlighted the importance of this area of research to me, evinced a keen interest in the subject and guided me

emphatically for the greater span of my research. I am deeply beholden for all the guidance and help that he had so kindly given.

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In this connection I beg to humbly note that my respected school and college teachers of Contai and my dear learned colleagues of the North Bengal University gave me constant encouragement and suggestion to prepare the thesis. I cannot but note it humbly that without their sincere help and co-operation the thesis could not have been written.

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