

Francis Buchanan In Se



Synopsis

The development history of Bangladesh is marked by fluctuations, turn-about and decelerations. To understand these complex dynamics of social and economic change towards finding solutions, we need to dig for historical knowledge. Francis Buchanan's account is the earliest and the most significant source of new information of 18th Century Bengal, Arakan, Tripura, Cachar, Manipur, Mizoram and Burma (Myanmar). It provides unique information on Southeastern Bengal in particular and further regions to the South and East in general and is a good example of how Europeans collected knowledge of the wider world and what views they held. It contains information on rural economy, social life and ethnic relations and above all of the British imperial policy in the region. Although Buchanan's account is presented as a travel diary, it is the diary of a disciplined traveller and is thus seen to represent a genre. His surveys are of far more than antiquarian interest as they provide us with the first detailed information in existence about rural Bangladesh. "He is, first and foremost, an intellectual forbear of all social scientists trying to make sense of social structure and social change in South Asia."

Book Information

Hardcover: 209 pages

Publisher: University Press; 2nd edition (October 5, 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9840511920

ISBN-13: 978-9840511921

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 0.9 x 8.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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